

CASTE

A HINDRANCE TO PROMOTION OF KANDYAN ARTS AND CRAFTS?

Final Report on the Research Project on Arts and Crafts and Cultural and Identity Dynamics in Three Depressed Caste Communities in Sinhala Society in Sri Lanka

Kalinga Tudor Silva, University of Peradeniya

Wijekoon Banda, Ruhuna University

W.M.K.B. Wickramasinghe, ICES

SAARC Cultural Centre

Colombo

2013

Table of Content

Chapter	Title	Pages
Chapter One	Introduction	1
Chapter Two	Changing Patterns of Livelihoods, Arts and Crafts in Rodiya Communities	4
Chapter Three	Kinnara Arts and Crafts	26
Chapter Four	Opportunities and Challenges for Kandyan Dance	31
Chapter Five	The Policy Framework and Services for Preservation and Promotion of Kandyan Arts and Crafts in Sri Lanka	43
Chapter Six	Conclusions and Recommendations	51
	References	56

Chapter One

Introduction

Traditional Sinhalese arts and crafts have had close linkages with the caste system. The lowest service castes in Sinhala society, among them Nakathi caste involved in Kandyan dance, Rodiya caste engaged in a number of cultural activities including healing rituals, manufacture of drums and occult practices and Kinnara caste engaged in making of artistic mats, carpets and chamara (fly whisks), often served as bearers of specific traditions in larger Sinhala Buddhist culture patronized by the upper caste elite, including Radala in Sinhala society (Reed 2010, Raghavan 1950, 1958, Coomaraswamy 1909). With the disintegration of the caste system, the decline of Radala patronage and status and dignity concerns of youth in the respective service caste groups, the continuity and the cultural logic of these art forms have come under serious challenge (Silva, Sivapragasam and Thanges 2009). The objective of this research project was to assess the current status of these traditional art forms and crafts in Kandyan society, identify and analyze the reasons for the decline of the relevant art forms and discover possible ways and means of reviving and strengthening the relevant art forms without reinforcing the caste system and the related forms of social inequality.

The relevant arts and crafts are part of the larger body of traditional arts and crafts in Kandyan society, including pottery, brass work, jewelry making, lacquer work and other Kandyan cottage industries which have also been similarly connected with hereditary caste groups (Peiris 1971, Pieris 1958). While we will not deal with the entire range of these arts and crafts in the current study due to its limited focus, the findings of the current study may be relevant for understanding some of the constraints applicable to this broad range of Kandyan arts and crafts relevant for promoting traditional art forms and handicrafts, which are not only important in their own merits as an important aspect of the larger cultural heritage of the traditional Kandyan society but also as a potential attraction for the expanding tourist industry. In the current study we have selected the particular set of Kandyan arts and crafts because of their linkages with the bottom layer of the Kandyan caste system and, at the same time, larger significance of traditional art forms such as Kandyan dance, which according to Reed (2002, 2010) have been

elevated as “a national symbol” representing the larger Sinhala Buddhist heritage during the post-independence era.

Objectives of the Current Study

1. To assess the extent of prevalence of traditional arts and crafts associated with Nakati, Rodiya and Kinnara castes.
2. To identify difficulties encountered by the remaining artists and craftsmen of the relevant castes in continuing these art forms and related crafts.
3. To assess the services available for the relevant artists and craftsmen from the state, civil society organizations and tourist establishments and private sector organizations.
4. To identify ways and means of promoting these art forms and crafts without reinforcing caste inequalities in society.

Methodology

The study was conducted in a limited number of purposively chosen villages in the Kandyan areas where these arts forms continue to prevail in the respective communities. Following an initial review, the villages listed below were selected for further research on the relevance of traditional arts and crafts within the larger rural economy in these communities.

Table 1

Basic Information about the Study Locations

Name of the Village	District and DSD	Arts and Crafts	Caste background
Waldambala	Kandy, Patahewaheta	Kandyan Dance	Nakati
Kalasiripura	Kandy, Patadumbara	Dumbara mats	Kinnara
Kuragadeniya	Kandy, Menikhinna	Occult practices, Making of drums	Rodiya
Manava	Kurunagala, Kuliyapitya East	Cane craft	Rodiya

The selection of these study locations facilitated the understanding of the current status of the relevant arts and crafts within the larger social, cultural and economic context of these villages. Initially the study was planned to be undertaken in the Kandy district only, but based on the suggestions at the mid-term review it was expanded to the Kurunagala district in order to understand the larger picture relating to selected traditional arts and crafts and their changes over time in the context of broader changes in Sri Lankan economy and society.

In order to understand the changing position of the selected arts and crafts, this study undertook rapid ethnographic research in the relevant study villages. Field research was conducted by the research team from July 2012 to August 2013. This was primarily a qualitative study covering all aspects of the relevant communities with a focus on their livelihoods inclusive of arts and crafts.

The study involved the following research procedures:

1. Literature review covering the relevant publications in English and Sinhala. The literature review focused on related research during the post-independence period.
2. Key informant interviews with a cross section of community leaders and officers of the relevant government, NGO and private sector organizations. These interviews sought to secure the background information about the communities, inclusive of caste background, current status of arts and crafts including the opportunities for their development and challenges encountered. Interviews with master trainers in the relevant arts and crafts were particularly useful for understanding changes in these art forms and crafts over time.
3. Focus Group discussions with selected groups of artists representing the specified arts and crafts. For instance, in Weldambala these group discussions were conducted with male and female drummers and dancers representing different age groups and diverse engagements with Kandyan dance such as participation in Kandy Asala perahera, tourist shows, performing arts and professional engagement as dance teachers.

It was originally planned to conduct a seminar for presentation of the preliminary findings of this study to an audience of leaders and officials associated with the relevant arts and crafts but this task could not be achieved within the specified time frame due to funding constraints and logistic difficulties.

Chapter Two

Changing Patterns of Livelihoods, Arts and Crafts in Rodiya Communities

This chapter describes the current status of arts and crafts in two Rodi caste communities studied within the larger context of social change, increased market penetration and emerging identity dynamics in Sri Lanka society in general. Considering its traditional position as the lowest caste in Sinhala society, the Rodi communities have tried to escape traditional indignities and barriers imposed upon the members of this caste by the caste system and, at the same time, build on their hereditary skills, occupational advantages and geographical mobility ascribed to them by the same caste system. In the days of Kandyan kings one severe form of punishment against high ranking officials who received the wrath of the royal family by committing some serious offenses was to condemn their wives and daughters to Rodiya status causing them public disgrace.¹ In the Kandyan feudal order Rodi men and women were required to wear clothing to cover only the lower part of the body with clothing not extending beyond the knee level, secure drinking water from springs and rivers and not from wells used by members of the higher castes, avoid any body contact with those from respectable castes and avoid certain types of occupation including farming and trade (Coomasawamy 1908, Knox 1911. Raghavan 1957). Many of these barriers and restrictions were gradually withdrawn in the colonial era and Rodiyas are no longer compelled to continue such demeaning behaviours. In spite of all the social changes and efforts at overcoming the demeaning social status historically and culturally attributed to the caste, there is a high degree of social interaction and solidarity within this caste not only at the village level but also among different Rodiya caste villages in each region maintained through marriages, kinship ties, participation in funerals and political mobilization through electoral politics at national, provincial and local government elections. For instance, reportedly there are 17 Rodi villages in the Kurunagala district and when there is a funeral in any of these villages representatives of all other villages participate through Funeral Aid Societies established in each of these villages. This may be seen as an emerging trend towards the development of an improved new social identity, political dynamism and economic cooperation among

¹ . For instance, the folklore in some of the Rodi villages in Kurunagala district held that some local Rodiya families descended from a certain high ranking official in the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy who was condemned to Rodiya status after it was discovered he had stolen a golden Buddha statue in the Temple. The story of being penalized for committing heinous anti-social acts contained in Rodiya origin tales involves a dual claim of higher status in the past and, at the same time, an acknowledgement of why the caste was downgraded.

these communities. As will be elaborated later, this is also connected with the emergence of some new economic opportunities that some upwardly mobile persons in these communities have taken full advantage of within the past two to three decades.

Traditional Occupations of Rodi Caste

The arts and crafts of Rodi caste must be understood in the light of the larger framework of livelihoods hereditarily held by the members of this caste.

Begging may be seen as the prototype occupation that defined the hereditary status of Rodiya caste. Because they could theoretically solicit alms from all other caste groups in Sinhala society, they were placed at the bottom of the Sinhala caste hierarchy. Even though not all Rodiyas were engaged in begging and even those who engaged in begging did not depend entirely on the charity of other people, begging influenced their lifestyle, hand-to-mouth existence and the public attitude towards Rodiyas in general. The Rodiyas did not use the word "*hingakama*" (lit. begging or pleading for money or food) to describe their occupation but used the word "*illan kama*" (living by soliciting), claiming some sort of hereditary right to do so (Raghavan 1957: 42). They used customary expressions like "May you attain Buddhahood" (*Deiyo Buduwanna Hamuduruwane*) and "Your honour, blessed with so much merit" (*pin ati hamuduruwane*) in soliciting money, paddy or any other commodities from the potential donors who often considered themselves to be under an obligation to help the Rodiyas. Raghavan observed that "In the past he was considered to have been as much a thief as a beggar, his doles being even interpreted to have been something in the nature of a tribute customarily paid to him, so as to safeguard the standing crops from Knox being stolen by him" (1957: 41).

Begging made Rodiya mode of living a mobile one extending outward from their "congested permanent abode" (*kuppayama*) to which they returned from time to time after collecting a sufficient supply of food and money from their begging rounds in specified localities. Knox described their peripatetic lifestyle in the following statement. "And thus they go abegging in whole Troops, both Men, Women and Children, carrying both pots and pans, Hens and Chickens, and whatever they have, in baskets hanging on a Pole, at each end, upon their Shoulders" (Knox 1911 : 111).

Even though a Rodiya beggar was customarily not accepted into the compound of a higher caste household, the higher caste people would normally consider it a shame or disgrace to turn away a Rodiya empty-handed. That is why Raghavan (1957), the Indian anthropologist who did pioneering ethnographic research among Rodiyas, identified them as "handsome beggars", also capturing the popular perception that Rodi women in particular were exceptionally good-looking.

Also it has to be noted here that against persons who antagonized Rodiyas, theoretically they had recourse to curse (*pali*) and charm (*ina*) along with a variety of other occult practices (collectively referred to as “*yantramantra gurukam*”), the secret knowledge of which was believed to be a preserve and a hereditary privilege of this caste. Raghavan was right when he observed that “In reports of Rodiya magic as of Rodiya curse, a common factor was that it revolves around folk reactions or responses to Rodiya begging. ... Begging being his sole means of living, he obviously learned by experience the wisdom of capitalizing on the credulity of the villager who otherwise would have been too tight-fisted to be charitable to the unfortunate Rodiya” (1957: 44).

Rodiya identity and some aspects of their livelihoods were closely associated with the removal, processing and recycling of dirt, refuse and waste. According to some linguistic interpretations, the word “Rodiya” is derived from the word “*rod*” or “*rodu*”, literally meaning filth or dirt (Raghavan 1957: 7). Some of the Rodiya crafts to be described in the next section were connected with processing of animal skin or animal horns and removal and burying of carcasses of dead cattle from the gardens of higher caste people was indeed considered a caste duty of the Rodiyas (Silva 2012). Rodiyas were considered entitled to eat the flesh of such animals, a socially condemned act, adding to their list of customary demeaning practices. Therefore, they were sometimes referred to as a “scavenging caste”, structurally similar to the untouchable Chakkiliar caste in Hindu society. While there is no historical evidence that removal of human waste and garbage disposal was indeed a customary responsibility of the Rodiya caste who made their living primarily from begging and related enterprises, their symbolic association with dirt, meat and cow skins appear to have been an important factor that degraded them to the bottom position in the Sinhala caste hierarchy. The symbolic association between dirt and disorder that Mary Douglas (1991) identified in some ways described the overall position and dilemmas of the Rodiya caste in Sinhala society.

Traditional Arts and Crafts of Rodi Caste

Some of the arts of Rodiyas were closely related to the skills associated with begging. Thus Rodiya women sometimes performed spinning of one-sided drum, (*rabana*) and singing of Ratnavali song as a means of soliciting money (Knox 191: 112). The Ratnavali story (Annex 1) and Ratnavali song related the origin story of the Rodiyas that claim that even though the Rodiyas descent from Princess Ratnavali, the charming daughter of Parakramabahu the Great, they descent from a union between a princess and a Vedda to whom she was made a consort following the shameful discovery of her secret engagement with and the desire for eating human flesh.

The knowledge of curses and chants, palmistry and fortune telling and a whole range of occult practices added to their cultural heritage and the range of influence in society. The potency of the love charms arranged by Rodiya practitioners, in particular, has

received considerable attention in the literature (Nevill 1887). They had earned a name for certain types of black magic as well as certain brands of healing rituals such as bali rituals even though the Nakati caste was typically considered the authority on bali rituals involving invocation of planetary deities. As an aspect of performing bali rituals, the Rodi practitioners were also involved in making of images of planetary deities (*bali ambima*), an art form which was an important component of the Sinhala folk culture.

In addition, the Rodiyas traditionally mastered a number of crafts of a secular nature. Making a range of drums (*bera*, *udakki* and *rabana*) using certain wood and animal skin was one such craft, in some ways linked to the traditional responsibility of removing animal carcasses. Another such craft was making of combs using buffalo horns. Making of ropes using fibers extracted from local plants was another important craft mastered by the Rodiya craftsmen. Using some of these ropes, they also made traps for the capture of elephants used as a draft animal, status symbol and part of the cultural capital of the Radala aristocracy that was particularly important in rituals of the Kandyan state. Using the locally available niyanada plant Rodiyas also made whips for use in ritual processions. The crafts of Rodiyas included the manufacture of brooms and sweepers (*kosu idal*) using coir and coconut leaves for the purpose of cleaning houses and sweeping the surrounding outdoor areas indicating their broader engagement with dirt. On the other hand, they also made a range of products used in traditional food processing with cane (*weval*) as the primary raw material, including winnowing pans (*kulla*), sting hopper trays (*indiappa tatttu*), sieves of coconut milk (*kirigotu*) and baskets (*paha*) for extracting oil from coconut and herbal resources (see Annex 8). Making of rice pounding mortar was also considered a Rodiya craft. These crafts resulted in a diversity of Rodiya livelihoods that they could essentially combine with begging. For instance, while some members of a Rodiya household was engaged in begging in a upper caste village, other members could sell or barter these craft products with resulting embellishment of income sources. While trading journeys were not always identical with begging rounds with a clear distinction maintained between *illan kama* and getting paid for the products of their labour, at the practical level the actual reality was rather complex with the relevant domains easily blending into each other and the Rodiyas opting to undertake different activities in different times of the year.

Against this profile of traditional activities and pursuits of the Rodiyas put together from a review of the literature and some key informant interviews, we will now examine the actual situation in two selected Rodi villages based on ethnographic research. Most of the Rodi villages in Sri Lanka are distributed in Central, North-Western, North-Central, Sabaragamuwa and Uva Provinces in Sri Lanka (see map given in Annex 2). For detailed study of Rodi livelihoods and culture inclusive of arts and crafts, we selected the village of Kuragadeniya from the Central Province and the village of Manawa from North Western Province.

Kuragandeniya

This is a crowded village of about 125 households in the Manikhinna DS Division in the Kandy District. This entire population is living in an area of about 5 ½ acres, consisting partly of an abandoned paddy land filled up for the purpose of building houses. The village name literally means “unfertile land full of certain wild trees”. The entire village is known as a Rodi kuppayama reportedly going back to the time of the last King of Kandy, Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe. Although many of the villagers acknowledge their humble origin and some continue to be impoverished, many households in the village has made substantial incomes in recent years through long distance trade and occult practices, as reflected in their housing and vehicles parked in front of their houses.

The villagers remember a period in which Rodi people experienced social stigma and blatantly discriminatory practices from surrounding communities such as shops serving them tea in coconut shells earmarked for them in place of the usual cups and sources, the bad treatment their children received in local schools and the Rodiya devotees experienced in local Buddhist temples and physical violence against some of the Rodiya people in Manikhinna town. Many of these discriminatory practices have gradually declined over the years even though there are still some instances of maltreatment of persons from the village from time to time. There was a clash between the Kuragandeniya village and some persons in Manikhinna town a few years ago and this resulted in Kuragandeniya people collectively boycotting shops in the nearest town with serious economic impact on the businesses in the town. The relationship between the village and Menikhinna town improved in the subsequent era with no apparent tension in their relationship in the time of fieldwork for this study.

Accordingly to folklore in the village, Kuragandeniya began with only 8 families during the time of King Sri Wikrama Rajasinghe. As of 2012 the reported number of households in the village was 125 with a total population of about 1000 people. In many of the houses there are multiple nuclear families due to the tendency for married children to remain within the original household due to housing scarcity and joint economic activities connecting the different family units. The number of people living in the village has rapidly increased in recent years due to influx of people from other Rodi villages in the area, including Koskote in Ambatenna and in Kadugannawa after selling their ancestral property to Muslims in those areas due to a combination of factors including better economic opportunities in the village, greater ability to overcome discrimination against the caste within a larger concentration of Rodi people rather than in small isolated Rodi villages surrounded by high caste villages and early marriage of Rodi boys and girls resulting in bigger families. While intermarriages with people from higher castes tend to have increased over the years, such couples are usually absorbed into the Rodiya village perhaps indicating continued opposition for such marriages from the kinsmen of higher caste persons who opted to marry a Rodi partner. On the other

hand, intermarriages between men and women from different Rodi villages continued following the conventional pattern.

Livelihoods

Based on key informant interviews with village leaders, the main livelihoods in the village in 2012 was as follows:

Table 2

Distribution of Households in Kuragandeniya by Livelihood, 2012

Livelihood	Number of Households Engaged	% of households	Approximate start date
Long distance trade	60	48.8	1980
Occult practices	30	24.0	Customary
Making of drums	3	2.4	Customary
Other crafts	4	3.2	Customary
Art work and performing arts	8	6.4	Customary
Middle East Migration	4	3.2	1990
Teachers	2	1.6	1995
Sanitary labour	3	2.4	1970
Soldiers	4	3.2	1985
Wage labour	35	28.0	1940s
Begging	Not stated		Customary

Source: Key Informant Interviews

Some of the traditional livelihoods continued in the village but often their significance declined in recent years due to opening up of new opportunities and difficulties encountered in continuing some of the hereditary livelihoods. Begging, for instance, has almost disappeared over the years but this trend may be somewhat exaggerated due to the tendency in the village to deny its significance due to status considerations. To the extent it is continued it was reportedly undertaken by the poorest households in the village with no other sources of income and they too did not solicit from higher caste households in the area using the traditional idiom as such but rather from unknown strangers in nearby towns just like any other beggars who do not come from a Rodi background.

Two of the hereditary crafts, namely making of drums and making of brooms and floor sweepers were done by a limited number of households exploiting the continued demand for such products locally as well as nationally. Partly using some of their traditional skills and talents, some households in the village engage in ritual art forms

such as painting pandols (*torana*) during Wesak and Poson celebrations and making poruwas and performing drumming and dancing for wedding celebrations in hotels. The initial impetus for profit making and asset accumulation came with long distant trade which while clearly reflecting the impact of economic liberalization since 1977 also highlight some of ways in which Rodi entrepreneurs exploited their prior experiences in spatial mobility with the new political economy of profit making and capital accumulation. This is further reflected in the increased popularity of occult practices as a means of responding to existential insecurities and coping with the new challenges in the modern world. As in most other Sri Lankan villages, the women in Kuragadeniya has also benefited from opportunities for overseas work particularly in the Middle East.

Most village leaders consider it a major achievement that a few persons in the village have been able to secure salaried government employment such as teaching through their success in education but the number of beneficiaries is way behind the figures in neighbouring villages perhaps reflecting their continued educational disadvantages compared to their counterparts in higher caste villages. On the other hand, a limited number of Rodi households have been able to secure salaried employment as sanitary workers in government establishments such as hospitals indicating a larger trend in many Rodi villages to take advantage of their hereditary engagement with dirt in order to enter a government or local government employment with regular salary but low prestige. Also taking advantage of the opportunities to join the government security forces during the war a few youth in the village became soldiers mobilized in the battle field. With no access to capital or alternative livelihoods the poor in the village are concentrated in casual wage labour dependent on unreliable labour markets within and outside the village and resulting uncertain incomes. Alcoholism was particularly widespread among men in such families, they being some of leading consumers of alcohol in taverns and liquor shops in Manikhinna. They were reputed for disorderly conduct, shouting and aggressive behavior in public places, which in turn tarnished the image of Kuragadeniya in the eyes of the higher caste people in the area.

In the sections that follow the more important livelihoods in the village are discussed in more detail with a focus on arts and crafts.

Long Distance Trade

As evident from Table 2, as of 2012 this had emerged as the main livelihood in the village. It appears that this emerged as a new economic activity in several Rodi villages interconnected through affinal kinship ties with effect from 1980s. While this indicates the impact of economic liberalization and resulting growth in trade, its particular development in Rodi villages indicate that the more enterprising families in these villages identified and exploited it as a new economic niche that built on their traditional caste skills in exploiting begging rounds, persuasion of other people to buy their

merchandise instead of being charitable towards them as in begging rounds and as was indeed practiced by the Rodi traders in the past walking from place to place selling their craft products and being accustomed to movement and being away from home for several days. These traders collect supplies of mattresses, bed sheets, carpets and mats from wholesale traders in Colombo and Kandy², load them in lorries hired or owned by them and take them for sale in far-away rural communities mostly in the dry zone and return home with profits earned after the end of each business round. While this mobile trade is certainly popular among many different trading communities, the Rodi traders gained an upper hand in this business since the 1980s through their business contacts with leading suppliers in Colombo and Kandy and dissemination of this trade along with relevant trade secrets and contacts from one Rodi village to another through prevailing kinship ties.

Almost the entire Kuragadeniya village is by and large engaged in long distance trade. Some leading traders in the village have made a lot of money through this trade, built large modern houses (see Annex 3) and purchased lorries and other motor vehicles for the purpose of transporting goods. Some of the leading trading families in the village own 3-4 lorries engaged in long distance trade and other transport services. The initial impetus for economic prosperity in the village came from this trade enabling them to move up the social ladder even surpassing higher caste persons in neighbouring villages and Manikhinna town. Some of the poorer people in Kuragadeniya also take part in the business trips usually as daily paid hired workers. In some cases the traders obtain their supplies from the known wholesalers in Colombo and Kandy on credit and settle the payments at the end of each business trip. Similarly some of the merchandise is delivered to retail shops in the areas of distribution on credit and money is collected from these retail shops after the merchandise has been sold, with mutual trust among trading partners being an important aspect of this trade from the wholesale level to retail level. The traders from Kuragadeniya travel as much as 100 km per day taking this merchandise and make overnight stays usually in Buddhist temples in a pattern well established over the years. The net profit from each business trip varies from Rs. 10,000 to 50,000 depending on the merchandise and the demand for them in remote areas particularly in harvesting seasons.

While some of the skills associated with begging and sale of craft products may have enabled the traders from Rodi caste to establish a niche in long distance trade in some commodities, it has also enabled them to overcome limitations imposed by the caste system as caste is a non-issue when they engage in business with unknown people in

² . Most of these products were imported from India, with post 1977 liberalized trade regime in the country facilitating large scale import of these commodities into the country. On the one hand, this has created new economic opportunities in villages like Kuragadeniya. On the other hand, the same process seems to have had a dampening effect of some of the traditional craft productions in the same villages.

far-away places. It is important to point out this has also being an important way in which men from Kuragadeniya establish relationships with women from higher caste backgrounds in far-away places, sometimes resulting in their inter-caste marriages in recent years. There was a feeling in the village that the profits of long-distance trade have begun to decline in more recent years due to increased competition from various other traders, the decline of the demand for the relevant commodities once enough supplies have been made in the areas where there is a demand and accumulation of bad credit over the years sometimes resulting in the bankruptcy of the trading families. That is why the more enterprising people have sought to diversify their business activities and venture into new enterprises.

Occult Economy

Kuragadeniya has emerged as a leading centre of occult services in the whole of Sri Lanka in recent years. Building on their traditional reputation for charms, blessings and manipulation of the evil broadly referred to as “*yantra-mantra-gurukam*”, some occult practitioners in the village have risen to national level prominence in recent years through newspaper advertisements. As evident in the advertisements reproduced in Annex 4, one important feature of these newspaper advertisements is that the occult services provided cater to the emerging demands in society for addressing husband and wife disputes (*pavul adadabara*), disappointments in love, blessing of new enterprises, protective blessing for overseas migrant workers and their families and concerns about the possible impact of sorcery committed by potential enemies. Another important feature is that the occultists clearly identify their Rodi identity by using traditional Rodi names such as Villiya, Valli, Hulavaliya , mentioning the name of the village indicative of the caste identity in the advertisements and referring to caste-specific occult practices such as “the spell cast by a Rodi person” (*nichakula bandanaya*) in the advertisement itself. This is one of the few instances where caste is openly recognized in modern Sri Lanka where caste is usually a hidden issue (Silva, Sivapragasam and Thanges 2009) and it is in some ways ironic that persons from the so-called lowest caste in Sinhala society openly recognize their caste identity in these public advertisements. In some ways this reveals that the hold of caste has not totally disappeared in Sinhala society.

In Kuragadeniya roughly about 30 occult practitioners (both men and women) provide their services to clients who contact them in response to newspaper advertisements as well as information disseminated through former clients, service recipients and other informal social networks. As of 2012, the occult services were seen as the more prosperous economic activity in the village surpassing the long distance trade in some instances, with some families gradually shifting from long distance trade to occult services diversifying their livelihoods and income sources. Some of the biggest houses in the village with expensive vehicles parked in front of such houses were those of

occult practitioners, signifying their rapid upward social mobility in recent years (See Annex 3).

The following case study illustrates the importance of occult practices in the family histories in the village.

G. Gunapala (GG) is a 60 year old occult practitioner in the village. He is a Justice of Peace (JP) and a highly respected village leader. His father (G.G. Kuppiniya) who died some 15 years ago was a ritual healing specialist (*bali adura*), astrologer, dancer and an artist as well. GG thinks that dance and art are important aspect of their cultural heritage as it was necessary to have artistic skills in making images of planetary deities and dancing in the healing rituals. He says that their caste held these services from the era of Mahasammata also suggesting that the specific caste was present even in the time of Lord Buddha. The *Nicha Kula Bandanaya*, referred to in many newspaper advertisements by practitioners from his village, actually originated in the time of Buddha when a woman from Rodi caste developed a desire to get married with one of Buddha's two chief disciples, namely Ananda thero, and cast a spell on him when he was on the streets engaged in wayside collection of food offering by devotees (*pindu singa vadima*, causing him to divert to her house. The Buddha came to know this through his special powers and intervened causing Ananda Thero to come back to his base. Since that time this spell is known as Rodiya spell (*Nicha Kula Bandanaya*), to be deployed by men or women in order to attract their loved ones to them.

GG has four brothers. Three of them are engaged in long distance trade. He and one other brother is engaged in occult services. He assisted his father in all his ritual activities from the time he was a small child. First he learned Kandyan dance from his father and went through the initiation ceremony for dancers (*ves banda*). He was trained along with about 100 others in the village in Kandyan dance under an organization set up by his father within the village with the support from the National Crafts Council (*Jatika Shilpa Sabawa*) during 1960 to 1970. GG says most people who were trained in Kandyan dance later gave up this art as they became attracted to long distance trade referred to in the earlier section. GG himself took over occult practices from his father when the latter became too old to practice.

GG says his services involves ritual blessing, healing rites (*shanti karma*), providing ritual protection (*arakasawa*) for people at risk by chanting and making an amulet (*yantra*) for each one of them to wear constantly and performing anti-sorcery rituals (*hat-adi-kapima*). Many of his clients come to him due to conflicts between husband and wife, for general blessing, for business success, for protection during war or protection during overseas travel and for success in law suits. "In occult services as a usual practice we first invoke the blessing of Buddha then the blessing of devas and finally malevolent spirits. His daily clientele ranges from 5 to 20. He was a man of moderate

means compared to some more popular occultists in the village with a larger and more lucrative practice or persons engaged in long distance trade , generating substantial wealth. He lived in a simple house and did not possess any motor vehicles, the commonest sign of affluence in the village.

Unlike most other occult practitioners in the village he does not resort to newspaper advertisements. His clients come back to him or come to him through other contacts. He says most other occultists in the village secure publicity through newspaper advertisements and often they do not actually have the magical powers they claim in the ads. They identify themselves using names established Rodi practitioners who are no longer living and under whom they never received any training. Even young boys immediately after completing their schooling have taken up occult services, with no experience or knowledge whatsoever to deliver what they promise to deliver in the advertisements. He stressed the importance of having required knowledge base, following adequate precautions, paying attention to the details and being genuine about what they do in performing occult practices.

Of his own children, one son is undergoing intensive training under him and another son is engaged in making of drums continuing another branch of their family heritage.

On the whole GG highlighted the importance and potency of occult knowledge held by proper bearers of such knowledge within the village provided they properly carried out their tasks in keeping with long established traditions and resented what he perceived as abuse of such knowledge by certain upstarts in occult practices in the village.

Arts and Crafts

Some of the surviving arts and crafts in the village included making of drums, performance of drumming and dancing and making artistic poruwa stages wedding ceremonies and art work in making pandols (*thorana*) in Wesak and Poson ceremonies and making coir brooms and floor sweepers.

Making of drums may be seen as a specialized Rodi craft handed down from generations. In Kuragadeniya village there were a total of three households engaged in making of drums, with all of them pursuing it as a more or less fulltime occupation.

The leading drum producer in the village is a 53 year old married man named K. Ranatunga whose wife and two sons also take part in the production process. He came from a village in Kotmale where he learned drum making from one of the skilled craftsmen in that village. He moved to Kuragadeniya after marrying a woman from the village. He was initially engaged in making of brooms and floor sweepers as his livelihood but later switched to drum making because of his interest in preserving this craft. He also conducted a training for manufacture of drums in the village under the

support of the Small industries Department from 1990 to 1997 for the benefit of younger persons in the village. The second drum maker is 32 years old GG Tissa Kusum who is a son of GG and who initially took part in Kandyan dance under his father and later took up drum making under the influence of his father. The third is K. Ranjan, who is 38 years old and who learned the art of making drums in his original village of Kuragala. He also moved to Kuragandeniya marrying a local women whose father was also engaged in drum making. The leading drum maker in the village, K. Ranatunga is also related to him through his wife's side.

All three drum producers in the village carried it out as a cottage industry with a small hut erected near the main house often serving as the workshop and some family members also taking part in the production process from time to time. While all three drum producers possessed the basic tools needed, only one possessed a lathe machine needed for making certain types of drums. They produced leading types of drums, including gatabera or magul bera, tammattam used in traditional rituals and dolacks used in music making (See Annex 5). Tissa Kusum mentioned that drum making is a composite craft needing skills in wood work, leather processing and drumming. "You cannot make a good drum unless you know how to play it" he stated. All of them stressed the need to follow traditional guidelines and specifications for wood work and leather processing in making each type of drum.

The two main raw materials needed for making drums were wooden logs and leather. They purchased cows leather and goat leather needed for making drums from Muslim butchers in nearby towns at a cost of about Rs. 450 to 500 per animal skin and monkey leather and iguana (*talagoi*) leather needed for making certain types of drums from Veddas in Dambana who hunted these animals. They processed these animal skins for making of drums using salt, lime and some other chemicals. Making an animal skin ready for use in drum making took up to two weeks of time. The animal skins were soaked in water making them smelly (adding to the image of dirt in Rodi villages). Also stray dogs sometimes took away the animal skins layed for sun drying, evoking hostile reactions from some of the neighbours in surrounding villages.

The securing of wooden logs for the purpose of drum making was difficult not only due to the scarcity of particular types of wood but also due to the government restrictions on transport of many types of timber. The logs used for making gata bera were either jackfruit or ahala with the latter timber often producing the best ritual drums. Due to the scarcity of these varies of timber, the drum makers often used breadfruit timber that was cheaper and easier to work on but the quality of the drums so produced was inferior and the drums not so durable. In order to make a good gatabera drum, the drum maker had to work usually for about one week. The market price of a ritual drum ranged from Rs. 10,000 to 17,000 depending on the quality of timber and type of leather used.

The drums manufactured were distributed in a number of ways. Sometimes drums were manufactured for the orders received from institutions such as schools, kalayathanayas and hevisi bands. This guaranteed a good income for drum makers where they were able to secure such orders. The drum producers in the village often took them for major religious rituals such as Kataragama, Kandy Perahera or celebrations in Anuradhapura Jaya Srimaha Bodhi where people gathered and made purchases of musical drums in particular. They often hired lorries owned by long distance traders for the purpose of transporting drums for these rituals with the entire family usually participating such trading missions. The drum makers also supplied their products to government outlets such as Laksala and private sector outlets in major towns. They often complained about the low price they received from private sector outlets and delays in receiving the payments from Laksala in particular. Often the supply of these produce to private sector or government outlets was through outside intermediaries who, according local producers, acquired an undue profit from these transactions. Apart from selling finished drums some of the craftsmen sold processed leather to other people from outside the village who then used them for custom making the types of drums they wanted to possess for various purposes.

On the whole the makers of drums were unhappy with the assistance they received from government establishments in facilitating their production process, securing of raw materials and sale of their produce. In spite of the sentimental and artistic value of making drums and the tendency among the leading drum producers in the village to train their children to continue this art form, there were concerns about the long-term viability of the trade due to scarcity of raw material, competition from cheaper products from outside, unreliability of marketing channels and lack of support for preserving these crafts on the part of the government.

Another important craft in the village was manufacture of coir brooms (*kosu*) and floor sweepers (*ida*). Some three families in the village were engaged in this industry on a part time basis. The producers travel to Kurunagala to obtain the primary raw materials needed for this industry, namely coir and stems of coconut leaves (*iratu*). The handles are made from sticks obtained from the local area. The cost of raw materials for a broom or a floor sweeper was estimated to be around Rs. 40 per unit and the producers were able to sell one unit for about Rs. 80 with a net income of Rs. 40 per each unit sold. The manufactured brooms and sweepers were sold to individual households or retail shops with either the manufacturers or their family members transporting them on head or in public transport to desired locations. The producers interviewed felt that the income received was inadequate by itself to meet their cost of living. So that they continued it as a source of supplementary income in combination with other livelihoods. One of the producers, for instance, stated that he participates in long distance trade as a partner to some other people and makes brooms and sweepers whenever he is from

such long distance travel. The competition from mass produced cheaper products were mentioned as a major constraint to expanding this operation as a cottage industry. The shrinking of profitability due to increased cost of raw materials and the marketing difficulties they encountered in selling their produce compelled some people to abandon this craft in favour of more lucrative activities such as occult practices and long-distance trade in recent years.

Even though village had many people who were trained in Kandyan dance only one of them, namely Saman, a 28 year old married man who was also a son of GG, actually used it as part of his livelihood. Saman had received Kandyan dance training from his father and low country dance training from another instructor who was from outside the village. He was the lead dancer in a troop which performed in wedding ceremonies and sometimes in tourist shows held in hotels in Kandy. In addition, he took contracts to erect poruwa stages used in wedding ceremonies partly using his artistic skills learned through his earlier participation in bali ceremonies under the leadership of his father. He also used his artistic skills in undertaking painting of toranas in Wesak and Poson celebrations. These various artistic engagements gave him a decent income but he also had to secure supplementary incomes through other activities such as participation in long distance trade with other partners. He said that there are two months in the year when there are no auspicious times for weddings and that is the time when he has to look for other income sources. He also helped his father in his occult pursuits from time to time with the intention of taking this over from his father when he would be too old to provide this service. In the past he used to participate in suvisi vivarana dances in temples but this form of dance has completely disappeared in recent times.

Saman reported that the cost of dance costumes has gone up substantially over the years with the income from dancing not sufficient to cover the relevant costs. For instance, the ves headdress alone costs anything from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 150,000 depending on the quality of material used.

The review of arts and crafts and livelihoods in Kuragadeniya indicates that they point to considerable continuity with the past in spite of ongoing social changes. The revival of occult practices in recent years is particularly interesting in that Rodiyas have found a social and economic niche in these occult practices. Some of the traditional arts such as suvisi performances and bali rituals have completely disappeared while others such as occult practices and dance performances in wedding rituals have become economically significant and socially relevant in the light of ongoing social changes. Caste specific crafts are continued by a hard core of interested craftsmen in spite of increased difficulty and increased cost of obtaining required raw materials and difficulties encountered in marketing their produce due to increased competition from mass produced cheaper substitutes that have entered the market in post-liberalization era. On the whole Rodiyas in Kuragadeniya who have made considerable gain from recent social and

economic changes such as revival of occult practices tend to assert their separate identity and search for their separate niche within the larger Sinhala society instead of abandoning their caste identity as such. On the other hand, they are no longer willing to accept the derogatory status hereditarily assigned to them by the larger society treating them as some kind of a social dirt not fit to interact with others on an equal footing.

Manawe

This is a somewhat remote village in the Kuliapitiya East DS Division in the Kurunagala District. The village is hidden in an interior location to be accessed through coconut plantations owned by rich landlords from outside the area. The population in the larger area is diverse in terms of ethnicity, religion, caste and livelihoods pursued. According to the origin story of the village, it was started by about 8 Rodi families from another village in the area who opened up Mukalana crown land of about 50 acres to set up the village³. Manawa literally means “full of a variety of rapidly spreading wild grass called mana” (Glyceria). The village population gradually expanded to about 600 distributed in 160 households as of 2013. Initially the residents did not have title to land, but the village leaders successfully obtained title to part of the land they occupied under the S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike regime in 1956. All houses in the village were cadjan huts until 1952 when the Sarvodaya Movement came to the village and helped improve their housing through outside assistance combined with self-help Shramadana efforts. The J.R. Jayawardena regime awarded Swarnabhumi deeds to all occupants of crown land through the interference of a local politician in 1977 and the village remained loyal to UNP ever since this event. A Christian nun from a nearby town visited the village in the 1980s, helped some children in the village to join a Christian boarding school in the town and, thereby become the first generation of Rodiya children to receive formal education in the school system. Even though they did drop out from the school when they reached grade 8 or so perhaps due to lack of parental support for education of the children at the time, once they returned home they became the pioneer change agents in the village. The children inherited father’s personal name as the their surname, following the Tamil practice in Wanni areas indicating a Tamil cultural influence on this community perhaps at an earlier stage of their settlement in the area.

Table 3

Population in Manawa by Age and Gender, 2011

Age Group	Female	%	Male	%	Total	%
0-5	32	10.0	38	12.7	70	11

³. It is interesting to note that in a map of Rodi villages published by Raghavan in 1957, Manawe is not included. It is possible that this village was not widely recognized as a Rodi village at that time.

6-18	81	25.0	83	27.7	164	26
19-29	82	25.3	68	22.7	150	24
30-59	113	35.0	101	33.7	214	35
60 or more	15	4.6	10	3.3	25	4
Total	323	100	300	100	623	100

Source: Biyanvila 2011

In 2011 the total population in the village was 623 distributed in some 150 households. There was an excess of females over males, perhaps due to the tendency for women from outside who married local men to move into this village after their marriage.

The entire population in the village reportedly belonged to the Rodiya caste.

Table 4

Population in Manawa by Religion, 2011

Religion	Number	%
Buddhism	527	84.6
Christian	94	15.1
Hindu	1	0.2
Islam	1	0.2
Total	623	100

Source: Biyanvila 2011

Their religious affiliations, however varied with Buddhism as the predominant religion followed by a significant Christian population in the village, due to their conversion to Christianity from Buddhism in a pattern widespread among the disadvantaged Sinhala caste groups in the area, in some ways contesting a tendency for local Buddhist establishments to represent the high caste Goigama interests vis-à-vis subordinate and depressed castes like the Rodiyas.

Livelihoods

Unlike all surrounding villages, farming has never been an important livelihood in Manawa. Anything close to farming found in the village is raising of poultry and piggery as a household level activity in some of the houses. It appears that most households in the village traditionally depended on begging, cane work and casual wage labour outside the village. In the key informant with village leaders in Manawa they reported that begging is no longer practiced by any segment of the village population and cane work still prevails in the village even though its significance has decreased in recent years due to emergence of new economic activities and chronic problems associated with raw materials and marketing of produce. Subsequent enquiries, however, revealed that some elderly women from the village still go for begging in surrounding villages and

nearby towns from time to time not always as their primary livelihood. In terms of income generating activities the village has always been oriented to the outside world with more or less complete absence of food production in the village. The total extent of paddy land reportedly present in the village is about 6 acres but this has never been regularly cultivated due to scarcity of water and lack of farming skills in the Rodiya population.

Table 5

Distribution of Population in Manawa by Livelihood, 2011

Livelihood	Number	%
Junk collection	135	56
Long distance trade	62	26
Sanitary Labour in Government	12	5
Overseas employment	5	2
Crafts	6	2
Wage labour	18	7
Other	4	2
Begging	Not stated	
Total	242	100

Source: Adapted from Biyanvila 2011.

By the time of undertaking this study long-distance junk collection and processing has become the leading economic activity in the village, followed by long distance trade. Some males in the community got salaried employment in the government usually as sanitary workers with effect from 1970s. They appear to be the first group of villagers to escape the traditional livelihoods of begging and craftwork and earn a regular salary income from the government. The fact that sanitary work was the only opportunity available for people in the village for salaried employment indicates that their caste status and perceived ability to deal with dirt and garbage was a factor in their selection for this employment as well as the reluctance of people from higher caste background to accept this derogatory work no matter how poor they were. Following the pattern we observed in Kuragadeniya long distance trade started in Manawa around 1994 and Junk collection from the outside became important from 1998. The improvement of income and living standards in the village coincided with these two developments also accompanied by female overseas migration for employment that seems to have begun somewhere in the 1980s. Through these lucrative income earning opportunities some families in the village became quite rich as reflected in their houses and household possessions including motor vehicles. As of 2013, the village reportedly possessed a total of 40 lorries (mostly demo batta type but also some bigger trucks used for transporting wholesale collections to Colombo), 12 vans and 14 three wheelers and

multiple motor bikes. Some of the richest households in the village have as many as 4 lorries used for long distance trade and long distance junk collection. Lorries were an important item of capital accumulation in the village.

Long Distance Trade

According key informants, the long distance trade in mattresses, carpets and mats started in Manawa in 1994 with a person named Gunapala being the pioneer in this business. He had three brothers who were blind and travelled many places for begging and Gunapala apparently came to know about this opportunity from his brothers. Gunapala hired a vehicle from outside the village for this purpose and obtained his supply of merchandise from a wholesale establishment in Piliyandala, near Colombo. Gradually this trade was taken up by other people in the village as well. But none could make much progress as they did not own vehicles by themselves. Some people in the village tried to purchase vehicles on a hire purchase basis but it did not work out as there were no suitable guarantors for the applicants from the village. The wealthy Sinhala people in the area refused to sign on behalf of people from Manawa, according to some local people, due to their caste prejudices. In 1998 they had some luck in that a Muslim businessman known to one of the traders in the village agreed to sign on behalf of Danapala, who was a hire purchase applicant from Manawa. Subsequently Danapala signed for other applicants from the village resulting in a vehicle boom in Manawa from about 2000. Long distance trade had mixed experiences in Manawa compared to its progressive economic stimulus in Kuragadeniya.

The market for the relevant commodities stagnated after sometime as more and more suppliers came to the market and the demand for mattresses etc. declined over time due to the oversupply. Some traders lost money and quickly became bankrupt due to their inability to recover credit from some of the retail traders in distant places who had secured their supplies from middle men from Manawa on credit. Some persons in the village diverted long distance trade to cane products obtained from suppliers in Radawadunna, as they had knowledge about the cane products from their traditional engagement in cane work. The possibilities for expansion of this trade, however, were limited due to the limited range of commodities they handled.

Long Distance Junk Collection

A new business opportunity started in the village in 1998 when Upali, a younger entrepreneur identified collection of scrap metal from far-away places and supplying them to scrap metal collectors in Colombo and other places as a profitable enterprise. Following the pattern already established in long distance trade, a group of youth got together, hired a lorry and went to remote dry zone areas looking for scrap metal. Once they managed to collect a sufficient quantity of discarded iron over several days they

would take them to a wholesale scrap collector and sell the entire stock to him, making a substantial profit in the process. Later the junk collection expanded to include discarded other metals such as brass, aluminum and bronze, discarded plastics, and discarded bottles. Even though this was an entirely new economic enterprise, in some ways, junk collection obviously had historical continuity with and cultural consonance to earlier Rodi engagement with begging and removal of waste. Junk collection was more of an economic transaction with unknown people outside the village, but skills cultivated in begging such as persistence, persuasion and moral pressure applied were perhaps important in the new trade as well. What differed in the new enterprise was that it was substantially more profitable. Here too the Rodiya entrepreneurs built on their traditional skills in negotiation and persuasion and capacity for moving from place to place looking for discarded junk material.

By 2013, four wholesale junk dealers had emerged in the village each possessing multiple trucks and trade networks with collectors and recyclers of specific scrap material in nearby towns and in Colombo. Sorting out of different scrap material was done by hired workers employed in their yards (See annex 6). Often these junk dealers lend some money for people in the morning to go out and collect junk from various distant locations and they would come and hand over their collection in the evening, making a profit in the process. Some would go house to house exchanging brand new plastic products for discarded plastics or even discarded iron. There were other self-employed junk collectors with or without ownership of their own vehicles who would go out in groups of 3 or 4, collect various scrap material sometimes in exchange for new products and supply them to either wholesale junk dealers in Manawa or those in other locations. There were also others who were merely employed as hired workers helping the junk collectors. As of 2013 junk collection had become the leading economic activity in the village, with different people in Manawa getting involved in this trade in vastly different ways. Long distance trade existed side by side with long distance junk collection, with some people moving in between these two trades and others fully engaged in one or the other of these enterprises. Some had tried to combine the two by giving some products or commodities in exchange for scrap material they obtained from the rural households. By 2013 junk collection had clearly gained ascendancy over long distance trade due to greater profitability, ready availability of scrap material particularly in former war-zone and lesser competition they encountered in junk dealing due to the technical knowhow they have gradually acquired and lack of inhibitions they seem to have in dealing with junk, perhaps due to a cultural priming of some kind.

In order to understand the significance of scrap material collection as an avenue of capital accumulation, it is useful to consider the profile of Nishantha, the leading junk dealer in Manawa.

Nishantha is a 39 year old businessman, politician and social worker in Manawa. He is married and has two children. When he was 12 years old Sister Benedict came to the village and helped Nishantha and several others from Manawa to join Christian boarding schools in Bingiriya and other towns. He studied up to O level there as a resident student that greatly influenced his outlook in life. There was no pressure for him to convert to Christianity and he remained a Buddhist in a Christian school. He however could not go for higher education as he did not pass GCE O level and he came back to the village to help his family. His father worked as a government sanitary labourer and earned a steady income. However he wasted part of his earnings on alcohol and, therefore, he could not improve the living standards of the family.

Nishantha has two younger brothers living next to him who are also engaged in junk trade with one of the brothers specializing in bottle collection.

Nishantha gradually built up his scrap metal business from a small beginning to become the largest entrepreneur in the village as of 2013. Earlier he was directly involved in long distance collection of scrap material but later he became an employer and financier of some 20 people engaged in this trade. He owns three trucks, two of which are sent out with his workers for collection of junk and a larger truck used for transport of processed material to buyers in distant locations like Chilaw. There are 4-5 skilled workers employed by him for sorting out and processing junk collected in his yard (see Annex 7). He also bought equipment such as TVs and Fridges discarded by firms by submitting tenders. For instance, in one of our field visits we came to know he had collected some 40 discarded TVs and over 100 fridges, which were all dismantled by his workers for sorting out the scrap material.

He contested the Pradeshiya Saba Election on UNP ticket in 2012 and obtained nearly 3000 votes. Even though he was not elected to the Pradeshiya Saba, the fact he obtained so many votes was a big achievement for a man coming from the lowest caste in the area. He was the president of the Funeral Aid Society in the village ever since it was established in 1993. The Funeral Society met on 25th of each month and all the people in the village including those who go out on long distance businesses made it a point to come back to the village in time for participation in the meeting of this society. Funeral Societies of all 17 Rodiya villages were closely interconnected and Nishantha made it a point to participate in and provide assistance for each funeral in Manawa and all other Rodi villages in the district as well. This was apparently related to his political ambition of contesting a Provincial Council Election in time to come with possible support of all voters present in these villages plus people from non-related villages including Muslim voters as well.

The social work carried out by Nishantha concentrated on improving educational facilities for village children, improving village infrastructure including roads and

electricity supply and prevention of alcoholism among his fellow villagers identifying it as a major constraint for their wellbeing.

Nishantha was not alone in recent success. A considerable number of people had benefited from long distance trade and long distance junk collection as reflected in increasing fleet of motor vehicles in the village and improved houses and improved household assets. Some agencies selling electronic equipment, mobile phones as well as many finance companies were increasingly active in the village to take advantage of improved income in the village. There was a trend towards improved education among the younger generation with many children deciding to go beyond primary education available in the village school. The educational achievements in Manawa, however, was modest compared to educational advances in nearby high caste villages.

Only a section of the village population, however, had benefited from the new economic opportunities. In 2011, some 39% of the houses were made of mud or cadjan walls and 37% of the households did not have electricity (Biyavila 2011).

Arts and Crafts

Manawa has a reputation for cane craft. Several households continued to manufacture cane products including coconut sieves (*kirigoru*), winnowing pans (*kulla*), string hopper trays (*inidiappa tati*) and wall hangers for storing coconut spoons (*handi*) (See Annex 8). These products were sold by producers or their family members to retail shops, individual clients and middlemen who supplied it to urban consumers. The number of persons engaged in making these products had declined over the years and even those who continue to engage in cane work has reduced their scale of operations due to competition from mass produced cheaper substitutes, difficulty of obtaining raw material and diversion of people from cane work to more lucrative livelihoods described above. In order to obtain cane people from Manawa had to travel long distances to far-away locations like Ampara and transporting processed cane was difficult as public transport operators refused to transport them. Under the open economic policies mass produced substitute products were imported to the country mostly from India and this had the effect of undermining the local craft production. To the extent cane work was continued it was continued by women and elderly persons usually as a part-time occupation.

There was no evidence of the presence of any other traditional Rodiya crafts such as making of drums, making of ropes and elephant traps or making of coir brooms or coconut stem sweepers in Manawa. Further occult practices, drumming and dancing was not seen as a Rodi cultural heritage in Manawa as was the case in Kuragadeniya. It is possible that some of these arts and crafts were more important in feudal centres close to Kandy compared to peripheral Rodi villages like Manawa.

The village has had a rich history of folklore and folk songs centred around the Ratnavali story, and spinning of rabanas and dancing by women beggars when they go on begging rounds. Most of these cultural expressions have disappeared with the gradual decline in begging as a livelihood.

One young person in Manawa had set up a music band among his friends in and out of Manawa. They performed in informal social gatherings like birthday parties and sometimes in weddings. In spite of popularity of music in many Rodi villages, this cannot be seen as traditional cultural expression of the people belonging to the caste as some of the band members were from outside his caste.

In summary, the traditional arts of Rodiyas included drumming and dancing, making of images of planetary deities, art of making of amulets, spinning of rabanas and reciting of charms and invocations. Most of these art forms are in a state of decline even though they are often understood as part of the cultural heritage of the caste and part of their traditional cultural expressions. Similarly many of the traditional crafts including making of ropes, making of nooses for trapping elephants, cane work, making of drums and other musical instruments and making of coir brooms and coconut sweepers are in a state of decline due to a combination of factors including marketing difficulties, problems about securing raw material and competition from mass produced cheaper substitutes for these products.

On the other hand, the revival occult practices in Kuragandeniya and the emergence of long distance trade in both villages and emergence of long distance junk collection in Manawa may be seen as new adaptations based on their traditional skills, interests and orientations.

It is important to note that a community leadership committed to preserving at least part of their cultural heritage while discarding the low status historically and traditionally accorded to the caste has emerged in both Rodi villages studied. There is also parallel interest in both reviving and sustaining cultural heritage and reforming the community and weaning affected people away from entrenched vices such as alcoholism. Leaders such as GG in Kuragandeniya and Nishantha in Manawa point to this tendency. The study also found many continuing exchanges between Rodi villages distributed in different regions not only in preserving caste endogamy and attendance in funerals but also in disseminating livelihoods, economic enterprises and shared political interests.

Chapter Three

Kinnara Arts and Crafts

Even though the Kinnarayas are known to be of slightly higher status compared to the Rodiyas, in the legendary rivalry between these two castes their relative position is often mutually contested. The Kinnara villages are small in number being largely limited to more remote areas of Kandy, Matale and Kurunagala districts. Traditionally Kinnarayas were more firmly established in their arts and crafts compared to the Rodiyas for whom traditionally begging was often more important than any of their arts and crafts from the angle of their livelihoods and social standing.

The Kinnarayas are famous for making artistic Dumbara mats (*kalalaya*) and wall hangings using the refined fibre extracted from a locally available hemp called hana or niyanda (*Sansevieria zelanica*). The art of weaving these ornamental mats using various designs (mostly bird or animal designs) was handed down from generation to generation within the caste. The technology used involved scraping of the hemp to extract the fibre, dying of the extracted fibres in multiple colours also extracted from plant material, weaving together of different colour fibres, using a wooden frame and a moving rod as in weaving of cloths so as to produce traditional tapestries and designs (see Annex 9). The products such as wall hangings are mostly ornamental and decorative in nature and traditionally designed for use by the social elite. On the other hand, some of their other products made using the same technology included utility mats and fly whisks (*chamara*), more trendy modern products like ladies hand bags and purses and conference bags made to orders from conference organizers. The technology used has remained unchanged throughout the known history. Like in the Rodiya crafts described in the previous section, the entire family was involved in the collection of raw material and the production of Dumbara mats.

Dumbara designs (*dumbara rata*) have been identified as a traditional cultural expression of Kandyan society. However, no systematic efforts have been made by either the relevant government agencies or professional bodies to preserve the rich array of Dumbara designs that had been handed down from the past. A total of 150 Dumbara designs, reportedly existed in the period of Kandyan kingdom and the number of Dumbara designs currently in use has been reduced to 5 or 6, indicating a substantial loss of cultural heritage during colonial and postcolonial periods. There are no records whatsoever of the rich diversity of designs used in the past and as the designs have

been orally transmitted from one generation to the next without recording them, there has been a progressive loss of designs in each successive generation.

For this study three Kinnara villages with a history of involvement in Dumbara mat weaving were initially reviewed, namely Kalasirigama in Pata Dumbara DS Division, Talwatta in Matale DS Division and Hiripitiya in Kurunagala District. Of these three villages, only Kalasirigama had a notable number of households engaged in the relevant crafts. This, in turn, indicates a largely downward trend in Dumbara mat weaving in recent decades.

Kalasirigama

This is a Kinnara village located within easy reach from Kandy. The village had about 80 households of Kinnara caste. The village was earlier known as Henawala (lit, low lying chena plot?), but it was upgraded under the Gam Udawa Scheme under Premadasa government around 1978 resulting in improved housing and improved infrastructure. A name change was effected as in all other disadvantaged villages that came under the Gam Udawa Movement, with the new name signifying the association with art. The upgraded new village also included a workshop for training of craftsmen and a meeting hall.

There was some reluctance on the part of many inhabitants in the village of Kalasirigama to talk about their specific issues and concerns, including the craft itself. This made it difficult to establish the actual situation in regard to the industry. Of the 80 households, roughly about 40 (50%) were reportedly engaged in some aspects of the craft with no family depending entirely on this industry and some 10 families drawing a significant part of their income from related work.⁴ Only some village leaders were ready to talk about their social origin and association with Dumbara crafts. Other economic activities in the village included farming, self-employed skilled employment, government employment, employment in industries, work in the Middle East and wage labour.

Arts and Crafts

One of the award winning craftsmen in the village was K.G. Dingiriya who was 65 years old. Before him his father and his father's father too had undertaken this craft. He made wall hangings and supplied them for various government exhibitions. He also serves as an instructor for making Dumbara mats in the government maintained training centre in the village and in various other establishments. He won a Presidential award for his contribution to Kandyan arts and crafts in 2011. He has also participated in a total of 5

⁴. G.H. Peiris who conducted research on Kandyan crafts in Pata Dumbara reported in 1971 that only 15 people in the village, then called Henawala, actually participated in Dumbara mat production. If the figure reported by him is correct we can argue that there has been a notable increase in involvement in various traditional crafts in the ensuing period.

overseas exhibitions of Sri Lankan arts and crafts. Even though income from this livelihood was not so satisfactory, Dingiriya enjoyed the recognition he received nationally and internationally for his artistic products.

Many households combined arts and crafts with other types of work. There was a strong feeling that one cannot make a living by engaging in these crafts alone due to the poor income from them. On the other hand, some of the elderly persons in the village continued the crafts partly due to their tendency to see these crafts as part of their family heritage.

A total of 6 households in Kalasirigama produced mats and wall hangings mostly with traditional motifs. They supplied their produce to the government outlet “Laksala”, private shops in Kandy and Colombo catering to local demand as well as the demand from the tourists. A standard wall hanging (4 feet high and 18 inches wide) took about 5 days to complete and sold for a maximum of Rs.1000. The motifs commonly used included birds, elephant, deer, and snake (see Annex 9). Most people said it was more remunerative to work as wage labourers who fetched close to Rs. 1000 per day, plus meals in some instances.

Some people purchased mats (*kalala*) produced by other people in the village and made ladies hand bags and purses which reportedly had a good demand in Kandy and Colombo. Per capita daily net income from this occupation too rarely exceeded Rs. 500. The advantage was that they were easy to sell as some middle men came to the village to collect them. More trendy products like lady’s handbags and purses were in demand in urban centres.

There were only a limited number of producers of utility mats in the village. They utilized the stem of certain weeds (*havan* and *gallaha*) for this purpose. These mats were usually sold in collective gatherings such as Kandy Asala Perahera, other temple festivals and periodic markets (*pola*).

There was a training programme for training of youth in Dumbara mat making conducted by the National Crafts Council (Jathika Shilpa Sabawa) in the village. The trainees numbering 10 at a time received a monthly allowance of Rs. 500 for participation in this training. The training was provided by trainers in the village such as K.G. Dingiriya in the Workshop building built under the Udagama scheme. This training program, however, was found to be ineffective in attracting and retaining youth in Dumbara art for reasons discussed in the next section.

Dumbara decorative mat weavers encountered several difficulties in continuing this art form.

First, they had many difficulties in obtaining the hemp, which was the basic raw material used in this industry. The Nihada plant did not grow in Kalasirigama or any nearby villages. It grew as a wild bush in far-away places like Teldeniya, Hunnasgiriya, Adikarigama, Marassana and Ampara. Earlier the mat weavers used to visit these places, collect these plants, bundle them and bring them in buses. Now they find it difficult to transport them as buses refuse to load them due to lack of space. This has compelled some mat weavers to get together and hire a truck to transport this raw material but this would inevitably increase production costs and further reduce their profit margin. The availability of the plant has also decreased due to forest clearing, clearing of the plant in people's private land due to the concern that the plant attracts snakes. Also following the outbreak of war, the mat weavers could not reach some of the places where the weeds used for making utility mats are available in abundance. The non-availability of the raw material has compelled the mat weavers to use nylon material imported from India as a substitute for the hemp, but this has vastly undermined the quality of the final product.

Second, in spite of the multiple marketing channels available, the marketing of their produce has remained a serious problem and the price they received from middle men and private outlets remain rather low. While Laksala usually purchases their produce at a higher price, it does not regularly accept their products and even when they accept to sell their produce there are long delays in making payments for the local suppliers. The competition from mass produced imported commodities also poses problems for Kalasirigama products such as lady's handbags and purses. It is important to point out here that imported utility mats were one of the items frequently distributed by Rodi traders engaged in long distance trade as stated in the previous section.

Third, income from this livelihood is totally inadequate even when compared to income from casual wage labour. This has meant that people turn to craft work when no other work is available, seeing it essentially as a supplementary income source. As a result, those who engage in the industry do not see it as a full time professional engagement that will result in a decent livelihood.

Fourth, young people in the community do not like to take up the industry due to all the difficulties involved and their greater attraction to employment avenues outside the village such as garment factories. The low status accorded to craftsmen by the hereditary caste system appears to be another disincentive for them to enter this industry. Some of the local children are even unwilling to say they are from Kalasirigama because of its association with Kinnara caste. This also partly explains the reluctance in the village to even openly discuss the craft with visitors from outside including the researchers. They resented some newspaper articles written about the village describing its Kinnara origin and heritage of Dumbara craft. A recent newspaper

article titled “Kinnara heritage of Dumbara designs” (dumbara tata mavu kinnara parapura) has particularly infuriated some village leaders and youth.

In conclusion, many persons associated with the craft do not see much future in it due to all the concerns noted above. Even though there have been some government interventions such as establishment of Kalasirigama under the Udagam Movement, establishment of Laksala as an outlet for craft products and training programs initiated under the Department of Small Industries, they have not made a major breakthrough in changing the status quo and improving the prospects for Dumbara art. While this industry can benefit from expanding tourism with Kandy as a main attraction for tourists so far this has not happened due to lack of cross fertilization between tourism and promotion of traditional arts and crafts, inability of local producers to access tourist shops, poor esthetic quality of many of the products, control of marketing channels by middlemen and lack of organization and leadership among the producers themselves.

Chapter Four

Opportunities and Challenges for Kandyan Dance

Kandyan dance has been of central importance in rituals like Kohombakankariya⁵, Bali and Kandy Asala Perahera and it has been newly introduced in a range of events including political rallies, wedding ceremonies, tourist shows and the like. The term “Kandyan dance” itself was coined as a colonial construct used for mapping of local cultures in characterizing Kandyan social formation and Sri Lankan culture in a broader sense. A dance form that began as a ritual act performed by drummers and dancers representing a particular caste (*Berava / Nakati*) in Sinhala society became identified as a distinctive marker and an expression of the Sinhala Buddhist culture during the nationalist upsurge from the 19th century onwards. The value of Kandyan dance from the angle of cultural heritage has been highlighted in a number of writings on art and culture (Sederaman 1968, Makulloluwa 1976). The social and cultural significance of Kandyan dance is dealt with in important anthropological writings on Sri Lanka such as “Precept and Practice” by Richard Gombrich (1971), “Rituals of the Kandyan State” by H.L. Seneviratne (1978), and “the Cult of Goddess Pattini” by Gananath Obeyesekere (1984). In a full scale ethnographic study and a historical account of Kandyan Dance titled “Dance the Nation: Performance, Ritual and Politics in Sri Lanka”, Susan A. Reed (2010) highlighted the changing role and politics of Kandyan dance in Sinhala society and its emergence as a performance art within the context of overseas dance tours, tourism, introduction of Kandyan dance in school curriculum and in TV shows of various kinds. While Kandyan dance is one of the three regional dance traditions popular in Sinhala society along with Ruhunu and Sabaragamu dance traditions, it has risen to greater national prominence as a traditional cultural expression of the Sinhalese and Sri Lanka society in general due to its association with the Temple of the Tooth and the Kandy Asala Perahera held annually as a premier cultural expression, political ritual and a means of ensuring fertility and prosperity of the nation.

In Kandyan areas drumming and dancing are considered the preserve of the drummer caste (*Nakati*), ranked rather low in the Kandyan caste hierarchy. Though of higher social status compared to the Rodiya and Kinnara castes discussed so far in the report, drumming and dancing are considered an act of salutation, whether the object of

⁵. Kohombakankariya was a village-level prosperity/ thanksgiving ritual addressed to certain local deities collectively referred to as Dolaha Deiyo (Twelve Gods).

salutation is deities or spirits or human dignitaries such as Buddhist monks and high caste lay officials in temples or secular administration. While Rodiyas may also be involved in drumming and dancing in some contexts as was noted earlier, as a feudal caste service drumming and dancing were primarily assigned to the Nakati caste. The aristocratic layer of the Goigama caste known as Radala served as the main patrons of Kandyan dance who sponsored rituals like kohombakanakariya and suvisi vivarana.

Drumming and dancing usually occurred within the caste idiom as evident from the following characterization by H.L. Seneviratne.

The very act of dancing in front of someone in certain contexts, of which the Perahera is one, places the dancers in a low position and the recipient of dance in a high position. This inequality is enhanced by the dancers worshipping the radala authorities every now and then in the moving Perahera, throughout its entire course. Further, during most of this course, the dancers also perform the remarkable feat of walking backwards from time to time, as much as they could while doing their dance too, another sign of honour accorded to a high status person to whom one does not turn one's back. (1978: 151).

Usually drumming and dancing are closely inter-coordinated but two distinct acts performed by different sets of performers dressed differently. Stylized bodily movements of the dancers are rhythmically controlled by beating of the drums. The rhythmic harmony of the act is essential to the performance. On certain ritual occasions, for example in Buddhist temples, the drums are beaten without the accompaniment of dance. On the other hand, dance cannot be performed without the beating of the drums. The commonly used caste name, Berawa signifies that the essential caste service is that of drumming. There are drums of varying shapes and sizes beaten differently on different occasions. The major variations are described by Hocart (1931). Two other musical instruments that commonly used in Kandyan dance are trumpet (horanawa) and jingles. The elaborate ritual dress of a dancer includes the ornamental headdress (*ves tattuwā*)⁶ treated as a sacred object (See Annex 10). The drums, musical instruments, dance costume and *ves tattuwā* are valued personal belongings of the performers concerned. They are typically passed down from generation to generation.

The chief dance lineages (*parampara*) in Kandy belong to some 4 predominantly Nakati villages around the city of Kandy having customary linkages with the temple of Kandy. Often they held land under the service tenure system (*rajakariya*) on the condition that they performed their service duties to the temple, whether in daily rituals (*thevava*) in the Temple of the Tooth, periodic rituals as in Poya days or in the annual Perahera in Kandy.

⁶. This is a silver headdress with a stupa shaped top decked with shimmering bo leaves representing the association of the dance form with Buddhism and Buddhist rituals.

Apart from services in the Temple of the Tooth, the drummers and dancers also performed in various rituals in village temples, deity shrines and in household rituals such as alms giving (dane) ceremonies, weddings and funerals typically in higher caste homes. Traditionally the drummers and dancers were heavily involved in household level healing rituals such as bali ceremonies that involved propitiation of planetary deities, kohomba kankariya, a community ritual that sought to improve the health and wellbeing of the community and suvisi vivarana, a Buddhist festival held in village temples commemorating the feats of lord Buddha in his prior lives and long and hard samsaric preparation for Buddhahood.

The Kandyan dance profession underwent various changes over the years due to increased popularity of overseas dance tours, performances for tourists, politicization of dance performances, introduction of Kandyan dance in school curriculum, establishment of Hevisi Band in the army and introduction of drumming and dancing as a performing art on stage and in TV shows. These changes made a big impact on training of drummers and dancers, career paths in Kandyan dance, professionalization and social status of drummers and dancers in general. While persons from Nakati caste background held a monopoly over ritual performances of Kandyan dance in Perehera, Kanakariya and Bali rituals, they lost their tight grip over the dance profession with the development of dance education in schools and universities and emergence of Kandyan dance as a performing art managed from urban centres. Entry of females into dance profession illustrated by the rise of female Kandyan dance scholars/ instructors such as Viadyawati Rajapaksa from Amunugama lineage (paramparawa) has also been an important new development in Kandyan dance (Reed 2010). Side by side with these developments, however, the role of dance lineages in continuation of Kandyan dance has gradually declined and in their places dance schools headed by leading performing artists in the country have emerged mostly in the capital city and in Kandy.

In order to explore how these changes impacted on the traditional scene of Kandyan dance we did rapid ethnographic research in the village of Wal Dambala situated in close proximity to Kandy town.

Wel Dambala

Waldambala is located within what used to be the heartland of Kandyan feudalism. It lies at the bottom of a fairly insulated valley situated some ten miles South East of the historic Kandy town, which as the capital city of the pre-British Kandyan Kingdom, served as the hub of political and social relations in the area. Prior to 1815, Waldambala and some of its neighboring villages in the valley constituted a royal village (*gabadagama*), which produced an agricultural surplus and provided certain services

needed by the royal family in Kandy under the service tenure system. Following the takeover of the Kandyan Kingdom by the British in 1815, the service tenure (*rajakariya*) was abolished in 1932 and, thereafter, Waldambala ceased to be a service village with service obligations to a specified feudal authority. The changes brought about by the colonial rule, however, led to the reorganization of the social structure of the village along semi-feudal lines rather than a complete dissolution of the feudal system. Land ownership in the village, for instance, remained in the hands of a few 'high caste' families, who had aristocratic pretensions vis-à-vis largely service caste population in the village (for details, see Silva 1982, 1986, 1992).

The feudal background of Waldambala is evident from its caste composition (see Table 6). In contrast to many of the so-called 'free villages' where Goigama caste constitutes a majority of the population, the numerical predominance of one or more 'low caste' groups seems to have been a distinctive feature of service villages. Feudal overlords required the services of specific 'low caste' groups in order to sustain their ritual superiority and privileged position in the society. As the service castes held a specific caste service assigned to them, they comprised a bulk of the population in service villages expected to serve higher caste overlords who were typically resident in political, administrative and ritual centres like the Kandy city.

Table 6:

Caste Composition of Waldambala, 2012

Caste Name & Service	Relation to rice farming	No of households	%	Population	%
Patti (officials)	Landlord/owner farmer	10	4.7	57	4.6
Nawandanna (smiths)	Owner-farmer	3	1.4	25	2.0
Hena (washermen)	Owner-farmer	14	6.5	86	7.0
Berawa (drummers)	Tenant	182	84.6	1024	83.5
Other		6	2.8	35	2.8
Total		215	100.0	1.227	100.0

Source: Adapted from Silva (1982).

The three 'lower caste' groups in the village of Waldambala belong to the category of service castes, implying that they were at the service of higher caste overlords. This, however, did not mean that the caste distinctions within the village were irrelevant. The Patti, reckoned as a relatively low status sub-caste of Goigama (see Table 6), are normally considered as herdsmen by hereditary caste occupation. In Waldambala, however, there is no evidence that they practiced cattle keeping as such in any historical era. Instead, it is evident that in this former royal village, the administrative elite came from the Patti caste, with its members serving as agents of higher authorities from outside controlling the service village. The Nawandanna and Hena, comprising less than 10% of the village population, occupied intermediate positions in the local caste hierarchy as reflected in their positions in the rice cultivation as well as the primary service obligations to those above them in the caste hierarchy.

The 'lowest caste' in the village, Berawa (also called Nakati) was also the numerically largest, indicating that mobilization of the important services of this caste group for various functions in Kandy, the ritual and political centre just outside the valley, was the primary historical function of this service village⁷. Their hereditary role in the paddy

⁷. In a majority of villages, Goigama or one of the intermediate low-country caste groups were in an overwhelming majority. The predominance of one or another service caste in Sinhala caste system was seen as a distinctive feature of 'service villages' serving one or another feudal master (See Pieris 1956, Seneviratne 1979).

cultivation as tenant farmers, a feature that was continuing at the time of ethnographic research with some minor changes in the land ownership in recent years, indicates that the caste system in the village is not merely a symbolic phenomenon, but also buttressed by a variety of economic and political structures evolved since the feudal era. As of 1979, the village also had four households set up by immigrants from the low country, with relatively ambiguous caste status.

The village was divided into several named hamlets; each hamlet was identified with a cluster of households belonging to a particular caste group in the village. The Patti households, which were typically located in spacious home gardens situated in central places of the village, had distinctive names with status implications. The paddy fields in the village were divided into several *yaya* (tracks), each named after a nearby hamlet or a specific caste group in some instances. For instance, one *yaya* was called “kammale vala kumbura” (literally ‘low-lying paddy field that belongs to blacksmith’s house’). The caste-specific place names in the village were also sometimes replicated in the names of individuals in the villages.

The three ‘lower castes’ in this village were expected to be at the service of higher castes in and outside this village. The names of individuals (both family and personal names) conveyed the relative status and service attached to the respective caste group. For instance, the commonest drummer caste family name in the village was “Berakara Gedera” (Lit. “of the drummer’s house”), while the Patti names indicated descent from illustrious ancestors (e.g. Rajapakasa Vasala Mudianselage) (For details see Silva 2006). In addition to the respective caste occupations, all the caste groups in Waldambala were engaged in paddy cultivation either as owner cultivators or tenants. In the case of drummer caste, throughout their known history, many of them had served as share-cropping tenants for Patti or Rate Atto (local term for Goigama proper) landlords who owned as their ancestral landholdings much of the paddy land in the valley. The tenants were considered as more or less bonded servants of the landlord families with a range of menial services assigned to them, particularly in domestic rituals such as weddings and funerals. Throughout the British period and in the early years after

independence, Patti and Rate Atto families in the local area held high positions in administration (e.g. headman, Korale, registrar), with the result that a small 'upper caste' elite mediated between the ordinary peasants, including 'low caste' service providers, and the state. There was a range of deference and demeanor applicable to 'low caste persons' in their social interaction with the 'high caste' people. For examples, forms of address, dress code, seating arrangements, commensality, and household duties all indicated the superiority of the 'higher caste' people vis-à-vis service caste individuals. Those of Patti caste were the first to receive good education in Kandy schools from 1920s onwards, facilitating their transfer from hereditary positions to coveted positions in the state bureaucracy, resulting in an unusual convergence of high caste privileges and bureaucratic power, a phenomenon well known in Sri Lanka and other countries in South Asia.

None of the caste groups in Waldambala was seen as unfit for social or physical contact by any of the 'higher castes' in and outside the village. Some members of the local landlord families were the first to reap benefits from educational and employment avenues first opened up with the processes of social change. There were, however, many factors that militated against the social mobility of the service caste groups. Being small holders or tenants, they had limited access to land. The Patti caste landlords kept their landholdings intact even when they became absentee landlords as they moved out of the village to accept bureaucratic employment. The education of children from service castes was limited to the village school, staffed mostly by 'high caste' teachers who often showed a prejudice against education of 'low caste' children. The parents of 'low caste' children could not change the names of their children indicative of low status as they wished due to the restraint exercised by 'upper caste' officials, including village headmen. Even though the old gabadagama based on caste principles had been dissolved, caste continued to determine the social life and economic activities in the village until 1960s and beyond.

Two developments that began in the 1950s helped in weakening the power of 'high caste' landlord families in the area to a considerable extent. One is gradual penetration of electoral politics into the area, particularly with effect from 1956 when there was a

significant transition of power at the national level. The drummer caste leadership in the village managed to gain some power and influence independent of the local landlords through supporting the local candidate of the Peoples United Front (Mahajana Eksath Peramuna) that eventually won the 1956 election on a platform of serving the underprivileged in the society.⁸ Second, commercial farming of vegetables that spreads in the area mostly benefited the 'low caste' cultivators of the soil, including the share tenants. These two parallel developments enabled some of the dynamic groups in service castes to break away from restrictions placed upon them by the caste system and to secure state patronage for enhancing their position in the society. Under the Paddy Lands Act of 1958 that was introduced by the new government, some of the drummer caste tenants working for absentee landlords were able to establish their tenancy rights and pay a regulated rent. Besides this, a few 'low caste' commercial farmers were able to purchase land from 'high caste' landlords (mostly absentee landlords) leading to a gradual expansion of their assets and profits. A layer of educated 'low caste' people gradually emerged in the village and they opposed to the 'high caste' landlords and increasingly resented any manifestation of status hierarchy and inherent superiority on the part of 'high castes'. While caste disparities in the village still continue to exist in some ways, it is no longer possible for the upper castes to treat the 'low castes' in an explicitly derogatory manner. While there are many political divisions and rivalries among the 'low castes' themselves, they are easily united against any 'upper caste' interests that seek to reinforce their privileges and prerogatives.

Caste occupations of the Nakati in Wel Dambala took several forms. On the economic front, Nakatis have been tenant farmers for Patti and Goigama landlords for generations. Astrological service was provided by two leading Nakati astrologers in the village, the caste name Nakati actually referring to good planetary constellations. Several gurunnase's in the village were traditionally involved in various healing rituals like bali and yakum. Although some of the senior drummers and dancers in the village

⁸. For this reason this important political change at the national level is referred to as '1956 revolution'. It marked the transition of power from westernized and often higher status elite to the representatives of the masses, including some representatives of underprivileged caste groups. For details, see Roberts 1981, Silva 1982.

had participated in kohombakankariya and suvisi vivarana in the past, they had not participated in these rituals since 1960 or so. Finally, drumming and dancing in religious rituals, domestic functions and political meetings and celebrations have been a main function of drummer caste artists in Wel Dambala throughout its known history.

Kandyan Dance

The ancestors of two leading Nakati families in the village held prestigious office as daily drummer (*panikkaya*) in the Temple of the Tooth for several generations. Vast numbers of drummers and dancers from Wel Dambala participated in the Kandy Asala Perahera for several generations under the broad category Uduwela Dance Lineage (Uduwela paramparawa). While their involvement in traditional Bali, Kohombakankariya and Suvisi Vivarana celebrations declined over the years, the broader interest in Kandyan dance as a heritage (*urumaya*) of the caste continued due to the interest taken by some Drummer caste community leaders in Wel Dambala. B.G. Jothipala was one such pioneer leader in the village who transformed not only the role of Kandyan dance but the overall status of the drummer caste in Wel Dambala.

B.G. Jothipala (1906 to 1984) initially earned a reputation as a bali healing specialist (*balitianna*) and an astrologer. At the tender age of 8 had lost both his parents. He learnt Kandyan dance from his uncle. Apart from astrological work and conducting bali ceremonies, he also took part in Kandyan dance from time to time. In his astrological services he became famous for making problem diagnosis based on betel presentation by a visiting client (*nimiti sastraya*). He was the first Nakati person to be elected to the Village Council in 1934. With this his identity reportedly changed from a Balitianna to Mambara (lit. member of Village Council). Later he became a Justice of Peace, irrigation headman for the area and undisputed leader of the Nakati caste in the village. In 1956 he supported the newly established Mahajana Eksath Peramuna under the leadership of S.W.R. D. Bandaranaike. He established a Kalayathanaya in the village in 1948 for training of young dancers. This in turn created a new interest in the younger generation for learning Kandyan dance considered as their traditional heritage. In keeping with the Sinhala Buddhist nationalist resurgence in Sri Lanka since 1956 and identification of Sinhala language, Buddhism, Ayurveda and Kandyan dance as essential elements of

Sinhala Buddhist culture, “a tangible sign of a revitalized national culture” (Reed 2010: 136) and the increased state patronage for revitalization of Kandyan dance, Jotipala was instrumental in reviving Kandyan dance in the village.

Following 1956 for some energetic drummer caste persons Kandyan dance became an avenue of upward social mobility. With some educational qualifications and qualifications in Kandyan dance obtained from newly established dance schools in Kandy, some youth were able to become dance teachers in schools. Introduction of Kandyan dance in the school curriculum also created a new demand for teachers in the subject. Others managed to join the Hevisi band in the army. Still others became much sought after dance performers in tourists shows in Kandy. One person from Waldambala joined an overseas dance tour to England, remained there for the next 20 years, joined an international circus team where he became a leading performer (under the name Pinah the Red Cloud), later returned to Sri Lanka, set up his own circus troop and earned much money from their tours all over the country. In describing how he became a circus performer, he said as a range of acrobatic acts (*pinum, karanam, adav*) was part of Kandyan dance which he learned from his childhood, it was easy for him to make the transition. His meteoric rise, however, was short-lived as he later became bankrupt due to his large network of kinsmen who joined his circus team playing out money, his own tendency for conspicuous consumption and bad investments on his part.

Deepa Patmini, a 33 year old female graduate teacher in Weldambala illustrates the importance of Kandyan dance for social mobility in the village. She comes from a dance family in the village and as a young child she first learned Kandyan dance from her father. She successfully passed several dance examinations conducted by Gandharava Saba. She later did a BA honours degree in Sociology in University of Peradeniya and joined the teaching profession. Even though she joined the teaching profession through her educational qualifications in other arts subjects, she voluntarily took up the post of dance teacher in the school due to her interest in the subject. Her school won several dance awards under her leadership. In addition she conducted dance regular classes for young children in the village, showing her dedication to this art form.

With renewed interest in Kandyan dance as a performing art and as a means of entering teaching profession, there was a tendency to reject the performance of Kandyan dance within the caste idiom as in rituals. As a result educationally qualified dancers typically refused to take part in Kandy Perahera, bali rituals or routine ritual functions in temples and shrines. Any ritual performances or routine demeanour (for instance, asking drummers taking part in a funeral or dane ceremony to sit on a mat when they are not performing) to be enacted in public within the caste idiom were typically identified as demeaning (*baldu weda*) and young generation in drummer caste in particular tended to avoid them. Drumming and dancing were increasingly understood as a short-term economic transaction rather than a hereditary responsibility of one caste towards members of another caste. This, in turn, created problems for sustaining Kandy Perahera where trade union like mobilization was beginning to take place among drummers and dancers (Seneviratne 1978).

It is however wrong to see these changes as occurring uniform across the board. Having no other options, poorer drummers and dancers opted to perform within the caste idiom whether it is in Perahera, temple functions or in other rituals. The gradual disappearance of traditional rituals such as bali ceremonies and decreased opportunities for drumming and dancing had the effect of compelling those who depended on these ceremonies of their livelihoods to turn to wage labour. Also increased cost of traditional dance costumes, ves headdress, drums and other instruments further contributed to the proletarianization of drummers and dancers. Opportunities for teaching positions in Kandyan dance declined gradually due to filling of existing vacancies and increased number of potential applicants. Even among performing artists among drummers and dancers, there was a feeling that outside middlemen with no background in Kandyan dance took away a greater part of the legitimate income of drummers and dancers. Also some dancers in Wel Dambala articulated the view that the urban artists from outside the caste have appropriated the more lucrative avenues available for Kandyan dance such as overseas dance tours, marginalizing the traditional practitioners in the process. This confirms Susan Reed's finding of "elite appropriation of Kandyan dance in recent years". On the whole under

the changing landscape of Kandyan dance there were winners and losers as was indeed the case in market- driven social change and economic development in general.

Chapter Five

The Policy Framework and Services for Preservation and Promotion of Kandyan Arts and Crafts in Sri Lanka

Preservation and promotion of arts and culture is a primary goal of the Ministry of Culture and the Arts in Sri Lanka. This, in turn, applies to preservation and promotion of Kandyan arts and crafts. In the case of particular Kandyan arts and crafts examined in this study, we discovered that so far this policy has been only partially successful. While Kandyan dance, Dumbara mat weaving arts and some cane crafts have demonstrated considerable resilience over the years and have adapted themselves to changing social, cultural and economic circumstances (for instance, successful adaptation of Kandyan dance as a performing art), there are also some serious challenges in continuing these art forms and crafts. This chapter reviews these challenges and policy and programme responses to these challenges on the part of the relevant government agencies, civil society organizations and private sector agencies.

As regards preservation of Kandyan arts and crafts there are a number of unresolved issues and challenges.

First, open economic policies tend to have multiple and often contradictory impacts of traditional Kandyan arts and crafts. For instance, while tourism has opened up new opportunities for Kandyan dance shows and sale of Dumbara artistic products, the liberal import of utility mats from India tend to undermine the production of utility mats as part of the Dumbara mat weaving tradition.

Second, this study points to some significant failures in preservation of traditional arts and crafts in Kandyan society. The reported loss of Dumbara motifs and their reduction from about 150 designs in the distant past to about 5 as at present is a case in point. Similarly the gradual disappearance of traditional rituals like Kohombakankariya, bai and suvisi may be seen as failures in preservation of culture from the angle of Kandyan dance. Some of the crafts practiced by the Rodiya caste too have more or less

disappeared such as the art of making combs from horns, cane craft manufacturing traditional food processing tools and the art of making certain type of drums. While some of these changes may be seen as necessary adaptations to changing circumstances, this highlight the need to identify and preserve remaining cultural heritage before they are destroyed by natural course of developments.

Third, this study also points to the fact that preservation and promotion of traditional Kandyan arts and crafts partly depends on the preservation of the physical environment in that the raw material for some of these arts and crafts must be collected from their natural habitats. For instance the growing disappearance of Niyanda and gallahi plants has caused a serious problem for continuation of Dumbara mat weaving industry. Similarly cane industry finds it increasingly difficult to collect cane from the wild as they used to do in the past. This, in turn, suggests that preservation of traditional arts and crafts must go hand in hand with the preservation of related ecosystems.

Fourth, what relevance caste has for preservation of traditional Kandyan arts and crafts must be explicitly addressed. Given the fact that many of the traditional Kandyan arts and crafts are specific caste occupations, their preservation may also result in simultaneous preservation of the traditional caste system, which is not a policy of the state. On the whole, the lower social status of the bearers of these traditional arts and crafts must be seen as a barrier for the successful preservation and promotion of them. The empowerment and networking of these social groups in ways that enable them to feel proud about and preserve their cultural heritage and family traditions in arts and crafts and thereby overcoming the limitations imposed by the caste system may be seen as a prerequisite for making sure that the preservation of traditional arts and crafts goes hand in hand with their improved social status, increased bargaining power and inclusive citizenship.

Public Sector Programmes for Preservation and Promotion of Kandyan Arts and Crafts

The public sector programmes for preservation of Kandyan arts and crafts are in diverse domains including cultural preservation, education, industries, trade, human settlement

and livelihood development. We review below some selected public sector initiatives directly relevant to preservation and promotion of Kandyan arts and crafts.

Human Settlement Initiatives

“Art villages” such as Kalapura in Harispattuwa and Kalasirigama in Patadumbara were established with a view to providing land title to the residents of these villages, help improve their housing and village infrastructure, enable the various artists and craftsmen to work together in addressing their common problems, facilitate processing and sharing of raw material among craftsmen, establish facilities needed for carrying out their arts and crafts, improve their self-esteem and change the public image about these craftsmen. With a view to promoting their social status, the traditional low-dignity names associated with these villages were changed so as to highlight their inherent value as artists and bearers of cultural heritage.

One of the four villages studied by us indeed was Kalasirigama, which is an art village established under the politically motivated Gamudawa Scheme. In an earlier assessment of the Kalapura village, Peiris (1971), argued that establishing these villages political motives often overshadowed the rational economic logic in that some of the artists settled in that village did not have much in common in that they practiced vastly different trades such as jewellery making and mat weaving. Kalasirigama, however, was organized around one craft, namely artistic mat weaving, with some degree of specialization within the community between processing of hemp fibre and using that fibre as a raw material for making mats and other by products like ladies hand bags and purses. None of the craftsmen, however, saw Dumbara mat weaving as a full time occupation giving them a decent income. Due to the poor income from the industry, the residents adopted other livelihoods totally unrelated to the craft such as casual wage labour with women and some elderly men working on the craft usually on a part time basis. There was no evidence that the art village actually served to enhance the status or self-esteem among the craftsmen as anticipated by the architects of the village. While Kalasirigama contributed to the preservation of the particular craft, this being the only village in the entire Kandy district where Dumbara mat weaving was practiced to any extent, it had not served to promoting of the craft in any sense with the

exception of using Dumbara mats for turning out trendy byproducts like ladies handbags and purses.

Kalayathanaya

Traditionally Kandyan dance training was given by a master drummer or dancer usually to his own son, his sister's son or any interested young people from one's own community. The Kalayathana system which apparently came into being in the 1940s involved village level formalization of dance training by a team of senior artists to a larger group of young boys according to a more systematic training schedule. The selected registered Kalayathanayas received a grant from the Department of Cultural Affairs for making a modest honorarium payment to the instructors particularly after the political change in 1956. In the Nakati villages Kalayathanayas came to be understood as an institution that ensured their position as bearers of a valuable strand of Sinhala Buddhist culture. For registration and funding purposes, the government identified three different grades of Kalayathanayas with a graded system of funding. Thus kalayathanayas facilitated the training in and, thereby, the preservation of Kandyan dance at the village level with some modest government support. Particularly after 1956, they became strongholds of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism in Nakati villages who were otherwise a marginal caste group, somewhat isolated from mainstream Sinhala society. They were also a step towards professionalization of Kandyan dance training, a corresponding development of a uniform scheme of training and represented the intervention and the control of the state in dance training. On the other hand, the state patronage for dance training waxed and waned according to who was in political power, making them highly vulnerable for political shifts and leadership changes in the country.

Cultural Centres

Cultural Centres are established under the Ministry of Culture with effect from 2005. In the Kandy District there are 13 such centres distributed in throughout the district. They are a government institution committed to promotion of culture in the respective areas. They have under their control dance troupes, musicians, instruments needed for dance performances and music recitals particularly for government functions, new year

celebrations and other cultural activities in their respective areas. These cultural centres are often located in the vicinity of well-established Kandyan dance villages so that it is easy to draw artists when needed. While their activities are by no means limited to the performance of Kandyan dance, having to organize various cultural activities at the local level including Pirith ceremonies, pageantries for welcoming visiting dignitaries and promotion of popular culture including western dance, they are a yet another government establishment for preservation and promotion of traditional culture, including Kandyan dance.

Education

The government administered extensive system of education in Sri Lanka has served as an important site for preservation and promotion of Kandyan dance, other art forms and some traditional crafts. Dance education was introduced in selected government schools as far back as 1950, but it was extended to the entire government school system from 1959-60. Some educational administrators who typically came from Radala aristocratic background were instrumental in introducing Kandyan and other dance forms in the school system, identifying it as an important subject that will cultivate the interests of students in local culture and local art forms. A university level program of aesthetic education was started as part of University of Kelaniya in 1974. A programme of pre-vocational education, inclusive of Kandyan crafts such as pottery, mat weaving, handicrafts and wood work was started in selected schools in 1970. Unlike Kandyan dance which was well integrated with the school curriculum, the pre-vocational education, however, was abandoned after some time due to opposition from the parents, rejection of pre-vocational subjects by students and lack of technical equipment needed for many of these subjects. This pointed to the fact that while Kandyan dance as well as other forms of dance were easily integrated with the academically oriented school curriculum, efforts at creating a practical education built around Kandyan and other crafts typically identified as vocations of specific depressed caste groups eventually failed to make a successful entry into the school curriculum.

National Crafts Council (Jathika Shialpa Sabhava)

Established in 1982, this institution is currently under the Ministry of Traditional Industries and Small Enterprise Development. Preservation and promotion of handicrafts and uplifting the status of craftsmen are the key objectives of this organization. Its activities include upgrading of the skills of craftsmen, organization of craftsmen through Craft Societies, establishment of craftsmen's villages, organization of craft exhibitions in Sri Lanka and abroad, production, import and distribution of raw materials among craftsmen, establishment of sales outlets for craft products, awarding of prizes, certifications and honours to craftsmen and organizing foreign study tours for selected craftsmen. Kalabhushana awards ceremony organized by the Presidential Secretariat is another scheme for recognizing the work of artists and master craftsmen. These efforts have had some impact on the preservation and promotion of arts and crafts at the national level. Nevertheless based on the findings of the current study, these measures do not seem to have led to a notable improvement of the income, living standards and the social status of practitioners of traditional arts and crafts located at the bottom of the Sinhala caste hierarchy.

Laksala

Laksala is a state owned arts and craft outlet established under the National Crafts Council and Allied Institutions Act, No. 35 of 1982. Its objective was to assist the traditional craftsmen to sell their produce to urban consumers and tourists at reasonable prices so that both parties benefit from this marketing chain. As of 2013, Laksala operated through **13** branches located island wide and marketed a wide variety of Sri Lankan craft products ranging from masks to wall hangings and Sri Lankan tea to spices. Since its inception the registered craftsmen directly supplied their produce to this government outlet and this provided a new lease of life to some of the Kandyan arts and crafts with an unstable and unsteady market at the time. They continue to receive a better price for their produce from Laksala compared to private sector outlets who often purchased their supplies through middle men. As we already discovered Laksala has not solved all the marketing problems of traditional practitioners of arts and crafts in the study villages. This is due to a combination of factors including their lack of access to

this outlet, long delays in issuing of payment following the supply of their products, poor quality of some of the produce from poorly trained craftsmen making it unable for them to meet Laksala procurement standards and Laksala not undertaking to sell some of their products such as coconut milk sieves and winnowing pans made of cane.

On the whole the government sector is heavily involved in the preservation and promotion of arts and crafts. Even though this has enabled Kandyan arts and crafts to meet some of their challenges, this has by no means overcome all their problems.

Non-Government Sector Programmes

Partly because the government sector has heavily colonized traditional arts and crafts, they have received limited attention from the non-government sector. One good example is Gandharava Sabha, a non-government organization which initially conducted dance examinations at various levels from the 1930s. These examinations were taken over by the Ministry of Examinations in the 1960s since recruitment to teaching positions were based on the results of these examinations. There are, however, some organizations like the Upcountry Art Association that seeks to mobilize traditional artists as a lobby for influencing policy and public sector programmes. Some national level NGOs such as the Sarvodaya movement have their own programmes for promoting traditional arts and crafts among interested parties like out of school youth.

The Role of the Private Sector

The private sector is involved in running some fee levying private dance schools and organizing tourist shows in tourist hotels or in other venues drawing their artists from dance villages and dance schools. The high end arts and craft market is also largely controlled by private shops which obtain their supplies directly from art villages, private artists or from middlemen. It is difficult to determine the relative significance of the public and private sectors in the arts and crafts market in and around Kandy, but it appears that neither sector is well connected with surrounding villages engaged in traditional arts and crafts. Even though there is considerable capital formation in long distance trade and long distance junk collection in the two Rodiya villages studied, there is a surprising lack of local entrepreneurship within the villages studied when it comes to the arts and

crafts market. This partly explains the poor quality of the products and limited indigenous development of technology, innovations and the like. Only the artists who have had an exposure to the outside world such as Pinnah the Red Cloud have introduced some significant innovations such as combining Kandyan dance with western acrobatics.

Chapter Six

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

This study discovered the close connection between caste and certain arts and crafts in Kandyan society. On the whole makers of drums, cane workers, artistic mat weavers and Kandyan dancers in Kandy and surrounding villages largely if not exclusively come from Rodiya, Kinnara and drummer castes in the local villages. It is important to point out that they belong to the bottom level of the Kandyan Sinhala caste hierarchy. Even though some of these art forms, Kandyan dance in particular, have now been identified as a distinctive marker of Sinhala Buddhist national identity and it has influenced the wide expansion of public sector services targeting these art forms also opening up avenues for public sector employment such as dance teachers, these developments have only marginally improved their social status in recent years. This is at the crux of why selected Kandyan arts and crafts have made limited headway in spite of heavy public sector involvement, which, in turn, has been informed by nationalist ideologies as well as the practical interest in preservation and promotion of these arts and crafts.

There are some important opportunities for preservation and promotion of these Kandyan arts and crafts as well as some big challenges for realizing these opportunities.

Let us first consider the opportunities.

First, as evident in the previous chapter, the public sector has initiated a multi-pronged strategy for preservation and promotion of these arts and crafts, covering training, marketing, award of honours, school education and support for performing arts. While politicization of public sector services may be an important bottleneck, the public sector has opened up new employment opportunities for those who are educationally qualified

besides being qualified in Kandyan dance or other art form. The public sector is favorably disposed towards the bearers of traditional arts and crafts in spite of their caste background.

Second, tourism which is likely to become a booming industry in Kandy and Nuwara Eliya towns in particular can be an important catalyst for development of traditional arts and crafts. So far this made some impact on Kandyan dance but only marginal impact on other arts and crafts. Even in Kandyan dance, the artists themselves are not the primary beneficiaries of tourist dance shows. More work has to be done in order to make the connection between the traditional arts and crafts evolved within a limited market and the tourist industry with its own interests, dynamism and requirements.

Third, even though educated youth continue to remain by and large alienated from these arts and crafts partly due to status considerations and in part due to currently poor levels of remuneration, there is a critical mass of artists and craftsmen highly committed to the preservation and development of these art forms and crafts in each village. This means with appropriate interventions these artists and craftsmen are likely to get excited about their work and take it beyond the limited parameters within which they have developed up to now.

The study also found some serious challenges for development of the Kandyan arts and crafts under the current circumstances.

First, the low dignity associated with the traditional arts and crafts due to their low caste origin continues to be a major obstacle to attract young people for these art forms and crafts. The gradual disappearance of rituals such as bali and suvisi, the decline Dumbara mat weaving and the disappearance of spinning of drums among Rodiya women are some of the manifestations of the refusal to carry out this ritual and secular tasks within a caste idiom. On the other hand, due to a combination of factors, Kandyan dance remains popular as a performing art particularly for tourists, manufacture of trendy lady's handbags and purses within the Dumbara mat weaving tradition is pursued with considerable interest and the art of drum making remains important in Kuragandeniya. This indicates that there may be prospects for overcoming the dignity

issue by appropriate changes in the delivery of traditional arts and crafts and by improving the income from these engagements.

Second, the growing scarcity of raw materials used for arts and crafts such as nihada plant and cane remains a serious problem of preservation and promotion of dumbara mat weaving and canecraft respectively. In order to sustain these industries it will be necessary to find suitable alternatives or establish plantations of the relevant plants in suitable locations.

Third, marketing problems remain a major obstacle for development or even sustaining these industries. This is particularly true of the products of Dumbara mat weaving and cane products made by traditional craftsmen. As already noted, the competition from mass produced cheaper substitutes, the poor quality of some of the local products and lack of alternative markets are among the factors that contribute to the marketing problems encountered by the relevant artists and craftsmen.

Fourth, their poor negotiating power vis-à-vis middleman has made it difficult for the traditional artists and craftsmen to derive maximum benefits from the market. Similarly their limited ability to influence government agencies and their policies and programmes in ways that limit their benefits from such policies and programmes. This, in turn, shows that it is necessary to create more active organizations among the traditional artists and craftsmen.

Fifth, the appropriation of traditional arts and crafts by middle class practitioners from outside these communities must also be seen as an important obstacle to the professional advancement and making headway particularly in more lucrative performing arts and overseas dance tours.

Recommendations

1. There is much potential for promotion of heritage and cultural tourism in and around Kandy town in ways that would enrich traditional Kandyan arts and crafts. Using promotion of Indian rural tourism in the state of Maharashtra as useful guide from within the South Asia region, heritage and cultural tourism includes temples,

archeological sites, museums and ancient centres of learning but this can be easily extended to include arts and crafts where tourists can observe and purchase the output from living arts and crafts (Gopal, Vama and Kopinathan n.d). This kind of tourism can serve to overcome the low profitability and lack of incentives for continuing Dumbara mat weaving tradition. As regards Kandyan dance, tourist shows can be organized in the attractive natural rural context in villages like Waldambala. Educated youth from the local area with some understanding of their cultural heritage may be trained and employed as tourist guides.

2. We recommend that there is better coordination among various government agencies involved in preservation and promotion of arts and crafts in vastly different sectors such as cultural affairs, rural industries, trade, development and education. They must be reorganized around common goals. As at present each of these different public sector programmes tend to work through separate rural institutions making it difficult for any of these organizations to sustain itself in the long run. For instance, while the National Craft Council has established craft societies among craftsmen, Ministry of Culture and Arts operates through local Cultural Centres making no effort at coordinating these different activities. It would be more desirable to establish one active rural institution in art villages through which all government programmes irrespective of the sector they represent must implement their activities. While this will prevent duplication work, it will also ensure that this will lead to better synergy of government programmes.
3. There is a need for further empowerment of traditional artists and craftsmen and promotion of participatory development where preservation and promotion of arts and crafts are concerned. The ongoing efforts are largely driven by bureaucrats from Colombo or Kandy with limited understanding of the ground realities in arts and craft villages. It is extremely important to consult the various stakeholders in all efforts at preservation and promotion of arts and crafts. In this study we found many dynamic community leaders (for instance Gunapala in Kuragadeniya,

Nishantha in Manawe and Deepa Padmini in Weldambala) who are capable of satisfactorily representing their communities in higher level public for a.

4. A framework must be developed for improving the quality of traditional arts and crafts through collective agreements on standards expected of the final products. The master artists and master trainers in each village can play an important role in improving the quality of arts and crafts in each village under the scrutiny of relevant public officials from outside.
5. International exposure must be given to suitably qualified practicing artists and craftsmen, preferably within the SAARC region. This may be arranged through the good offices and contacts of the SAARC Cultural Centre.
6. With inputs from relevant experts arrangements must be made to establish plantations of nihada, cane and gal in suitable locations easily accessible from the craft villages. The craftsmen and their family members must be trained to pick these plants without causing damage to their capacity for their growth and replacement.
7. The possibility of establishing cooperative organizations among different artists and craftsmen in a given village or given area must be explored so as to facilitate the supply of outside raw material where necessary and common marketing of their produce to government or private sector outlets.

References

Biyanwila, Rasanga Jayanath.

2011 Manawata Vasanthayak: Improving the living standards of inhabitants in the village of Manawa in Talliyadda Grama Niladhari Division. MSW thesis, Rajagiriya: National Institute of Social Development. 2011.

Coomasawamy, A.

1908 Medieval Sinhalese Art. New York: Pantheon

Douglas, M.

1991 Purity and danger: an analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo. London: Routledge.

Gombrich, Richard.

1971 Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Gopal, R., Varma, Shilpa and Gopinathan, Rashmi

n.d Rural tourism development: constraints and possibilities with a special reference to agri tourism: A case study on agri tourism destination Malegoan Village, Taluka Baramati, District Pune, Maharashtra. <<http://dspace.iimk.ac.in/bitstream/2259/596/1/> accessed on 21-11-2013

Knox, Robert.

1911 An Historical Relation of Ceylon. Glasgow: James Maclehose & Sons.

Makulloluwa, W.B.

1976 Dances of Sri Lanka. Colombo: Department of Cultural Affairs.

Nevill, Hugh

1887 The Gadi or Rodi caste in Ceylon. The Taprobanian 1:81-96, 108-121.

Peiris, G.H.

1971 Kalapura: the colony of craftsmen in Pata Dumbara. Modern Sri Lanka Studies 2 (1): 88-122

Pieris, Ralph

1956 Sinhalese social organization: the Kandyan period. Colombo: Ceylon University Press.

Raghavan, M.D.

1950 Cultural anthropology of Rodiyas. Colombo: National Museum of Ceylon. (Spolia Zeylanica 26 (1).

1957 Handsome beggars: the Rodiya of Ceylon. Colombo: National Museum.

Reed, Susan A.

- 2010 Dance and the Nation: Performance, Ritual and Politics in Sri Lanka. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- 2002 Performing respectability: the Berava, middle class nationalism, and the classicization of Kandyan Dance in Sri Lanka. *Cultural Anthropology* 17 (2): 246-277.

Obeyesekere, Gananath

- 1984 The cult of Goddess Pattini. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Sederaman J.E.

- 1968 Udarata Natum Kalava. Colombo: M.D. Gunasena.

Seneviratne, H.L

- 1978 Rituals of the Kandyan State. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Silva, K.T

- 1982 Caste, Class and Capitalist Transformation in Highland Sri Lanka. PhD diss., Monash University, 1982.

- 1992 Capitalist Development, Rural Politics and Peasant Agriculture in Highland Sri Lanka: Structural Change in a Low Caste Village. in James Brow and J. Weeramunda eds. *Agrarian Change in Sri Lanka*. New Delhi: Sage, pp.63-94.

- 2012 Globalization, marginality and cultural challenges of the Rodiya Communities in Sri Lanka. *SAARC Culture* 2 (2011): 106-126.

Silva, K.T., Sivapragasam, P.P. & Thanges, P.

- 2009 Casteless or caste-blind? Dynamics of concealed caste discrimination, social exclusion and protest in Sri Lanka. Colombo & Chennai: Kumaran Press.

Annex 1

Origin Tales of Rodiyas

According to Robert Knox (quoted in Raghavan 1958) the origin tale of Rodiyas is as follows:

“The Predecessors of these People, from whom they sprang, were Dodda, Vaddahs, which signifies Hunters: to whom it did belong to catch and bring Venison for the King’s Table. But instead of Venison they brought Man’s flesh, unknown; which the King Liking so Well, commanded to bring him more of the same sort of Venison. The King’s Barbar chanced to know what flesh it was and discovered it to him. At which the King was so enraged, that he accounted death too good for them; and to punish only those that had so offended, not a sufficient recompence for so great an Affront and Injury as he had sustained by them. Forthwith therefore he established a Decree, that all both great and small, that were of that Rank or Tribe, should be expelled from dwelling among the Inhabitants of the Land, and not to be admitted to use or enjoy the benefit of any means, or ways, or callings whatsoever, to provide themselves sustenance ; but that they should beg from Generation to Generation, from Door to Door, thro the Kingdom; and to be looked upon and esteemed by all People to be so base and odious, as not possibly to be more.

“And they are to this day so detestable to the People, that they are not permitted to fetch water out of their wells; but do take their water out of Holes or Rivers. Neither will any touch them, lest they should be defiled.

“Many times when the King cuts off Great and Noble Men, against whom he is highly incensed, he will deliver their Daughters and Wives unto this sort of People, reckoning it as they also account it, to be far worse Punishment than any kind of Death. This kind of Punishment being accounted such horrible Cruelty, the King doth usually of his Clemency shew them some kind of mercy, and pitying their Distress, Commands to carry them to a River side, and there to deliver them into the hands of those who are far worse than Executioners of Death: from whom, if these Ladies please to free themselves, they are permitted to leap into the River and be drowned ; the which some sometimes will choose to do, rather than to consort with them.

“The Barbar’s information having been the occasion of all this misery upon this People, they in revenge thereof adhor to eat what is dressed in the Barbar’s House to this day.”*

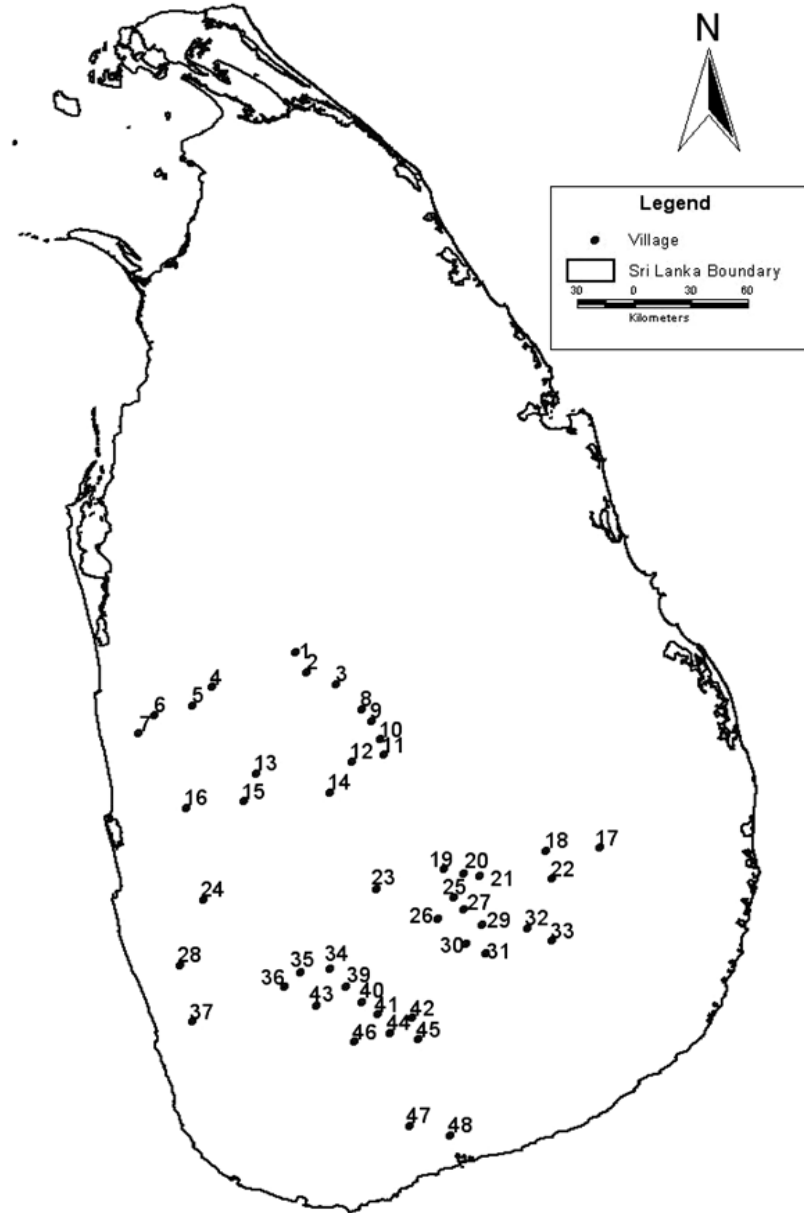
The tradition is in accord with the Rodiyas’ own account of their degradation, which is given by Hugh Nevill quoted in Denham 1912.

“At Parakrama Bahu’s court the venison was provided by a certain Vaedda archer, who, during a scarcity of game, substituted the flesh of a boy he met in the jungle, and provided it as venison for the Royal Household. Navaratna Valli, the beautiful daughter of the King, discovered the deception, and fascinated by a sudden longing for human flesh ordered the hunter to bring this flesh daily. The Vaedda accordingly waylaid youths in the woods, and disposed of their flesh to the royal kitchen. The whole country was terrified by the constant disappearance of youth and maidens. It happened that a barber who came to the Palace to complain of the disappearance of his only son while waiting was given, by the royal scullery, a leaf of rice and venison curry. Just as he was about to eat he noticed on his leaf the deformed knuckle of the little finger of a boy. Recognizing it by the deformity as that of his son, he fled from the palace and spread the alarm that the king was killing and eating the youths of the city. The facts then came to light, and the king, stripping of her ornaments, and calling up a scavenger then sweeping out a neighbouring yard, gave her him as wife, and out to earn her living in her husband’s class. The princess and the scavenger fled from the town, and as night came on asked for shelter from a Kinnara, but were angrily repulsed.”

Annex 2

Distribution of Rodi Villages in Sri Lanka 1911

- 1 Maeliya
- 2 Ganegoda
- 3 Kahatawela
- 4 Siyabalakadawara
- 5 Lokurugama
- 6 Panawella
- 7 Diganwela
- 8 Hiruwela
- 9 Kalalpitiya
- 10 Koskote
- 11 Ampitiya
- 12 Udugalpitiya
- 13 Hunuwela
- 14 Kuragala
- 15 Hambuluwa
- 16 Meegaspitiya
- 17 Galmulla
- 18 Kumarapattiya
- 19 Meepanawa
- 20 Maspannagama
- 21 Soranatota
- 22 Kandawinna
- 23 Watagoda
- 24 Kosgama
- 25 Pitadeniya
- 26 Katagoda
- 27 Divithotawela
- 28 Kalapitiya
- 29 Athgalapitiya
- 30 Matipibiyagama
- 31 Kabillawelagama
- 32 Udarawa
- 33 Udagama
- 34 Galboda
- 35 Malwala
- 36 Waraniyagoda
- 37 Talapitiya
- 38 Dippitigala
- 39 Wilhena
- 40 Moratota
- 41 Digadura
- 43 Wathupitiya



Source: Silva, Thangesh and Sivapragasam, (2009), Casteless or Caste Blind, page 48.



Annex 3: Multistory rich houses of occultists in Kuragandeniya

සමාජීය

නිවතුල වයි ගුරුකම්

අතිප්‍රබල වයි ගුරුකම්
 30 පිහිටි වරු තුනේ සිටි නොවරදින අන්තර් ප්‍රතිපල
 වන්දිකර්ම නිවසන්ගේ **වයි ගුරුකම්**
 072 3134300 / 077 8951260

මහා බලගතු රෝඩ් කුලයේ
 අතිප්‍රබල නිවතුල වයි ගුරුකම්
 081-5610432
 077-6960471

නිවතුල වයි ගුරුකම්
 077-3131655
 077-3131655

අක්ෂතයට නිමාවක්
 Trance Therapy / මිනිසා ප්‍රතිලෝම
 077-3131655

මහා බලගතු නිවතුල වයි ගුරුකම්
 0712 929262

කේතුවා
 072-8698572
 072-9004344

අතිප්‍රබල වයි ගුරුකම්
 072-9004344

වයි ගුරුකම්
 077-1234573 / 0717272133

නිවතුල වයි ගුරුකම්
 072-9066903
 072-9277139

අතිප්‍රබල නිවතුල වයි ගුරුකම්
 071-7 433 999 / 072-4 641 643

මානවකල්ලේදී අති ප්‍රබල කතෘ නිවතුල වයි ගුරුකම්
 0094-714221599

ශ්‍රී කාලිදේව කාමුදුරුවන්ගේ කතෘ ගුරුකම්
 0771234573 / 0717272133

අප්‍රසිද්ධ
 නිල තල
 අපට දර

අතිප්‍රබල නිවතුල වයි ගුරුකම්
 071-7 433 999 / 072-4 641 643

මානවකල්ලේදී අති ප්‍රබල කතෘ නිවතුල වයි ගුරුකම්
 0094-714221599

ශ්‍රී කාලිදේව කාමුදුරුවන්ගේ කතෘ ගුරුකම්
 0771234573 / 0717272133

Annex 5: Drum making in Kuragandeniya



Annex 6: Junk collection in Manawa



Annex 7: Long Distance Junk Collection

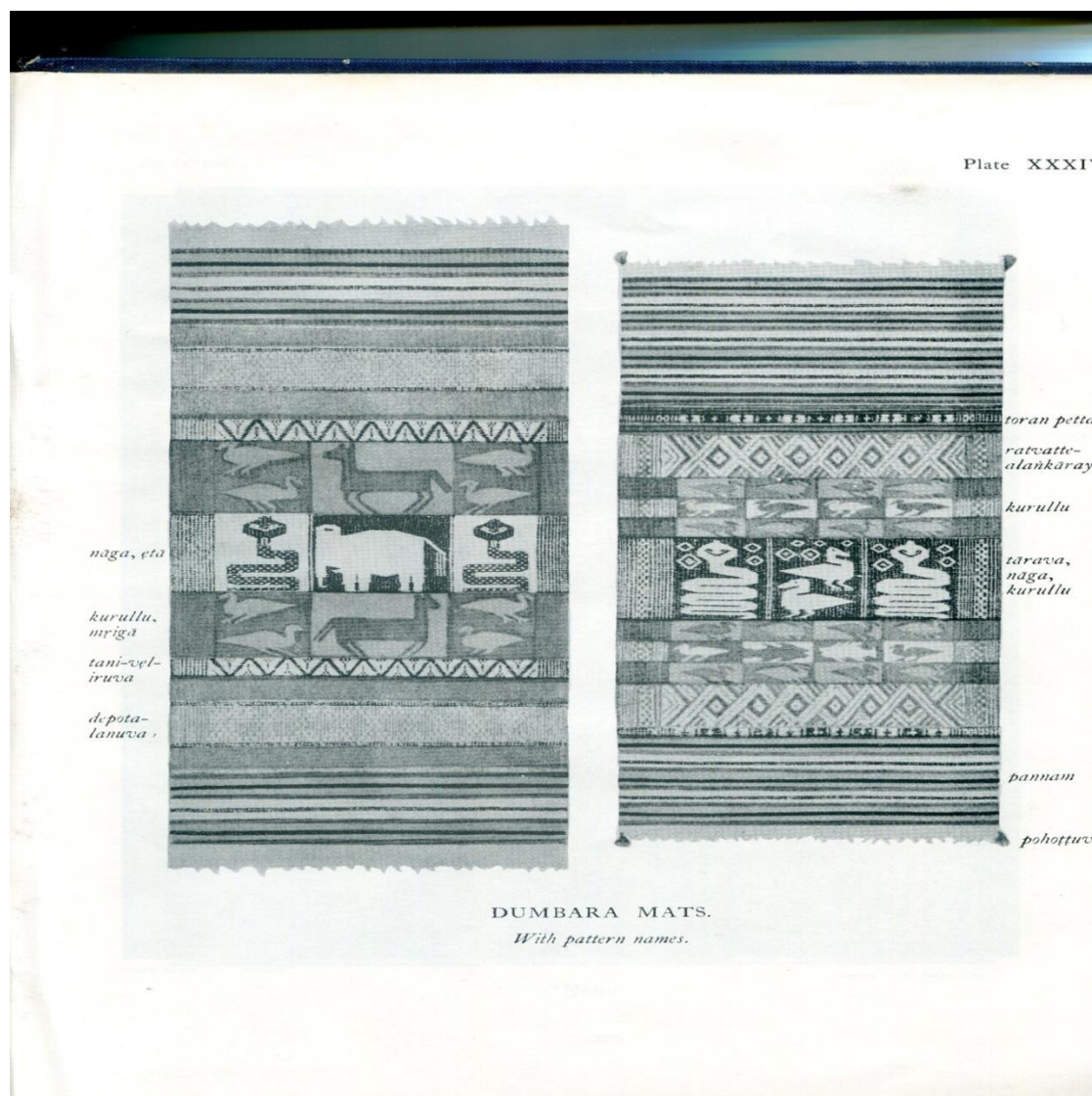


Annex 8: Cane work in Manawa



Annex 9: Traditional Designs Used by Dumbara Mat Weavers

(Source: Coomaraswamy 1908)



Annex 10: Kandyan dance performances



