

AN ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL STUDY OF DRUM MAKING IN SRI LANKA

M. ALAWATHUKOTUWA

Department of Fine Arts, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya

Music consists of two components: Vocal and Instrumental. Musical instruments employed in the traditional music of Sri Lanka are classified into five categories: "atata, vitata, vitatatata, Ghana, sushira". Drums fall into the categories of atata, vitata and vitatatata.

Drums are considered to be a symbol of fertility although playing of drums has been closely related to religious worship and rituals in many countries.

Drums are also played in various social contexts: tewawa, magul bera, ana bera, mala bera... etc. A variety of style is evident in all these contexts.

For the making and playing of drums different craftsmanship, customs and technologies are employed. Although in the past, the making of drums was exclusively done by the people of a specific cast named *RODI*, at present it is considered as a commercial industry rather than the responsibility of a specific cast.

The objective of this study is to analyze the process of making drums and related customs associated, astrological observances technical methods, musicological and cast based ethno musicological approach.

Literature surveys, participant observations and interviews were mainly utilized for this study. This research provides an explanation of the social hierarchy of the art itself and the people engaged in the art while it explains the same hierarchy using the materials employed in the making of drums. This study also reveals the scientific nature of the traditional knowledge.