

# NAME CHANGES, CASTE AND PERSONAL IDENTITY COMPLEX AMONG THE SINHALESE IN SRI LANKA<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

The use of names among the Sinhalese as markers of personal identity has a historic basis in caste. Today, names are still important among the Sinhalese as indicators of the caste of a person, although this no longer applies to all names and castes as much as it did in traditional times.<sup>2</sup> At present, traditional high-caste names are preferred, and names indicating “low-caste” status are disappearing. This situation would appear to indicate the diminishing significance of caste as a determinant of social status and the emergence of a class system where one’s name is seen as a status reflector rather than as a caste identifier. However, this paper argues that caste, as a structural entity among the Sinhalese, has not diminished in significance. Rather, it has assumed a new role in modern Sinhalese society vis-à-vis class. Today, names reflect the intersection of the residual effect of caste and the modern manifestations of class structure.

In the traditional period, an individual was considered a member of a group where caste provided the overarching boundary; personal status was subsumed within a group status, which was defined by kinship and caste. The need for any change in personal status, therefore, never arose. However, castes as status groups have been subject to change over a long period. For instance, rearrangements of the hierarchy of castes and of subdivisions within a single caste were reported during the British Period.<sup>3</sup> Although caste is viewed as a structural entity with an assumed hierarchy, occasionally in traditional times individuals did change their social status by moving into castes that were

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<sup>2</sup> “Traditional times” in this paper does not refer to a particular time period because, when viewing name changes, “traditional times” reflects individual family situations in particular historical periods, and it is specific to the family. Therefore, the historical period referred to as “traditional times” is amorphous and refers to a broad period for each family when its forbears did not change their structure of names.

<sup>3</sup> Roberts, Michael, *Caste Conflict and Elite Formation: The Rise of a Karava Elite in Sri Lanka, 1500–1931* (Cambridge University Press, 1982); and Yalman, Nur, “The Flexibility of Caste Principles in a Kandyan Community,” in *Aspects of Caste in South India, Ceylon and North-west Pakistan*, ed. E. R. Leach (Cambridge University Press, 1960), 78–112.

regarded as being of a higher level. Such instances of individual mobility within the traditional caste system were facilitated by name changes, and names functioned as identifiers of an individual's caste, village of origin or residence (the village of origin and residence were often coterminous), and occupation.<sup>4</sup>

The Sinhalese have changed their names through newspaper notifications for several decades now, as this has been the easiest way of fulfilling a legal requirement that name changes be made public. Name changes in newspaper notifications are of two types: personal or first name changes, and family name changes.

### Classification of Sinhalese Names

Among the Sinhalese, family names are passed from one generation to the next and used as distinctive identifiers of family and kinship groups. In the traditional period, there were two kinds of family names: the *patabendi* (honorific) names and non-*patabendi* or ordinary names. Traditionally, *patabendi* names were conferred by the kings for conspicuous military exploits.<sup>5</sup> During the Kandyan Kingdom period (1474–1815),<sup>6</sup> *patabendi* names were found in the dominant *radala Goigama* caste families who constituted the landed aristocracy.<sup>7</sup> The *patabendi* names were later treated as patronymics and used as family names by the descendants of the conferee. As Pieris notes, “Scions of a man honoured with a *patabendi* title such as ‘Suriyasekera Mudiyanse’ would convert it into a patronymic by adding the suffix ‘*lage*’ (belonging to or descending from) and call themselves Suriyasekera Mudiyanse*lage*, ‘descendants from Suriyasekera Mudiyanse’.”<sup>8</sup> Referring to this process of converting *patabendi* titles into patronymics, Obeyesekere concludes that it “has resulted in a spread of *patabendi* titles in Kandyan society.”<sup>9</sup> Since such patronymics were widely used by affluent families in the Kandyan provinces, who were largely Goigama, they were generally thought of as a prerogative of the Goigama caste, particularly the *radala Goigama* sub-caste.

<sup>4</sup> Yalman, “The Flexibility of Caste Principles in a Kandyan Community.” P 88

<sup>5</sup> Pieris, Ralph, *Sinhalese Social Organisation* (Colombo: University of Ceylon Press, 1956).

<sup>6</sup> The year of the foundation of the Kandyan Kingdom is uncertain. According to T.B.H. Abeyasinghe, the Kandyan Kingdom was founded in 1474. See T.B.H. Abeyasinghe, “The Kingdom of Kandy: Foundations and Foreign Relations to 1638,” in *History of Sri Lanka*, Vol. II, ed. K.M. de Silva (University of Sri Lanka, 1995), pp139-161.

<sup>7</sup> Goigama is the majority caste in Sri Lanka. Within this caste are sub-castes such as the *radala*, which constituted the landed aristocracy in the past.

<sup>8</sup> Pieris, *Sinhalese Social Organisation*. 1956: p173.

<sup>9</sup> Obeyesekere, *Land Tenure in Village Ceylon: A Sociological and Historical Study* p224.

Although we do not have much information about patronymics used by castes other than the Goigama during or prior to the Kandyan era, different castes have folk stories referring to the conferring of honorific names on their ancestors by kings and provincial rulers. This practice was evident during the times of colonial rulers, who granted patabendi names to the local and regional officials they appointed. Obeyesekere, however, states that “with the three streams of foreign conquest, the prohibition against assuming patronymics and titles associated with rank was lifted, and there was a mass ‘usurpation’ of these honorifics particularly among the dominant *Goigama* and a few of the *Karava* caste.”<sup>10</sup> The presence or absence of a patabendi name identifies a person in terms of his/her class status within the caste. Generally, those who did not have a patabendi name were considered lower in the caste hierarchy than those who had such a name. Lately, however, patabendi names have been used to distinguish one’s origins, whether upcountry or low country<sup>11</sup>, and sometimes one’s religious affiliation.

Another important category of names is known as *vasagama* names, or names indicating the place of origin. During the Kandyan period, ordinary Goigama people who did not use patabendi names had *vasagama* names. The *vasagama* name indicates a person’s hamlet or village of origin. As each hamlet or village consists of several kin groups, *vasagama* names usually have nametags to identify the particular line of succession. For example, the name Pahala Medagama Gamage Jinadasa, mentioned in Obeyesekere, has three distinct components.<sup>12</sup> Jinadasa is the individual’s personal name. The first two words, Pahala Medagama, refer to his place of origin or *vasagama*. Finally, Jinadasa of Pahala Medagama belongs to the particular line of succession named Gamage. Thus, the *vasagama* indicates the hamlet of origin of the forefathers of the person concerned and his line of succession.

The people without patabendi or *vasagama* names were the low castes in the Kandyan Kingdom. While some of them were identified with a *Ge* name or “house name”, such as *Ihala Gedera* “house located at the upper elevation” or *Pahala Gedera* “house located at the lower elevation,” others were identified with their father’s name, for example, Ukkuwage Puncha “Puncha, the son of Ukkuwa.”<sup>13</sup> Yalman observes that ordinary Goigama people, as opposed to the aristocratic Goigama, were considered to be of a low caste because their

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p 225.

<sup>11</sup> The division of upcountry and low country in Sri Lanka has a social significance. The low country areas were under the colonial rule since 1505, and underwent many changes as a result. Adoption of Christianity, Catholicism and European names and cultures are some such changes. The upcountry areas were under the rule of the Sinhalese kings until they were captured by the British in 1815. Most of the patronymics were originated in the upcountry areas that were conferred by the kings.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* p15.

<sup>13</sup> Names such as Puncha and Ukkuwa are “low-caste” names.

forefathers had been serfs and did not have title names. "These serfs were no longer bound by feudal (*rajakariya*) laws, but 'respectable' people would not intermarry or interdine with them. Their 'lowness' was evident in their names, for they were distinguished from other Goigama – so it was claimed — by their lack of ancient titles and vasagama names. They had been the 'working people' (*vada karayo*) like the low castes."<sup>14</sup>

In traditional villages, however, "low castes" such as the potters or the washermen were identified by particular family (*Ge*) and personal names, which was one of the ways of segregating people into different castes, and putting them in social positions relative to the higher castes in the villages. Although the "low-caste" people may not have liked the way in which they had been identified and labelled as being people without vasagama and honorifics, they could not do much to prevent the continuation of such a system of naming, for it was regulated by the high-caste people. The registrars of births and deaths, who registered the newborn children, were often Goigama people in Kandyan upcountry villages and had the discretion to name the children of "low-caste" parents in accordance with the traditional, Kandyan system.<sup>15</sup> Even when parents wanted to name their children differently to alleviate the social stigma attached to "low-caste" names, they could not bypass the registrars who followed the old tradition.

Although traditionally the naming system had an importance for symbolic identity and a meaning required for stratification and interaction, in modern society social identity denoted by names does not necessarily correspond to the assumed social roles and status of people. Since traditional *Ge* (house or family) names and personal names, particularly those considered to be "low-caste," are now regarded as a barrier for socialisation, the vasagama, honorifics and patronymics of the high castes are being emulated and widely used. As a result, these vasagama have lost their traditional social meaning, which had been associated with demonstrated leadership and proprietorship.

Although the name of an individual has become less of a status marker in present-day Sri Lankan society, the traditional values of the caste system persist in many different ways, thus fostering the hierarchy and perpetuating the stigma attached to "low-caste" people. Name changes are a necessary and an accepted

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<sup>14</sup> The definition given by Yalman in this quotation is used throughout this paper to denote caste status as "low-caste." Therefore, it is used with inverted commas throughout the paper. Yalman, "The Flexibility of Caste Principles in a Kandyan Community" p 88.

<sup>15</sup> This system changed particularly after the 1960s when village-level officials were appointed on the basis of their educational qualifications rather than of their traditional family status, authority and ownership of land. The Grama Sevaka Niladhari [local administrative officer at village level] replaced the Arachchis (village headmen) during this period. However, in certain villages even in 1980s, the registrars of births, deaths and marriages, who were Goigama radala, were of the view that "low-caste" persons should be named according to the old tradition.

form of eliminating the lingering notion of the caste-related lowness of a person in modern society, but are not a sufficient condition for upward mobility.

### Ways of Changing Name among the Sinhalese

Before the popularity of using newspaper announcements as a means of making a name change public and consequently assuming high-status names, there were other ways by which Sinhalese changed their names. In traditional society, "low-caste" but powerful persons who aspired to assume social prestige practised hypogamy, or marriage into a higher caste. For example, Yalman describes how an ordinary Goigama man named Dehi Gaha Pitiya Kalu Banda of Terutenna, who did not have a title name, married into an aristocratic family and adopted the aristocratic title (*radala*) of his wife, Nissanka Mudiyansele Tun Amunu Gedera, a name that was later also assumed by almost all of his kinsmen. Yalman further notes, "There were some 'low' Goigama who had grown rich and thereupon changed their place of residence and successfully assumed aristocratic titles."<sup>16</sup>

Obeyesekere reports another way of changing one's name and assuming a title name (honorifics and patronymics).<sup>17</sup> According to him, in Hinidumpattuwa, the rich and powerful people who were emancipated from the ordinary caste and kin groups formed new social bonds with similarly powerful and rich families of the same caste in the region. These groups were called *pelantiya*. They were distinguished from the ordinary caste members by their distinct honorifics and patronymics, the form and meaning of which often resembled title names (*patabendi nam*), which had been bestowed upon the ancestors of the family by the kings in the Kandyan Kingdom.

This paper focuses on how the present-day Sinhalese use newspaper advertisements as a way of changing their names, a method that has become increasingly popular in the last few decades. The increase in the number of name changes has been quite dramatic. In the year before economic liberalisation policies were introduced in 1977, only 484 people announced changes in their names in newspapers. Two decades later, this number increased to around 4,000 per year during the period 1993 to 1995 as shown in Figure 1

Given this background, it is pertinent to ask why people change their names. In Obeyesekere's words:

(Can we say that) usurpation of honorifics ... is an emulation of a position of power, prestige and authority by persons who were traditionally debarred from such positions? Is it because people want to do away with names that associate with caste status? Alternatively, is it because

<sup>16</sup> Yalman, "The Flexibility of Caste Principles in a Kandyan Community" p 88.

<sup>17</sup> Obeyesekere, *Land Tenure in Village Ceylon*. pp 224-226

the traditional naming system has become obsolete and it is given a new meaning in the modern class society?<sup>18</sup>

This paper attempts to answer some of these questions by analysing newspaper announcements of name changes in the present context of class and caste mobility among the Sinhalese. In doing so, this study investigates whether the name changes have actually contributed to any change in caste status for those who changed their names; or whether such changes of name facilitated merging into the wider society in modern times in a free and equal manner by alleviating the derogatory and stigmatizing connotations of traditional names.

### Materials and Methods

The data for this study consists mainly of notifications of name changes in Sinhala newspapers from 1993 to 1995.<sup>19</sup> These were compared with notifications published in 1976, just before economic liberalisation policies were introduced, in an effort to account for the significant increase in these notifications after these policies were implemented.<sup>20</sup> The following variables were chosen for analysis after an initial review of the notifications:

1. Type of name change (first name or family name)
2. Initiator of name change (individual or family)
3. Gender of the advertiser (if an individual initiated the name change)
4. Names used (by families/individuals) prior to the proposed name change
5. Caste indicated in the previous name
6. Assumed (new) name and the caste indicated by this name
7. District of residence
8. Date of notification

The castes associated with names were identified through discussions with key informants from different geographical locations where name changes were reported. Frequency distributions were then obtained using caste, district, initiator of name change, and gender as controlling variables.

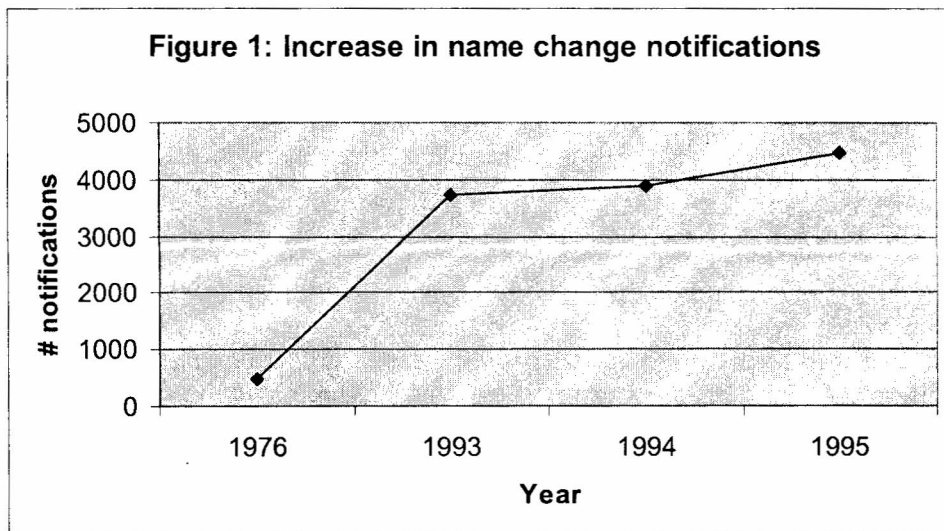
<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p 226

<sup>19</sup> The Sinhala newspapers that were covered in this research include *Jantha*, *Dinamina*, *Divaina*, *Lak Janatha*, and *Lankadeepa*. It is believed that these newspapers are representative of the Sinhala newspapers published during this period in Sri Lanka.

<sup>20</sup> It is widely believed that economic liberalisation policies introduced after 1977 have resulted in the upward mobility of individuals. Self-employment and other income sources have increased as a result (Central Bank Reports). This comparison could serve as a test of the hypothesis that the opening up of the economy provided opportunities for involvement in wider society, creating the backdrop for name changes.

**Findings**

From 1993 to 1995, a total of 12,063 notifications of name changes or an average of 4,021 per year were published in those Sinhala newspapers surveyed. By comparison, the notifications published in 1976 totalled only 484, or about one-ninth of the average annual number of notifications published in the period from 1993 to 1995 (see Figure 1). The marked rise in the number of notifications in the later years suggests the increased significance of name changes as a form of individual and class mobility and a mechanism of destigmatizing one's family name.



In addition, it suggests that names have become increasingly recognized as a marker of an individual's social status in the wider society. (Henceforth, title names, that is, honorifics and patronymics, vasagama names, and Ge names, will all be considered under one category as family names for convenience).

**Table 1: Type of name change implied in notifications**

Type of name change	Who changed the name			Total
	Individual	Whole Family	no information	
Only family name Changed	2386 (19.0%)	1767(14.1%)	55(.4%)	4208(33.5%)
Only first name changed	3588(28.6%)	0(.0%)	0(.0%)	3588(28.6%)

Both first and family name changed	3304(26.4%)	1425(11.4%)	9(.1%)	4738(37.8%)
Type of name change not identifiable	3(.0%)		10(.1%)	13(.1%)
Total	9281(74.0%)	3192(25.5%)	74(.6%)	12537(100.0%)

Of the total 12,547 notifications in Table 1, 28.6 per cent were changes of first (personal) names only; 33.5 per cent were changes of family names only. Of the total number of cases, 25.5 per cent related to changes of family name for a whole family, 19.0% per cent to changes of family name for an individual only and 26.4% to changes of family and first name for an individual. The proportion of cases involving a change in first name only fell from about 30 per cent in 1976 to around 28 per cent in 1993/95, while change in family name only has increased from 20 per cent in 1976 to 35 per cent in 1995.

If the adoption of new family names is equated with an entirely new caste status, then about 71 per cent of those who assumed new family names have changed their caste status from a "low caste" to that of Goigama or radala Goigama. At this rate, the average number of families assuming Goigama caste status every year amounts to about 800 families, or approximately 4,000 persons if we assume that a family consists of five members. In addition, there are about 1400 individuals assuming Goigama caste names each year. This accounts for a considerable portion of the increase in the number of people in the Goigama caste, despite the fact that traditional values attached to the patronymics, honorifics, and vasagama names of the Goigama are being "pejorated," as Obeyesekere notes.<sup>21</sup>

The individuals who changed their family names were predominantly male (about 70 per cent). Though we do not have information on their age and relative social status, it is likely that these individuals were young males who aspired to move up the social ladder through employment and marriage.<sup>22</sup> As in any social context in Sri Lanka, those aspiring to change are mainly young males. However, the percentage of females among those changing their family name increased from 22.5 per cent in 1976 to 33.3 per cent in 1995, indicating that females of the non-Goigama castes are also increasingly becoming socially mobile and aspiring to change their social status. This may be a sign of

<sup>21</sup> Obeyesekere, *Land Tenure in Village Ceylon* p 226.

<sup>22</sup> In interviews with Registrars of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, it was mentioned that individuals who wish to change their names have to make an application personally, and the majority of applicants are in the age category of 20-30 years.



improvement in the quality of life of these “low-caste” women, who are traditionally poor and less educated.

Table 2 shows the geographical distribution of family name changes announced by individuals and families. The higher percentages were found in urban areas such as Colombo (13 per cent) and Gampaha (12 per cent), as well as in districts in the traditional Kandyan territories. These territories include Kurunegala, Kandy, Ratnapura, Kegalle, Anuradhapura, and Badulla, and account for about 50 per cent of the total. The districts in the south, though very populous, have relatively few notifications of family name changes.

Districts with a large percentage of Tamils among their population, such as Vavuniya, Jaffna, and Trincomalee, had only a few notifications, while others like Batticaloa and Mannar did not have any, suggesting that, among the Tamils and Muslims, the family name does not seem to have any particular social prestige or caste connotations attached to it. It is possible, however, that such notifications were published in Tamil newspapers, which were not included in this study. It is worth mentioning that notifications by Tamils accounted for 6.5 per cent of the total, of which about 80 per cent sought Sinhala family names, mostly of the Goigama caste. Of these, the majority (28 per cent) were from Colombo, while Ratnapura (11 per cent), Gampaha (9 per cent), Kalutara (8 per cent), and Kandy (8 per cent) reported a considerable number of Tamils seeking Sinhala Goigama names.<sup>23</sup>

It is interesting to note that 85 per cent of all Tamils seeking name changes in the four years under review published their notifications between 1993 and 1995, compared to only 15 per cent in 1976. An increase in the number of Tamils changing their names to Sinhala names may have been due to the 1983 communal riots and the subsequent civil unrest, the war in the northern districts and the mass exodus of internally displaced persons in the 1990s.<sup>24</sup> Names are an explicit symbolic expressions of ethnicity. Name changes would have facilitated avoiding public identification of Tamil ethnicity, especially in urban work places, business circles, and residential areas — the focus of communal riots in 1983. Most of the politically neutral Tamils living in the said districts would have preferred ethnically neutral English names, while those who were closely linked with the Sinhalese would have preferred Sinhalese names.

Table 2. Distribution of family name changes by district

District	Number of name change notification	Percentage of notifications
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<sup>23</sup> According to the census of 2001, the percentage of Tamils (both Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils) in these districts were 10.9 per cent in Ratnapura, 3.6 in Gampaha, 3.9 per cent in Kalutara and 12.2 per cent in Kandy.

<sup>24</sup> However, the actual timing of the increase in the adoption by Tamils of Sinhala names cannot be ascertained from the present data, which is restricted to particular limited periods.

Colombo	1,193	13.3
Kurunegala	1,092	12.2
Gampaha	1,079	12.1
Kandy	775	8.7
Ratnapura	754	8.4
Kegalle	714	8.0
Anuradhapura	508	5.7
Badulla	449	5.0
Matara	316	3.5
Galle	290	3.2
Kalutara	280	3.1
Matale	256	2.9
Puttalam	204	2.3
Hambantota	180	2.0
Nuwaraeliya	132	1.5
Polonnaruwa	125	1.4
Monaragala	119	1.3
Ampara	60	0.7
Trincomalee	16	0.2
Vavuniya	7	0.1
Jaffna	2	0.0
District not mentioned	395	4.4
Total	8,946	100

Table 3. Assumed caste positions identified through changed names given in notifications by original Tamil name holders.

Assumed Caste or ethnic group depicted in the new name	Frequency	Percentage
Goigama	356	43.7
Unidentified castes	225	27.6
Retained Tamil Identity	82	10.1
Muslim	66	8.0

Acaste	33	4.0
Karava	33	4.0
Burgher	16	2.0
Durava	4	0.5
Total	815	100.0

**Patterns of Family Name Changes**

Table 4 presents the frequency distribution of family name changes by Goigama caste persons who notified name changes through the newspapers. The data shows that Goigama people made about 28 per cent of the name changes. About 60 per cent of these notifications did not indicate any caste change, but modified names by modernizing them. The second largest category (21.4 per cent) was those who assumed radala Goigama names. There were a few, largely females, who assumed Muslim names after marrying Muslim persons.

Assumed caste status	Number of notifications	Percentage of notifications
Goigama unchanged (name modernized)	2,012	59.8
Radala Goigama	720	21.4
Not identified	558	16.7
Muslim name	48	1.4
Karava	17	0.5
Durava	5	0.1
Acaste	4	0.1
Total	3,364	100

The name changes by Goigama persons adopted two broad methods: a) modernizing family names by rearranging them to follow the English/Western style and b) assuming traditional title names and honorifics. The examples presented in Table 5 illustrate these name changes.

Original name	Changed name	Comments
Yapa Mudiyanselage Yahapathami	Yapa Mudiyanselage Ranjit Priyantha Yapa	The name has been modernized and it has assumed an upper-class status. Adding a traditional high-caste nametag, such as Yapa, is a modern way of making the name

		look elegant. When the name is initialized, the traditional family name "Yapa" can be written as Y.M.R.P. Yapa. This makes the family name or the kinship line more prominent. If the old name were written in the same way, it would be Y.M. Yahapathami. The status difference between the two names Y.M. Yahapathami and Y.M.R.P Yapa is quite marked.
Udagama Liyanaige Alice Noona	Udagama Liyanaige Asoka Udagama or U.L.A. Udagama	The change of personal name is not obvious as it is written with initials — the way most Sinhalese write their names nowadays. (This is also a practice adopted by the "low castes" when they change their names, which will be discussed later.) This name change represents a complete reversal of the way names were presented in traditional times. If this name were written traditionally with initials, it would be U.L. Alice Noona. The Westernized, modern way of writing the name is U.L.A. Udagama.
P.M. Sarlis Appuhami (from Colombo)	Charles Sirigunatileke	The first name has been modernized and the traditional Appuhami name has been dropped. A modern caste and high class family name has been adopted. The two names Sarlis and Appuhami are considered old-fashioned names of traditional villagers.
Dan Watta Liyanaige Kamalawathi	Illeperumage Dona Kamalawathi Ariya Wijenayake	The family name Liyanaige is a Goigama succession line found in the low country. The assumed name Wijenayake connotes high caste and high-class status. When Kamalawathi is changed to Dona Kamalawathi, it shifts from an ordinary first name to a low-country aristocratic first name.
Jayawardene Mudalige Arumawathie	Jayawardene Mudalige Aruna Jayawardene	The traditional name has been modernized by using part of the family name as a tag at the end of the name. When written with initials the two names look different and portray two different social statuses. J.M. Anumawathie is very much a village name, while J.M.A. Jayawardene looks elitist.
K.H. Heen Banda	Sumit Attanayake	The ordinary Goigama name has been changed to a modern Goigama name. Being a resident of Colombo the person so named preferred Sumit to Heen Banda, with the colourful family name, Attanayake. (Attanayake was the name under which

		Rohana Wijeweera, the slain JVP leader, sought refuge during his last few years of underworld politics.)
Ukku Bandage Ram Banda	Wanninayake Mudiyanselage Ranjith Bandara Wanninayake	As pointed out by Leach, most villagers in Anuradhapura do not have vasagama names. <sup>25</sup> Although they are Goigama, they do not have titles or prestigious vasagama. They follow the tradition of using the father's name as an identifier of the son, as in the case of Ukku Bandage Ram Banda (Ram Banda, the son of Ukku Banda). Many name changes of ordinary Goigama in the Anuradhapura district are of this type.
Kiri Menikage Karunadasa	Karunadasa Mudiyanse	Sometimes, especially when a child is born to an unmarried woman, the child is named after the mother, as in Kiri Menikage Karunadasa. This name was changed to a title name with Mudiyanse, a high-caste honorific.
Wijetunga Mudiyanselage Sarath Bandara or W.M. Sarath Bandara	Sarath Bandara Wijetunga or S.B. Wijetunge	This is a classic example of a modernized Goigama name, where the family name has assumed only part of the traditional title name. In this change, it is clear that S.B. Wijetunge assumes higher social status than W.M. Sarath Bandara.

**Non-Goigama Name Changes**

Among all the name changes, family name changes among the non-Goigama castes were the most frequent. Of the total number of people who changed their names, 64 per cent were Sinhalese from non-Goigama castes and, of these, the non-Goigama from the Bathgama, Naketi, Dura, Hena, and Vahumpura castes were important (see Table 6). The Bathgama and Dura castes,<sup>26</sup> which were traditionally concentrated in the Kandyan districts, are now dispersed in other districts as well, as revealed in the notifications (See Table 7).

<sup>25</sup> Leach, E.R., *Pul Eliya, A Village in Ceylon: A Study of Land Tenure and Kinship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961).

<sup>26</sup> Dura caste in Kandyan areas is different from Durava caste in the low country.

Table 6. Percentage distribution of non-Goigama caste applicants		
Original caste of applicants	Number of applicants	Percentage of applicants
Bathgama	1,528	20.3
Naketi	1,304	17.3
Hena	1,019	13.5
Dura	915	12.1
Acaste	863	11.5
Vahumpura	734	9.7
Achari	457	6.1
Karava	284	3.8
Salagama	139	1.8
Kumbal	138	1.8
Patti	43	0.6
Durava	35	0.5
Panna	17	0.2
Burgher	17	0.2
Galladu	9	0.1
Gattara	8	0.1
Hunu	8	0.1
Rodi	7	0.1
Malay	7	0.1
Total	7,532	100.0

