AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF MOTOR CARS IN RELATION TO THE CAST SYSTEM IN SRI LANKA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES.

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ABSTRACT

This research paper describes an anthropological study as to how the car, as a modern industrial unit, arrived and got established with the cast hierarchy, arranged in the social model of the rural culture in the late 19th century in Sri Lanka. One of the important incidents, happened in the late 19th century was the rise of the new capitalist class, comprising of various casts. Internal changes occurred in both cast and the class systems. Even the “Govigama” sector which was at the upper layer of the Sinhala capitalist class was divided hierarchically. “Mudalis” and a group, made of the members of their families were on the top of it. Though, the Mudalis mainly earned their wealth by engaging themselves with the estates and the graphite, the “Karawa”, “Durawa” and “Salagama” came up challenging the “Govigama” cast with the trade of liquor. These particular classes used the motor car as a symbol in order to demonstrate in the fact that “Govigama” was apparently not in a position to outdo them. It was observed in various archives and records (i.e. vintage car club registry of Sri Lanka, various newspapers & magazines at national archives, administrative reports and journal entries of governors) that the car was largely used by “Karawa”, “Durawa” and “Salagama”. The people, belonging to the “Govigama” cast had used expensive and cars of larger sizes such as Cadillac, Chevrolet, Jaguar, Benz, Rolls-Royce, Renault & Daimler and the people of “Karawa”, “Durawa” and “Salagama” casts had a tendency to use brands such as Austin, Wellesley and Vauxhall. Having been based on the social attitudes, tastes and traditional ideologies that were present among the people of these various casts, the preferred model of the car was decided.

Key words - industrial unit, capitalist class, casts, vintage car

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INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this research paper is to provide with analytical and exploratory details regarding as to how the car which is a modern industrial unit arrived in to the society, arranged in a conventional model in Sri Lanka and got established gradually across various cast systems. As per the above mentioned objectives, the way in which the sense of power of the people, belonging to different casts was expressed with the introduction of the motor car into the Sri Lankan society of the 19th century and also as to how the motor car as a modern technical unit as well as a novel media, got absorbed is also studied.

BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

The knowledge that belongs to the establishment of the identity of the industrial revolution arrived in Sri Lanka with the imperialism. Under these circumstances, the British imperialists introduced the industrial elements, associated with the plantation in Sri Lanka in which the communication system, the transportation system and the factories, associated with the plantation can be considered as the most significant. The transportation system, introduced with the imperialism is still alive in Sri Lanka. The remains of the industrial elements such as bridges, tunnels and signal systems, associated with the plantation industry can still be seen in Sri Lanka.

Although, the remains of these industrial elements have been found all over Sri Lanka, only a very few detailed researches have been done on the remains of the industrial revolution. The central reason behind this particular
situation is the fact that, this particular subject is still kept in a low profile within Sri Lanka. As the transportation history of Sri Lanka is taken into account, it has been revealed that there is a historical background, running back to the medieval period where there are some certain elements, connected with the above mentioned matter. Walking on foot was later developed into conventional transportation methods such as “Dolawa”, “Dandy”(A person, seated on a chair been carried)” and riding on animal’s backs. However, the conventional transportation method took a different shape along with the imperialism, arrived after the Pre-Modern Period. As the primary sources are studied, it can be understood that the transportation in the Dutch period had mainly be done by using water streams. By the 19th and the 20th centuries, this situation further got changed along with the British administration. The transportation methods, related to the industrial revolution arrived in Sri Lanka in the 19th and the 20th centuries. In the first half of the 19th century, both the highway and the railway systems were established in Sri Lanka and a number of industrial elements was also established, in relation to the above established systems(Beckford,1972: Grant,1987). Further, by now, most of those elements are ruined. Generally, Sri Lanka has both the land and the water transportation systems, and in this particular study, the transportation, done on the land during the 19th and the 20th centuries in Sri Lanka is focused. However, the transportation, existed in the 19th and the 20th century is a field of study which has a wide range. The transportation, done on the land is also divided into two parts, for instance, the highways and the railways(Hyatt,2000). In this aspect, the mode of land transportation is spread over a wide range such as signal systems, bridges, and the technology, related to railways, tunnels and passenger cars(Brohier .R.L., 1984). Due to the industrial revolution which took place in the 18th and the 19th centuries, a number of remarkable changes came into being in European countries including England, where the change was of course a revolution. It paved the way for a society, based on complex machineries giving up traditional methods existed before. In that aspect the items in the caliber of transportation and communication systems that did not exist before came into being(Kannangara,1966). At the moment, the items that belong to the said period had been distributed elsewhere Sri Lanka. But, due to sheer ignorance of the general public, these monuments are under the threat of destruction, and the vintage motor cars are also not an exception. As such, this study is based on the vintage vehicles, imported to Sri Lanka during the 19th and 20th centuries.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The 19th century can be identified as a period that initiated a number of new changes in the Sri Lankan history. In this period, the plantation economy, introduced by the British through the imperialism paved the way for a capitalistic economy in Sri Lanka changing the non-industrial development that existed before. The Sri Lankan history got a new shape with the opportunities, created by the economic revolution in this era. Even at the time the British conquered Sri Lanka, a social system, based on the cast had already been established in Sri Lanka. The “Govi gama cast” had been placed at the uppermost layer of the hierarchical cast system and the other casts had been placed based on their performance. Along with this, a particular class called “Radala”(Feudal families) which also belongs to the “Govi gama cast” received the power and the sponsorship of the Royal system that ruled Sri Lanka in the past, also represented a particular layer in the Sri Lankan society as “Walaw People”. Apart from these two, a new class got established and it earned wealth by engaging in the fields such as liquor, rubber and graphite mining, where the contribution of the British seemed relatively less than the above mentioned areas notably from the first half of 19th century, which paved the way for the eruption of a new capitalist class in Sri Lanka. They invested their money in buying lands and properties in rural areas. They also engaged in the services like law and medicine. Under such circumstances, car, as a mode of transportation arrived in Sri Lanka(Casinader,1974). There are facts in primary sources that traditional transportation modes such as going on animal backs, horse carts, bullock carts, etc. had been used till the end of the 19th century. Thus, a modern industrial unit in the caliber of a car arrived and gradually got established in a hierarchical society based on the cast and the class. Depending on such a research background, the main objective of this research paper is to provide with analytical and exploratory details regarding as to how the car, which is a modern industrial unit, arrived to the society, arranged in a conventional model in Sri Lanka and as to how it got established gradually among various cast systems.
RESEARCH PROBLEM

As to how the motor car got expanded in Sri Lanka through the then established cast stratification, following the arrival of the motor car, as a modern industrial unit into a social structure which symbolized the traditional characteristics even during latter part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century is studied.

LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

This field of study cannot be confined to a particular area or to a divisional secretariat as it is in social scientific researches. The reason behind the fact is that the spread of the residues belonging to the field of industrial archeology is less in terms of studies in Sri Lanka. Hence, the limitation of the research is considered as the time during which the cars are considered as vintage. A vintage car is a car which has been produced before 1940 and registered under a single letter. Thus, the research was carried out by using a set of 400 registered and used cars, during that period of time.

METHODOLOGY

Research Methods

Field study

In the field study, the primary data was collected mainly by the observation and the investigation. Two methods were used to carry out the investigation.

i. Method of interview

Information was obtained through the interviews, done with the owners of classic cars and the chairmen of the three vintage car clubs; the classic car club, Italian car club and Sri Lanka Benz club.

ii. Questionnaire method

Information was obtained by giving questionnaires to the vintage car owners and the old members of vintage car club in motor rallies. Apart from that, data was obtained through mail as well. Data was obtained by posting questionnaires to the addresses of the vintage car owners, living in distant areas as well. Moreover, data was obtained through newspaper advertisements in which the vintage vehicle owners were informed about the research and whereby they were requested to give information regarding their vintage vehicles.

Data analyzing method

The method of descriptive data analysis was used.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF MOTOR CARS IN RELATION TO THE CAST SYSTEM

The rise of the new capitalistic class comprised of various castes was an important incident that took place in late 19th century. Internal changes took place both in the cast and the class systems. Even the “Govigama” sector of the Sinhalese capitalist class was also divided in a hierarchal manner. However, the “Karawa cast” arose challenging the “Govigama cast” in this era(Jayawardhana 2006:214, Ryan, 1993). Those who were in lower castes started flourishing in the capitalist class and it was revealed that these people who belonged to the three casts “Karawa”, “Durawa” amd “Salagama” were able to gain a remarkable position in the study of the transportation methods of the capitalist class.

It was revealed that a high level of ownership of cars was represented by the people of “Karawa”, “Durawa” and “Salagama” cast from the analyzed details in the study of cars, imported from 1889 onwards. The expensive cars in the world had been imported to Sri Lanka and it is a special fact that the owners of most of those cars were the people having the surnames of the “Karawa” cast. The newspapers, the magazines, preserved at the archives, diaries, administrative records of the governors and the cars, registered in the vintage
car club of Sri Lanka, clearly give evidence that the people of Karawa”, “Durawa” and “Salagama casts have used the car to a higher extent. Most of the car owners who participated in the rallies such as “the Times Great Race” rally in 1969, the Moratuwa Rally in 1969 and another rally, where the relevant is not mentioned, found on the inspection of the old newspapers, were of the above mentioned three casts (see -Annex-1) 93 cars had participated in the rally held at Moratuwa in 1969(see - Annex-1) Among them, there were a large number of people having surnames in the caliber of Fernando, De Silva, Perera, Mendis, De Mel that belong to those three casts. Moreover, the cars, used by the people with those surnames were the most expensive ones. More often, the people who carried the surnames of the the “Govigama” cast, had a relatively large number of cars such as Austin 7, and Morris 8 Therefore, it is appropriate to discuss about the cars used by them with the origin of their families as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>The year of the rally</th>
<th>Number of cars</th>
<th>Owners with Karawa, Durawa and Salagama cast</th>
<th>Owners with Govigama cast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Layanal Frando</td>
<td>Walter Jayasinghe</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arnast de Silva</td>
<td>Athula Rodrigo</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>E.D Silva</td>
<td>Jayasinghe</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Lusian s Frando</td>
<td>Donaldal Ramanayake</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>H. A Wimaladasa</td>
<td>Siriwardhana</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M K S’ de silva</td>
<td>B D D Gunasekara</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>L de Mel</td>
<td>Athukorala</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G. Seemon Perera</td>
<td>Gamini Gunathilaka</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lorance</td>
<td>Wanniarchachi</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>W'D Frando</td>
<td>Vicit Ranawaka</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C.H perera</td>
<td>J C Wilataganwawa</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>W.S.S Fonseka</td>
<td>Eric Jayasundara</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>L D Mel</td>
<td>D J RAnathunga</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P A C De Silva</td>
<td>D T B Munasinghe</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>K Justin Perera</td>
<td>L C Gunasekara</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kumar de Silva</td>
<td>Salgadu</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P V Jinadasa</td>
<td>Saparamadu</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E Perera</td>
<td>Mahindha</td>
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<td>19.</td>
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<td>Dadli Peiris</td>
<td>B Samarasinghe</td>
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<td>20.</td>
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<td>S. De Silva</td>
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<td>21.</td>
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<td>N A Silva</td>
<td>D Jayakodi</td>
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<td>22.</td>
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<td>B Layanal Frando</td>
<td>Kannangara</td>
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<td>23.</td>
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<td>C W Pere</td>
<td>Abesekara</td>
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<td>24.</td>
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<td>Frando</td>
<td>Mahaulpatha</td>
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<td>25.</td>
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<td>Sam</td>
<td>Kuruppuvarachchi</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W Ginadasada Silva</td>
<td>M Amaradasa</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Harischandra</td>
<td>K V Podimahathitya</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Martin Perera</td>
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</table>

(Moratuwa Rally - 1966) See Annex 01

According to the data in the above table, 70 cars had participated in the rally, held in 1966 and out of all the surnames, more than 25 surnames belonged to the “Karawa” cast of which the percentage is 25. Among these owners, the names Lionel Fernando, S. Fernando, M.K.S. Silva, Lawson De Mel, Simon Perera, W.D. Fernando, H.Perera, W.S.S. Fonseka, Lijol De Mel, M.S. Karolis, P.A.C. De Silva, K.Jayantha Perera, Kumara De Silva, P.V. Jinadasa, Emil Perera, L.D. Silva, N.A. Perera, H.Fernando, W. Jinadadsa De Silva, B.S. Martin Perera are prominent. And also, 70 cars of the car brands such as Austin, Chevrolet, Sunbeam, Opel, Ford, Morris, Cowley had also been there (Milburn,1960).

Further, among the car owners, who participated in the rally, held in 1966, the names such as V.M. De Mel, V.H. De Mel, Ashoka De Silva, E.C. De Silva, L.N. Zoya, C. Harun Fernando, Hersil Fernando, Lincoln Fernando, M.O. Jinadasa, Martin Perera, G.A. Peiris, H.C. Peiris, Niyomal Dias, Dudley Peiris, Thilini Peiris, represent “Karawa”, “Durawa” and “Salagama” casts. 93 cars participated in this rally and popular
brands in Sri Lanka such as Benz, Woolsty, Austin, Ford, Vauxhall, Morris 8, Morris Minor, Chrysler were also present. However, the people with the “Govigama” surnames were also present in both of these rallies.

An outstanding factor, revealed here is that the highest number of vintage cars still remaining in Sri Lanka had been used in areas like Moratuwa and Panadura where the rice cultivation is not highly found(Peebles,1973:168). As such, the people in these areas have mainly involved themselves in business such as liquor, retailing, carpentry and boat making etc. For instance, the western coastal towns such as Maratuwawa and Panadura and also a southern coastal town like Galte, have had an interconnected relationship with the families of the “Karawa” cast (Jayawardhana 2006:215). The people who became wealthy and respectable capitalists later on were the people of this cast who earned wealth through the above stipulated entrepreneurship. Following are such famous personal names which belong to the “Karawa” cast of the new capitalist class, born in the 19th century. Warusahannadige Zoysa, Hannadige Peiris, Widanegelage De Mel, Thelge Peiris, Lindamulage De Silva, Hanwedige Peiris, Ponna hannadige Dias, Meregngnage Salgado, Mahawaduge Perera, Muthuthanthrige Fernando, Hettiyaakandage Fernando De Silva, Amarasuriya(ibid, 2006) and also the people of the above generation who lived in the latter part of the 19th century are seemed to have had a close association with the field of motor cars. Among the Zoysas, families in Moratuwa, the Warusahannadige Zoysa family which had liquor licenses was the richest and the most powerful. The patriarch of this family, Joronis Zoysa, was the chief of the liquor business in the central province(ibid, 2006:216). In the book, titled “Twentieth Century impressions of Ceylon : History of people, Commerce, Industries and resources” written by Wright, a photo of the car used by Mr. Zoysa is included. But, the brand of this car “Wolsey” was also imported to Sri Lanka by one “ Peiris”. The present owner of the said car is also a member of the Peiris family, Chithuru Peris. The late H.C. Peris has imported it to Sri Lanka in 1902 (Akbarali ,2013).

In the mean time, the Peiris ancestry can also be illustrated as a powerful capitalist family that represented the “Karawa” cast. The Peiris and the Zoysa families were friendly with each other. The Peiris family also had invested their profits, earned through liquor business in the coffee trade. Apart from this, the Peiris had invested money in the graphite business as well (Wright, 1907:580). Due to the collapse of the coffee industry from 1880 onwards, his wealth got badly affected. However, the oldest car “Wolsey” was also imported to Sri Lanka by one “ Peiris”. The present owner of the said car is also a member of the Peiris family, Chithuru Peris. The late H.C. Peris has imported it to Sri Lanka in 1902 (Akbarali, 2013).

Ebert Siva was also an outstanding person who moved forward from the set of three casts “Karawa”, “Durawa” and “Salagama”. Ebert Silva had a Rolls-Royce which was one of the most expensive cars of that time. This car which was registered under the number C 9042 is still available. The Rolls-Royce, owned by the owner of the Dias Bus Company at Panadura, the one present at Warawita area under the registered number X 2650, the cars, owned by Mihiri Fernando and Sarsee De Zoysa can be identified as the Rolls-Royces, owned by the Sri Lankan individuals at present. Dr. Jayasuriya of Mount Lavinea also has a Rolls-Royce. Moreover, Don Yasapala of Mount Lavinea also has 3 valuable Rolls-Royces(Wickramaratne pers.com 2012). The valuable Rolls-Royce previously owned by Leo Fernando is presently exhibited at the Moratuwa technical college(Emmanuel, Chairmain, Italian car club, pers.com 2012). On the review of the information about the old newspapers, Mr. Ernest De Silva, who was reputed as “The king of stamps”, is the owner of the first Rolls-Royce in Sri Lanka(Ariyawansha, Diyatha-2012). Moreover, the “Humber” can be identified as another motor car, used by the high class people of the capitalist society. The facts, given in the study indicate that Lord Mount Batten on his visit to Sri Lanka had seen the “Humber” car, used by a famous capitalist, P.H. Hendrik, who represented the Sri Lankan new capitalist class, had parked the car near the Isipathanarama temple and it had been requested to be bought by Lord Mount Batten. Despite the repeated request of Lord Mount Batten before he left the island, Henric was adamant not to sell the vehicle and instead it was set on fire(Jyantha, Vice president of vintage car club SL.Pers.com 2010).

Mr. Leo Fernando who was from another famous family, among the families which became rich through the liquor trade in the “Karawa” cast, lived in the latter part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, had placed an order to America and imported a car, branded as Lincoln. This car, manufactured by Ford company was known as Ford Leo Lincoln, following the importation to Sri Lanka(Jyantha, Vice president
of vintage car club SL. Pers.com 2010). Mrs. Jeromius Dias, reputed as the “Liqour lady in Panadura”, was a rich woman of the “Karawa” cast and she had also ordered a very expensive Rolls-Royce car (Roberts, 1975). By the first half of the 20th century, cars manufactured by various companies were promoted by exhibiting on ships and they could be ordered at the ship itself. But, due to the high demand, she was unable to purchase the car in that year itself. But again few years later, she was able to buy this particular car. At present, this Rolls-Royce car, registered under the no. B 701 is available in the Colombo area (Jyanthara Vice president of classic car club SL. Pers.com 2010). Cyril De Zoysa who was the owner of the MG group was also an outstanding character among the car users in Sri Lanka. Benz was his favorite.

The Vauxhall, with the registration number of N 467, used by C.I. Gunasekara, an outstanding character of the Sri Lankan cricket, was registered in 1929. The first owner of it was Mr. Welimatigoda Hewage Podi Signo who was a capitalist of the “Karawa” cast. This car can be seen in Colombo 05 at present. Mr. Jinasena is known as an outstanding name in the “Karawa” cast and also it is a name, associated with cars as well. They were the pioneers of the “Jinasena Water Pump Company” and were the members of the “Karawa” cast in Moratuwa. In the chronicle of Jinasena, the information about very attractive cars is also found.

Further, in the chronicle of Jinadasa, it is mentioned that the surname Jinadasa was originally born, in a village in an area called Villorawatta comprising of 18 villages, and it is “Kolamba Patabendige” and their ancestors were the members of the earliest “Karawa” cast(Bhagawandas,7). The majority of these casts which lived in the coastal areas was Catholics. All the members of the Jinsena ancestry are also Catholics. The ancestors of their families were carpenters in the Moratuwa area. Initially, the members of this family started making rubber rolling machine in 1905. A sound knowledge in carpentry was helpful in this aspect. The main duty of this factory was to build boilers which run steam engines, required by the graphite industry. Thereafter, a factory was started to produce roller machines to press rubber bundles. By 1916, Jinasena had 3 partners. Apart from this, they had an agency for Belis Thomson car as well(Bhagawandas. 2007,18). At the same time, the C. Jinasena Company was being established gradually in Sri Lanka. Mr. Jinasena felt the need of a car during the time in which he lived in England. By that time, MG cars were imported to Sri Lanka by the Roland Company. Hence, he had joined the club, where he had competed in a car race at Liyangahawela in the Bandarawela area. At that time, the sons of the planters’ community were highly involved in the race. They were well skilled in driving cars in the hill areas(ibid, 2007:42). Meanwhile, the first motor car club had been established in 1934. Mr. Jinasena was also a member of it. Roger David had got the record of becoming the cleverest driver in the races, held there daily. In the mean time , Mr. Jinadasa had broken the record while Roger was in England. However, Roger came to Sri Lanka with a car called “Rilay” to win the race. But Mr. Jinda said not like to get defeated and produced a car of himself to win the race, and it was a car, made by assembling various parts. The production of the celebrated car called “maggpi” is named in memory of that race. The Magpi car with a high power was built by using the engine of the Le Francis car and the MG Magna car, bought for his wife. A gear box and a chassis of a MG Magna were assembled in it(ibid, 2007, p44). Mr. Jinasena on his car, made by himself won the race defeating Roger at Magasthota in 1939. As a Sinhalese defeated a White man, Roger did not come to receive the trophy for the 1st runner up. This situation positively affected with the development of the Jinasena company day by day. He had bought the MG from Roland company on an installment basis in order to compensate a part of the value (ibid, 2007, 45) The Jinasena chronicle mentions. "I gave my Minor car also to them...\". Following the 2nd world war, the activities of this club got restarted. Peugeot station wagon had been used as the family car of the Jinasena family and it was used on family trips more often.

In the same way, as the rich people of the “Karawa” cast grabbed the car, the “Govigama” people also came up in the capitalist class. Some of them did not hesitate to engage in liquor business and they were a component of the merchant class. Among the families that became rich in that manner, the Wevage Arunolis Deph family can be identified as a very successful liquor business holder of the “Govigama” cast in the 2nd half of the 19th century(ibid,2006:239). A large number of coconut lands and urban properties belonged to these families. The Deph family had a relationship with the rich business family of Wijewardhena at Thudugala, Sedawaththa, Grandpass through marriages. (Hullugalle,1960:7). Some persons who came from this Deph Wijewardhena family entered into politics and Mr. J.R. Jayawardhena was the most noticeable character among them. Mr. J.R. Jayawardhena also had used the car to protect his political identity. Mr. Jayawardhena also had used a Benz.
There are some evidences that a noticeable businessman Mr. D.R. Wijayawardhena, who came from this family, was the owner of the famous newspaper agency while been an owner of a Benz. Among the Benz cars, the model of 118 had a nick name of “Radula Benz car” (aristocratic/noble). The reason behind the fact is that this new capitalist class largely used these Benz cars in order to call themselves as if they are in the same class of aristocrats. The Benz car, used by Mr. Jayawardhena, the father of Mr. J.R. Jayawardhena, has been offered to Ven. Galaboda Gnanissara Thero, the chief priest of Gnagarama temple (Jyantha, Vice president of classic car club SL. Pers.com 2010).

The Senanayaka family of Bothale can be pointed out as a wealthy family of the “Govigama cast”. Don Speter Senanayaka had entered into the mining industry at the age of 18. The profit, gained from this business had been invested in buying coconut lands, urban property, liquor licenses etc. The graphite mines, located at Mirigama, Ambepussa and Pussahewa belonged to him (Jayawardhane, 2006:241, Wickremarathna, 1969). Mr. Senanayaka was the owner of the lands in the North Western province and also the owner of the valuable properties and houses in Colombo and Kandy (Wright, 1907:611-614). By 1907, this family as a leading liquor trader had become a powerful member in the cartel of liquor traders (ibid, 2006:242). This family became very noticeable with the entry of their three sons namely of Mr. Senanayaka, namely, Don Charles Senanayaka, F.R. Senanayaka, D.S.Senanayaka, into mainstream politics in the 20th century. Mr. D.S. Senanayaka was elected to the state council in 1942 and also became the first prime minister of Sri Lanka from 1948 to 1952 (ibid, 2006:242). The house they lived was known as the “Bothale Walawwa”. Mr. Senanayaka had used a car with the brand name of “Opel”. There are evidences that among the cars, owned by the Senanayaka walawwa, especially the cars used by Mr. Senanayaka and the others, the brands such as Skoda, Walsy, Peugeot, Chevrolet were prominent. The car called “Adler” with the registered number of C-734 made in Germany and used by F.R. senanayaka who was a noticeable politician of this family is presently owned by Mr. Darup Peiris. This was a car with solid tires and was also used for the transportation of graphite of the Bogala graphite mine, owned by the Senanayaka family (Jyantha, Vice president of classic car club SL. Pers.com 2010).

The Artigala family can be highlighted as another family that became rich in the same way. They have earned a considerable wealth through the coffee plantation and they invested this profit in the graphite mines. They have entered into the liquor trade later (Wright, 1907:59). After the death of Artigala in 1901, his son, Francis took his father’s successful business under his control and after his assassination in 1907, his property was inherited by his sisters. Those sisters were married to T.G. Jayawardhana, F.R. Senanayaka, and John Kothalawala (ibid, 2006:246). The son of John Kothalawala, John Lionel Kothalawala, was the prime minister of Sri Lanka from 1953 to 1956. Sir John Kothalawala was also an outstanding person in the field of cars in Sri Lanka. He had used a Cadillac car when the registration of cars was done by using the letter “Y%S” (SRI) got started in 1956, and he has used “1- Y%S ” (SRI) for his Cadillac which is now being exhibited in the Army museum. Apart from this car, Mr. Kothalawala had owned several other vehicles as well. Opel, Vauxhall, Willis jeep, Holden were among them (Akbarali, 2013, Nicholls, 2004: Wickremarathna, 1969).

Apart from these families, the Coraya family can be considered as another powerful family of the capitalist class. They lived in the Chilaw area and their history runs back to the eras of the Dutch and the Portuguese. They obtained ranks in the Dutch and the British eras by serving as the government officers (Wright, 1907: 735). A considerable number of members of this family had entered into the professions of medicine and law. C.E. Coraya, Alfred Ernest, Victor Koraya of this family entered into politics later.

In the same era, as two outstanding families in the society and also in politics in the post colonial Sri Lanka, are taken into account, the Obesekara and the Bandaranayaka ancestries were the owners of the large coconut lands among the “Mudalis” by the 19th century (ibid, 2006:246). These families that were prominent in the capitalist class in Sri Lanka belonged to the “Govigama” cast (Ryan, 1993). The origin of these families runs back to the “Seram Mudalis” and a relationship network including the families of Obesekara, Dias Bandaranayaka, Inangcoo De Alwis, Livera, Peiris and Sirirwardhana was built through marriages (ibid, 2006:246). These “Mudalis” tried to earn the status and the traits of the noble aristocratic class (ibid, 2006:246). The members of the type of Mudali were largely the owners of the coconut lands. According to Peebles, 7346 acres of coconut lands belonged to 5 members of this Mudali family (Peebles, 1973). However, this type of Mudalis did not
engage in liquor business in order to protect their dignity (Jayawardhana, 2006: 246). They invested their money in buying urban properties. In the meantime, the vehicle importation was also carried out. Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranayake who was a descendant of this ancestry had used a Benz. Also, the vehicle called Citroen used by his daughter, Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranayaka, in Sorbonne is a product of France, which is available in Sri Lanka even today. A Citroen with the registration letter of “W” is available with a gentleman called “Rate Mahaththaya” of Kegalle (Jyantha, Vice president of classic car club SL. Pers.com 2013).

CONCLUSION

In the study of the history of cars in Sri Lanka, it was found out that there is a clear relationship between the spread of cars and the cast system, established in Sri Lanka. Especially, the people belonged to the “Karawa”, “Durawa” and “Salagama” casts were dominant than the “Govigama” people, in the usage of cars. In the style of absorbing an industrial unit such as the car, the members of the “Karawa” cast such as Peris and Zoysa are distinguishable and “Wellesley”, the oldest petrol car which is still available in Sri Lanka was imported by the Peris Family. It was imported by H.C. Peiris in 1902 and presently, owned by Darup Peiris who is a grandson of H.C. Peris, is inherited to this car by his farther, Chithru Peiris. Moreover, the first Sri Lankan who bought the first petrol car, imported in 1900 was E.L. Zoysa from Moratuwa represented the “Karawa” cast. His wife was Spanish and she was the first woman to drive a car in Sri Lanka. According to these details, found in the old newspapers in the 19th and the 20th centuries, the “karawa” cast was dominant in the pattern of obtaining the cars. It was a special fact that the majority of the car owners who participated in the car rallies, held in 1966, 1969, 1978 are of the “Karawa”, “Durawa” and “Salagama” casts. The names, Silva, Perera, Zoysa found on the inspection of the name lists of the participants represented the above mentioned three casts. As their usage of the cars is observed, Austin, Wolseley and Vauxhall are seemed to be dominant. The members of the families, who represented the capitalist class of the “mudalis” in the “Govigama” cast, like D.S. Senanayaka and S.W.R.D. Bandaranayaka had a tendency of using the cars in the caliber of Chrysler, Cambridge and Benz.

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Annexure -1 – Motor rallies published in old newspapers

**"VINTAGE MOTOR RALLY 1978"**

To commemorate the Silver Jubilee of the first "Old Crocks Rally" of 1953, the Y's Men's Club of Moratuwa and the Rotary Club of Mount Lavinia, requested Tilney Peiris to organize an old crocks rally. Since the vintage vehicles were becoming a part of Sri Lanka's Heritage, many owners did not want their vintage vehicles to be called old crocks any longer. So Tilney organized the rally and named it as the "Vintage Motor Rally 1978" which was held on Sunday 27th August, 1978 from Galle Face Green to Moratuwa. There was a record number of about 120 vehicles and 26 trade floats. The Rally was the most successful vintage rally held. The participants, as reported in the Ceylon Observer of 25.8.1978, were:

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<td>(Rider: Jayalath Fernandez)</td>
<td>Austin</td>
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<td>X 2920</td>
<td>Bandula Namgatuge</td>
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<td>J. Ratnayake</td>
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<td>Paul Joseph</td>
<td>Austin</td>
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<td>Z 2762</td>
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<td>D 3319</td>
<td>Nimal Mapagurunatne</td>
<td>Austin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Z 3870</td>
<td>T. Chandrasena</td>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>1937</td>
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</table>

Note: Over 50% of the participants were Austin 7s. Some are still to be seen but most are not heard of now. Most of the others models which took part are still around, of course some need restoration which are not problematic, and it is hoped that the owners will do so.
### LIST OF ENTRIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Make</th>
<th>Regd. No.</th>
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<td>2. Lal. Rodrigo</td>
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<td>8. Atul Rodrigo</td>
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<td>32. Lloyd de Mel</td>
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<td>33. Claire Corseri</td>
<td>Adler T (Jac.)</td>
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<td>M. G.</td>
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