

One can see a particular trend in language usage in Sri Lanka. The Sinhala majority race is divided into several classes. At the topmost echelons, distinguishing themselves from the "new rich" business community of humble beginnings, are the English-speaking variety. These nominal Sinhalese are ashamed of their mother tongue. They pride themselves on being highly urbanized and highly Westernized, mostly residing in Colombo and the suburbs.

To this community, Sinhala, their native language is something they would rather discard altogether if possible considering it very lowly to be knowledgeable of it, or be culturally familiar with idioms, mannerisms, music, drama or folklore. A language only their maids and drivers would know and speak, but not them. These people, born and raised in Sri Lankan homes, having attended school in Sri Lanka, and having had their education in Sinhala, seem ashamed of Sinhala.

At meetings and parties, they love to boast that they do not understand Sinhala or that they find it very difficult to talk in "Sinhalese", behaving somewhat like expatriates in a foreign country. Some of them go to the extent of having an accent when they do speak Sinhala, or deliberately

name is spelt W, I, K, in "Wikremanayake" and not W, I, C, K, or that their name is spelt G, O, O, N in "Gooneratne" and not G, U, N, or that their name is spelt W, I, R, in "Wirasinghe" and not W, E, E, R. The way a particular political leader in the nineteen eighties pronounced his Sinhala name in Anglicised tones comes to mind. Here, the Sinhala "wardhana" is pronounced "wardner".

These pathetic souls who have lived in Sri Lanka with names roughly meaning victorious lion or leader or developing virtuousness have totally abandoned who they are, latching onto how a foreigner has prescribed they spell their name and slavishly follow their masters' decrees that were only relevant centuries ago, probably with considerations of convenience in mind rather than hierarchy. In spelling their Sinhala names in English, they also want to distinguish their superiority from those who would spell their names otherwise. It is the height of ridiculousness, don't you think?

Moving to the audio-visual media, Sinhala television dialogue is interspersed with expressions such as "Wow!" to exclaim surprise, while "shit" is unashamedly expressed to show disappointment, presenters probably unaware of its meaning.



THE SINHALESE PEOPLE WHO ARE ASHAMED TO SPEAK IN SINHALA

speak haltingly and pretend to be searching for words of expression, interspersed with accentuated "ah"s and "um"s. Most of these Sinhalese are the descendants of Sinhalese parents, grand- parents and great grand- parents who had not the slightest exposure to another language.

The public, whatever their background, attempt to make sense of the world by constructing social categories that invariably involves the hierarchy. Sri Lankan leaders,



Lasantha Pethiyagoda

together with the media have influenced the affluent public to forget their values in freely adopting values that result in profits for their companies and enterprises. Shirking of Sinhala is one such.

Sinhala had largely been the medium of instruction in all schools in Sri Lanka including in much of Colombo and the suburbs, before the advent of "International Schools" mushrooming in Sri Lanka just about a decade or more ago. Some parents of children attending these "international" schools are visibly proud to declare their children's ignorance of their mother tongue!

Much before that, "well to do Sri Lankans" had the privilege of studying in the English medium before the "Sinhala Only" policy was introduced in Sri Lanka. This saw the abandonment of the English medium altogether, with the exception of private schools. Therefore, most of the men and women who attended private schools in Sri Lanka, now in their retirement had their entire education in English.

These so-called "Sinhalese" people have lost their identity so much, that when they introduce themselves to other Sri Lankan Sinhala people, they specify how their particular surnames are spelt...you guessed it, in English! They proudly declare that their

Audio-visual media anchors and presenters, young actors and actresses, most never ever having left Sri Lanka's shores, speak Sinhala with an "English-sounding" accent. They too seem to be searching for words to express themselves in Sinhala, while not engaging too long in English except for a smattering of phrases quickly reverting to the familiar.

It has also become trendy to adopt "Western" style breakfasts. Television advertisements show young Sinhala men and women (who would definitely look more at home in sarong or frock) dressed in ties and suits, pouring "breakfast cereal" into their children's bowls at breakfast. The English-speaking "elite" seem to have abandoned "kola kaenda", "mung-aeta", "kadala", "pittu", "arpper" and "indi-arpper" for Coco-pops, corn-flakes and wheat biscuits, most of which are imported, not as nutritious and full of sugar. Here again, it is the 'foreign-ness' that attracts, not their intrinsic qualities, which neatly fits into these people's efforts to distance themselves with anything Sinhala.

Any challenger to the status quo, in desperation, would attempt to ram home the inherent disconnect between the facts of evidence and the attractively woven myths that promote an alien lifestyle. However, as we see today, it is not sufficiently powerful because the storytellers find it easy to ignore the disconnect, seeming perfectly comfortable in a realm of pure fiction - which only make the concocted fantasies all the more convincing, to the millions of eager citizens who yearn for change to success.

One only needs travel down popular highways in suburban Colombo and main roads within the city to witness banners and billboards advertising "Western-sounding" institutes of "higher" education "affiliated" to American or British "universities". They promise foreign degrees and diplomas, "internationally" recognized, whereas the implication is that indigenous institutes are too lowly and unfashionable. Their brochures and advertising supplements in local newspapers depict white Caucasian people celebrating their academic achievements. "Locals" are not to be seen! I am convinced that if they had instead depicted young Sri Lankans, or the institutions had Sinhala names, no one would even bother looking!

To confound things even more, false values even form part of official public policy. One, is that representative democracy and a free enterprise economy are necessary for anyone anywhere to live a decent civilised life; and the all-powerful leaders take it upon themselves to ensure that everyone everywhere can enjoy their God-given right to live in a liberal, democratic and capitalist society.

Given these developments, with seemingly insurmountable problems afflicting "local" higher education, the Sinhala people are rapidly developing further class differences to differentiate the "other". With economic

problems that will not be resolved for many long generations, the recipe is being formulated for massive social upheaval.

The state can be manipulated to use its powers only by a people aware of what they receive and how best it may be changed. People have a responsibility to nurture this resplendent isle to its former glory by rediscovering their humanity, fellowship with the enduring heritage of its blessed soil and compassionate endeavour.



ඔබගේ ආධාරය ලැබුකේමියා රෝගියකු ජීවත්කරවීමට යොදවන්න
ඩිෂන් ප්‍රතිකර්ම

ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ මීගමුව කතරගොඩ පවුරේ වර්ෂ 28 ක් වන ඩිෂන් ප්‍රතිකර්මය යන අය සහය ලබාදීමට මහ සිට Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML - M2) නැමති පිළිකා රෝගයකට පෙළෙමින් සිටියි. ඔහු වි සඳහා මේ වන විට Chemotherapy ප්‍රතිකර්මය කෙරවත් ලබා ඇත. එහි ප්‍රතිඵලය අනුව ඉන් හුවාල ලැබීමට Bone Marrow Transplantation නැමති ගුණකර්මය සලසනු බව වෛද්‍යවරුන් කිරීමේදී කට ඇත.

මෙම ගුණකර්මය සඳහා උපකට ලංකාවේ පහසුකම් නොමැති නිසා අතර වෙනත් රටවල් සමඟ සහභාගිවනු ලබන කල ආර්ථික වශයෙන් වඩාත්ම සුදුසු විසඳුම් වන්නේ ඉන්දියාවට ගොස් එහි ප්‍රතිකර්මය ලබා ගැනීමයි. මේ සඳහා මාස දෙක තුනක් ඉන්දියාවේ කේටාසිකට් ප්‍රතිකර්මය ලබාගත යුතු අතර විදාල ඇමරිකානු ඩොලර් 30000 සිට 40000 ක් අතර වන වටිනා ගෙවනු ලබනු ඇත.

ඩිෂන් සහ ඔහුගේ ජීවිත කල මුදල් මේ වන විටත් අවසන් වී ඇත. ඉදිරියට විශේෂ ප්‍රතිකර්ම සඳහා විදාල මුදලක් සිදුවී ඇත්තේ ඔහුගේ පියාටය. ඩිෂන්ට ඔහු විදාලයක් දෙපොදකගෙවනු ලබා ගැනීමට සිදු වූ නිසා ඔහුට නොමැති සුදු වන්තරයක් හිමි ඔහුගේ පියා කම් පුතාගේ පිරිමියා වෙත ගෙවනු ලබනු ලබන ප්‍රතිකර්ම මුදල නොමැතිව ප්‍රතිකර්ම සඳහා ගත විදාල මුදලක් සිටින ඉන්මොනා ඇත.

සුදු ආධාරකට වුවද විශාල වෙනසක් ඇති කිරීමට හැකි වන්නේ මෙම පිරිමියා වෙත ගෙවනු ලබන ඔබ සමඟින් කරුණක අවධානය යොමු කොට යම් අධාරකට දිය හැකි නම් එය ඉතාමත්ම අගය කරන්නෙමු.

ඔබගේ ආධාරය පහත සඳහන් ගිණුම් අංකයට ඔබ කරන්න.
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වැඩි විස්තර සඳහා අමතන්න - **George - 0449 805 023**
dishanfernandofund@gmail.com