

# THE AMBANA VILLAGE



A joint publication of  
The Agrarian Research and Training Institute  
and  
The Communication Strategy Project  
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting  
Sri Lanka

**CASE STUDY No.3**

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THE STUDY OF COMMUNICATION FLOW  
IN  
SELECTED VILLAGES IN SRI LANKA

CASE STUDY 3

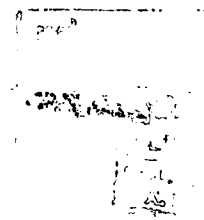
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R.D. Wanigaratne

A joint publication of the Agrarian Research  
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Colombo, Sri Lanka 1977

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The names of individuals  
referred to in the  
monograph are pseudonyms

## FOREWORD

The Village Action-Research Project is a joint undertaking of the Communication Strategy Project and the Agrarian Research and Training Institute (ARTI).

The project selected the following areas for its research - viz: Medagama in the Galle district; Colony Unit - 14 (Uhana) in Ampara; Ambana in Mirigama; Duwa in Negombo; Kahapathvilagama in the Anuradhapura district; Naduodai in Batticaloa and Ussan in Jaffna. The composite report in respect of the last four studies is now under preparation.

The work commenced with case studies in each of the selected villages and will be followed by training and multi-media action programmes in selected village organisations.

The case studies were undertaken by Ranjit Wanigaratne of the ARTI with the assistance of the UNESCO Advisor to the Communication Strategy Project, Dr (Mrs) Florangel Rosario-Braid.

The central purpose of the action programme was to evaluate the effectiveness of various communication approaches including group discussions, to identify various interpersonal networks through which social changes can be introduced and to experiment with the use of certain mass-media materials as tools in developing interaction among group members.

Specific studies on adoption-diffusion, evaluation of various mass-media materials, training for the development of effectiveness of group leaders and programme personnel will be made during the action programme.

It is hoped that the case studies and action programmes will provide useful guidelines for communication and training strategies for development.

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*A word of appreciation is due to Mr H.M. Gunatillake of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for his conscientious work as the field investigator. The typing was done by Miss Vasantha Joseph of the ARTI.*

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCING THE VILLAGE AND THE PROJECT

As a preliminary to commencing an action programme on population education, the Agrarian Research and Training Institute in collaboration with the Communication Strategy Project of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting undertook a survey of seven research locations purposively selected from different parts of Sri Lanka. The Ambana village was one of them.

#### 1.1 Setting

The village of Ambana is situated in the Hapitigama Korale in the Western Province of Sri Lanka, and is approximately half mile South-West of Mirigama town.

Ambana lies in a rolling plain with spot-heights ranging from 100-200 feet, and falls within the Attanagalle Oya drainage basin area. It receives between 75-100 inches of rain per year, the bulk of which is from the South-West monsoon. The natural vegetation is wet lowland forest.

#### 1.2 Choice of the Village

The village was selected for the following reasons :

- (i) Ambana was one of the six villages included in the study of Class II Coconut Lands undertaken by the Agrarian Research and Training Institute in March 1975 and figured also in a baseline survey for a Community Health Project initiated by the Public Health Inspector of Kal-Eliya range in 1972. The village was also the scene of social service activity by the Sarvodaya Organisation in 1967.
- (ii) Besides the volume of background data already available, the ARTI study showed aspects of high population densities and attendant problems of land fragmentation, housing and so on. The presence of large estates in its immediate environs also impeded the natural growth of the village.

#### 1.3 The Nature of the Project

A key problem in the task of disseminating population education in a rural locality is the need for an *a priori* understanding of the

potential recipients - their nature, the socio-cultural and economic setting in which they live and the communication paths through which they obtain and exchange information.

#### 1.4 Investigation Procedure

The survey was conducted in the Ambana village during a 91 day period, from the 17th of January to the 17th of April 1975. A single investigator, Mr H.M. Goonatilleke, of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, was stationed at a private house in Ambana.

The first two weeks were spent establishing contacts, transcribing household lists from the Mirigama Kachcheri records and cross-checking with lists kept by the Grama Sevakas and Cooperative Stores, working on the land registers of the Ambana Cultivation Committee and membership lists of various village-level organisations.

A short questionnaire was administered after a fortnight to collect basic data on population, rural institutional activity, membership, frequency of participation, awareness of information sources, awareness of contraception, public health activities, and so on. The questionnaire was introduced to the entire village which at the time consisted of 106 families.<sup>1</sup> Information was also collected concurrently through informal interviews. The investigator maintained diary recordings of responses received.

The recordings were examined each week by the coordinator in the field who redirected the investigator on promising lines of further investigation relating especially to leadership, organisational patterns, population awareness, effectiveness of communication paths and other aspects relevant to the study.

Three subsequent visits were made after May 1975 to the research location to check specific matters relating to leadership, land tenure and village organisation which emerged from the tabulated data.

## Chapter 2

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

#### 2.1 Introduction

A majority of the Ambana folk belong to the *Panna* caste, considered one of the lowest in the feudal caste hierarchy. The surrounding villages are of the *Goigama* caste, considered the peak of the caste hierarchy. The composition of the village castewise is set out in Table 1.

Table 1 Caste Composition of the Ambana Village

Caste type <sup>2</sup>	No. of individual families	Total population
Panna	95	544
Goigama	6	33
Karawa	2	12
Palli	2	7
Rajaka	1	6
Total	106	602

The original settlers of the village were of *Panna* and *Palli* castes. *Goigama*, *Karawe* and *Rajaka* groups were comparatively recent settlers who had come in the last three decades.

Four endogamous kin groups (*varigé*) of the *Panna* caste were believed to have originally settled in the Ambana village. They bore the surnames : *Labbalage*, *Perumbadage*, *Menikpurage* and *Hehathpurage*.

Even at present the *Panna* population broadly fall under these four family groups. Subsequently marital relationships of the Ambana folk with persons of a like caste in other areas were seen in a number of other minor surname groups like, *Wijeyalathpurage*, *Kekulupurage*, *Ilandaripurage*, *Aluthpurage*, *Hingapurage*, *Menikpurage*, *Ranchapurage*, *Kuruledenige*, *Kudawelabadage*, *Wickramarajage*, *Devathapedige*, *Dalugampitige*.

Many of these surnames are those adopted from the conjugal partners brought into the village, and the surnames were passed down to their children. A principal reason for this was the desire

of the Ambana folk to dilute the social stigma attached to their own caste, their village name and family names. For example, three residents of Ambana, *Kekulupurage* Siril Sagara, *Kekulupurage* Dharmasena and *Menikpurage* Nandasena referred to themselves as Siril Sagara, Dharmasena and Nandasena respectively even in official documents like the Lands Register and never once mentioned their surnames even in normal conversation with the researchers.

Discrimination against the people of Ambana by the surrounding villages was reflected in a number of ways.

When in 1969, Siril Sagara, a young man of Ambana asked for party nomination to the Village Council elections as a ward member, he was refused on the ground that the surrounding villages might be alienated from the political party on a caste issue. Siril however, contested as an Independent candidate and lost the election by only 7 votes. With the exception of a few Siril received all the Ambana votes.

Table 2 Results of the Village Council elections held on 21.5.1969

Name	Votes gained
L. Wijeratne (SLFP)*	298
K.P. Siril Sagara (Independent)	291
I.R. Charlis Singho (UNP)**	67

Source : Village Council Records

\* SLFP - Sri Lanka Freedom Party

\*\* UNP - United National Party

Not a single instance was recorded in the Ambana village of a Panna caste-man or woman having chosen a marriage partner from the Goigama or any other caste. Their marital dealings and relationships were mostly with a few villages in the surrounding area which harboured like caste groups. These villages were :

Keendiwela	-	Mirigama area
Davatama village	-	Meddepola area
Vellewa village	-	Meddepola area
Narangamuwa village	-	Giriulla area
Bataleeya village	-	Mirigama area
Gonadeniya village	-	Kurunegala area

A form of caste discrimination appeared to be present in the schools in Mirigama town which some of the Panna caste children of Ambana attended. This caused the sensitive ones to drop out or to change schools.

In the last two decades or so a number of developments contributed towards a lessening of the social ostracism of the past. For instance -

Under the older *Gam Muladeni* (village headman) system, Ambana folk were at a disadvantageous position. *Gam Muladenis* for Ambana were invariably from the surrounding villages, which were essentially of the Goigama caste. These individuals by various means prevented Ambana folk from moving out of their enclave or even altering their family names. Many of the Ambana folk were registered under names which they did not possess earlier (e.g. Paapu, Bandiya, Lensuwā, Hotha etc). The replacement of the *Gam Muladeni* with *Grama Sevakas* was beneficial to Ambana folk. These officials who were selected on their academic qualifications rather than on the status position of their families also had no social status problems with Ambana folk, since they were not of the immediate environment.

Under the modern hospital system complete freedom was given to parents of a child born in the hospital to change its surname. This freedom was to some extent utilised by Ambana folk who were able to alter the surnames of their children without facing any caste conflicts with officialdom.

Until very recently certain individuals in surrounding villages who were rich landlords exacted a form of feudal servitude (this still exists, though, in a much diluted form) from the Panna folk. These individuals were called *Hamuduruwo*, *Walawwe-Haamu* etc., - honorifics adopted by persons when addressing personages who wield socio-economic and/or legal powers over them - by the Panna people (especially the older persons). The younger people, however, addressed them as "Mahattaya" (Sir) or "Nona mahattaya" (Madam) which were polite without overtones of subservience.

In the temple committee itself there was caste distinction. The menial jobs were reserved for the Panna folk. Yet the fact that the Buddhist monks who themselves were of the Goigama caste did not discriminate on the basis of caste enabled the Panna folk, especially the youth, to take an active part in temple activities and mix freely with the temple crowd.

A common feature in many of the older houses in the village was that their porches faced minor cardinal points of direction. This feature was incorporated on the advice of the astrologers. The astrologers who were invariably of Goigama caste were moved by a desire to status - differentiate the Panna folk from the Goigama folk whose houses faced the major cardinal directions.

However, among the new houses this feature was not seen. Purposely the new houses were built so that house porches faced the same directions (along one of the four major cardinal points) as those of the Goigama caste in Ambana as well as in the surrounding villages.

## 2.2 Population

The village had 106 families with a total population of 602 or 5.7 persons per family. Of the 602 individuals, 302 were males and 300 were females. The sex ratio was 101 males per 100 females.

28.4% of the population was below 14 years, an average of 1.6 persons (below 14 years of age) per family. Four hundred and thirty one persons (48%) were in the age group between 15-29 years and were born between 1945-1960 - the years of accelerated population growth in Sri Lanka.

In the age group between 0-19 years the village showed a sex imbalance of 81 males per 100 females - indicating the possibility of relatively higher mortality among male children between the years 1956-1974. The sex ratio for the age group 20-29 was the reverse of this situation with 131 males per 100 females. This high state of imbalance is due to the fact that a number of females in the age group (both married and single) were found to be out of the village during the enumeration period. They were employed mostly as domestic servants in the city of Colombo.

The average number of living children in an Ambana household was 5, with 3 males and 2 females. Sixty-four (60%) of the families had four or more children, and 33% (36 families) had over 5 children per family. Though the population growth at present was low, the predominance of families with a large number of children is creating problems of housing, sanitation and other amenities.<sup>3</sup>

### Marital Status

Two hundred and fifty one (42%) of the total population were married, an equal proportion (41%) among both sexes. About 153 persons (98 males; 55 females) were unmarried though in marriageable ages. Among the males the unmarried persons tended to cluster in the age group between 15-30 while among females in the ages between 15-24.

Considering its population to land ratio, (0.20 an acre per person) Ambana faces a critical situation despite its present low population growth rates, especially as unmarried persons of both sexes<sup>4</sup> cluster round the ages of 15-30 while 28% of the population are below 15 years of age.

All the available highland<sup>5</sup> in Ambana has already been used for housing while most of the lowland is owned by non-villagers.

One hundred and forty-seven married persons of both sexes (58%) of the population above 14 years of age were married under common law, and 133 (41%) were married under customary laws of the region. One hundred and six individuals were married to cross-cousins, under both common and customary law marriages. One

instance of *ek gē kema* (two brothers having a single wife) was identified during the survey. That traditionality is still very much alive in the Ambana village, is evidenced by the high proportion of cross-cousin marriages and customary law marriages.

### 2.3 Residential Status

About 96.5% of the population of Ambana village were permanently settled in the village itself. Only 4 (.5%) visitors were encountered in households during the enumeration and only 34 (6%) persons were found to be temporarily out of the village. On an age-specific basis it was found that 98.2% of the individuals (of both sexes) who were temporarily out of the village were in the age group between 25-34. These individuals were found to be employed in and around the Colombo city.

### 2.4 Educational Status

Seventy-four respondents were found to have received some formal education in a Government school while 26% had not received any formal education. Forty-four percent (44%) were found to have received formal education in temples, Pirivenas, tutories etc. The average period of formal education for heads of households was 6 years, but if the age group 15-30 who are not heads of households is also considered the average was about 7 years.

Thirty eight (36%) of the individuals had received between 1-4 years of formal education, while 25 (24%) of the respondents were found to have received formal education between 5th and 7th grades. Eight respondents (7%) were found to have received education beyond the 7th grade.

### 2.5 Employment Status

The Ambana villagers were found to work on the average about 7.9 hours a day which suggests under-employment in the village. Among the types of employment 43 individuals were classed as cultivators (mostly tenant-cultivators of paddy) while an equal number were classed as labourers. Within this category almost all (about 40) were also part-time agro-labourers. The village had only two Government employees (a peon and a driver) and one technical worker. Three heads of households were able-bodied men who were temporarily unemployed; four women who had become heads of households at the deaths of their husbands - subsisted on the earnings of their children; three were incapacitated due to physical ailments.

Many of the Ambana families are dependent on a few wealthy *non-Ambana* families. In paddy cultivation, 78% (28) of the Ambana tenants (who worked for non-Ambana landlords) worked in fields belonging to 5 non-Ambana land-owners. Similarly 48% (15) of those who worked as labourers in agro-based industries, and other agricultural enterprises (except paddy cultivation),

worked in lands belonging to two individuals Jayakody Ralahamy of Ambana (a Goigama caste rural elite)<sup>6</sup> and in the Coir and Rice Mills belonging to Godellawatte Ralahamy of *Indiparape* - a neighbouring village.

An Ambana tenant farmer usually did a number of jobs to supplement the family income - plucking coconut, cutting drains, husking and tapping one or two coconut trees for toddy for jaggery-making etc. An average Ambana head of a household was able to earn between Rs 150 to Rs 250 per month.

Even the relatively affluent Ambana people usually did a number of jobs to supplement their family incomes. For example, two of the relatively affluent Ambana people, P. Bandiya and P. Suwaris who were cultivators earned Rs 350 and Rs 400 per month respectively from their land and also worked as *ande* cultivators in paddy lands belonging to non-villagers.

This involvement in a number of occupations was probably responsible for the complaints of absenteeism made by the management in a number of work places in Ambana. For example, about 5 persons (3 females; 2 males) from Ambana were found to be employed in the nearby Ambana Rubber Estate (205 acres), who alternated as rubber tappers, factory workers, and manual labourers - involved in clearing and drain cutting work. The superintendent of the estate stated that the attendance of Ambana workers was very irregular probably due to the following reasons :

- (i) they do not have sufficient incentives to come for daily work in the estate because of their part-time involvement in less routinised tasks - wage employment<sup>7</sup> and self-employment types;
- (ii) Ambana folk were a proud lot preferring self-employment to the more stable daily wage employment as estate workers.

Similarly, the superintendent of an adjacent coconut estate (the Halgahapitiyawatte) said that a dozen or so of labourers from Ambana who were employed in the estate in the 1950s and early 1960s, had a poor attendance. A number of them were detected stealing coconuts and even equipment like mammoties. Thus, he was forced to restrict the employee quota to about 3-4 persons who were found to be less prone towards such tendencies.

One hundred and sixty six (74%) of the population above 30 years of age were in agriculture based occupations, whereas only 5 (11%) were employed in non-traditional occupations. In the age group 20-30 years the proportion employed in agriculture was 26 (37%) while a greater number 65 (46%) were employed in non-traditional occupations.

Seventeen individuals (24%) of the population in the 20-30 year age group were found to be unemployed while in the case of the over 30 year age group the number unemployed was 4 (9%) persons. The relatively low unemployment figure among over 30 years reflect their capacity to adjust to their environment. Thus, 74% of the population in this age group were found to be involved in agriculture while 17% were involved in mostly manual work in the surrounding estates. The educated young people however, generally took to the non-traditional occupations.

## 2.6 Land Ownership<sup>8</sup> and Operation

The total extent of the Ambana village was 121.5 acres of which 14.5 acres were in lowland and 107 acres were in highland. The total operated lowland acreage was 40.5 acres, showing that cultivation of paddy under *ande* was carried out rather extensively by Ambana villagers. In the case of highland only 68 acres (or 63%) of the total extent were operated. Tenurial conditions in land holdings and size considerations in individual holdings add a complicated depth to the simple pattern shown above.

### Lowland

Twenty-eight Ambana persons owned a total of 14.5 acres of lowland with roughly 0.5 of an acre per person.<sup>9</sup> Of those who owned lowland only 18 were classed as owner cultivators. Ten of the landlords utilised the help of tenants to cultivate their lands. The lowlands owned by the Ambana folk were in the *Ambana yaya* - an elongated paddy stretch which ran alongside the Ambana village. Among the 18 owner-cultivators one case of *thattumaru* (a form of joint ownership) was discerned involving a paddy parcel of about 20 perches. The *joint owners* were Labbalage Gunaya and Labbalage Ara.

Table 3 Owned lowland among owner-cultivators  
(by size of holding)

Holding size (acres)	*No. of owner- cultivators	No. of parcels	Total extent		
			A	R	P
$\frac{1}{4}$ - below $\frac{1}{2}$	8	9	1	2	0
$\frac{1}{2}$ - below $\frac{3}{4}$	5	5	1	2	0
$\frac{3}{4}$ - below 1	4	7	4	1	0
** below 1	1	1	1	0	0
** $\frac{7}{4}$	1	1	1	0	0

\* 3 land owners had different parcels falling into different holding sizes.

\*\* The single parcel of one acre belonging to this size class was customarily owned by a single person (Perumbadage Siriya) though 4 others lay claim to it. The legality of their ownership had not yet been settled in courts.

A majority of the owner-cultivators owned parcels of land which were below  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre in extent. For example, 13 owner-cultivators<sup>10</sup> owned 14 parcels of land (in individual holdings of below  $\frac{1}{2}$  an acre in size) covering a total extent of 3 acres. The average size of a parcel among the 13 owner-cultivators was 0.23 of an acre. Four individuals owned more than 4 acres of paddy land in 7 individual parcels (in holding sizes between  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre) showing a concentration of land in the particular size class.

The 10 land owners, who used tenants to cultivate their paddy lands owned a total extent of 4 acres in 12 individual parcels. Ten of the parcels were below  $\frac{1}{2}$  an acre in extent. The average size of a parcel was 0.22 of an acre; the land owners employed 13 tenants to cultivate their paddy lands. With land rents of half-share of the produce going to landlords the tenants were forced to seek more parcels to cultivate and other employment sources to subsist.

One case of tenant rotation on a single paddy parcel ( $\frac{1}{4}$  of an acre in extent) on a *kanna* basis<sup>11</sup> was encountered among the tenurial positions of the 13 tenants. The land owner was H. Kirimally and the tenants were K. Podiya and H.P. Sutiya - all of Ambana.

Thirty-six Ambana villagers worked as tenants in paddy parcels of the Ambana *yaya* belonging to 28 outside land-owners during the period of the survey. They cultivated a total of 29 acres in 54 separate parcels of land. The average size of a parcel was 0.54 of an acre. Of the 36 tenants, 29 worked in individual parcels of land between  $\frac{1}{2}$  - 1 acre in extent. Only 4 tenants worked in parcels below  $\frac{1}{2}$  of an acre in extent.<sup>12</sup>

Among the tenants who worked in paddy fields belonging to non-villagers 4 cases of tenant rotation on a *kanna* basis were found.

They are as follows :

Case	Landowner		Tenants	
	Name	Home village	Name	Home village
I	S.D.Prema-wardena	Pahalamulla	L.M.Siriya Pediris	Ambana -do-
II	- do -	- do -	- do -	-do-
III	- do -	- do -	S.Martin K.P. Menike	-do- -do-
IV	J.M.Wijesekera	Indiparape	P.Renga C.Podda	-do- -do-

Twenty eight (78% of the Ambana tenants who worked for non-Ambana landlords) tenants worked in paddy parcels belonging to 5 non-Ambana landlords. Details concerning them are given below :

Land Owner	Home village	Extent of paddy land owned (in Ambana yaya) ac.	No. of Ambana tenants who work for them
S.D.Premawardena	Pahalamulla	3.50	10
A.M.Karunaratne	Navane	2.25	6
Asilin Nona	Neligama	4.00	5
S.A.D.Weerasinghe	Mungama	2.75	4
C.D.Catherin Nona	Halpe	1.75	3

S.D. Premawardena, who in the earlier Table is cited as a strong advocate of tenant rotation is seen to have the highest number of tenants working in 7 parcels of paddy land covering a total extent of 3.50 acres in the Ambana Yaya.

Thirty-three tenant-cultivators (or 73% of the Ambana tenants) worked only single parcels of land usually above  $\frac{1}{2}$  of an acre in size. Seven tenant-cultivators operated two parcels of paddy; 3 tenant-cultivators operated 3 parcels of paddy each; only 2 tenant-cultivators operated 4 parcels of paddy each. They were Guneris who cultivated a total extent of 1 acre 35 perches in 4 individual parcels, and S.Martin who operated a total extent of 2 acres 30 perches of paddy land in 4 individual parcels. Several inferences could be derived from the above facts.

- (i) Sufficient lowland for even basic subsistence was seriously lacking in Ambana which had only 14.5 acres for a population of 602 persons;
- (ii) Consequently many were forced to work as tenant-cultivators in paddy lands owned by certain (Ambana) villagers and outsiders. These tenants were at the mercy of land-owners as evidenced by the 5 cases of tenant-rotation on a cultivation season (Kanna) basis;
- (iii) A number of tenants had even attempted to stabilise their position by taking on several parcels of paddy on a share cropping basis (ande). However, a great majority (73%) were found to cultivate only single parcels of paddy under ande.<sup>13</sup> Even for which they had to compete not only with fellow villagers but also with cultivators of surrounding villagers. In such a situation the struggle to obtain tenancy rights to more than one parcel of paddy, especially when the paddy land owners were non-villagers became more acute and the tenant-cultivators were forced into a higher degree of servitude dependence on the land-owner. Some of the tenant-cultivators in turn were able to react by diversifying their sources of income to avoid being too deeply drawn into a position of complete dependence on the land-owners for their existence.

The acuteness of land hunger as far as lowland was concerned was reflected in the fact that while Ambana folk only owned 14.5 acres of lowland, they operated a total extent of approximately 44 acres - or, three times the owned extent.

The acute state of competition among tenants of both Ambana and surrounding villages for tenancy rights of paddy holdings in the Ambana yaya was reflected in the fact that Ambana tenants even took upon paddy holdings of below  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an acre under adverse tenancy contracts like giving half share of harvests (after initial deductions for inputs provided) and being subjected to measures like tenant-rotation on a kanna basis.

Many of the tenants pursued one or more other occupations besides paddy cultivation, irrespective of the size of the paddy plots or the number they cultivated. It was because the costs of inputs and crop-share to the land owner were too steep to make a substantial profit margin. What was left over was mainly used for subsistence purposes, rather than for generation of income. In many cases the part of the harvest which went to the tenant-cultivator could not even completely satisfy his subsistence requirements. Thus, many of the Ambana tenants were pushed towards occupational diversification. It was quite usual to find that a tenant-cultivator, was also a part-time carpenter, a manual labourer or a toddy tapper.

#### Highland

In case of highland though the total owned acreage was about 107 acres the operated acreage was only 68 (63% of the owned acreage). Though this may suggest an under-utilisation of highland, much of the highland was used for housing and other basic amenities.

The only available land was in narrow strips between houses, and this land was mainly restricted to few coconut palms and manioc plants. Thus, what is meant by operated land at the village-level is the haphazard cultivation of manioc and banana plants in narrow spaces and a few hundred coconut trees scattered over the village - most of which are tapped for toddy for jaggery making.

The 107 acres of highland was in 130 individual plots of land ranging in sizes from below  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an acre to above 5 acres. The average size of highland plot was between  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre to less than 1 acre (.82 of an acre). The 130 plots of highland were owned by 71 single owners and 99 joint owners. The most significant feature in the ownership pattern of highland holdings was the prominence of joint owners.<sup>14</sup>

The distribution of highland among land owners according to holding sizes is shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Owned highland (by type of holdings)\*

Holding size (acres)	No. of single owners	No. of joint owners	No. of parcels	Total extent		
				A	R	P
1/4	31	2	32	6	3	33
1/2 - below 1/4	14	2	18	4	0	20
3/4 - below 1/2	15	18	29	12	2	0
1 - below 3/4	10	24	23	16	2	0
1 - below 1	4	42	26	32	2	33
7/7 2	5	13	12	34	1	0

\*Some single owners and joint owners owned more than one parcel of land falling into different holding sizes. Thus, the total of single owners and joint owners as given in Table 4 is greater than the actual number.

A majority (42%) of the joint owners were concentrated in highland holdings between the 1 - 2 acre size category. The average size of a holding in this category was approximately 1.25 acres. Usually 2-3 registered (joint) owners<sup>15</sup> were found to be associated with each of the 26 individual holdings in this holding size category.

Though joint ownership of highland was prominent in Ambana it should be noted that little or no joint operation of highland took place. This is because available highland was taken up by houses and other constructions like wells and latrines. There was no space for organised highland cultivation work.

The prominence of joint ownership speaks not only of land inheritance customs, and the shortage of land, but also of the value of land as a symbol of material wealth and social status.

Those of the Ambana population who had more land than others, even if the lands were barren, were treated as being affluent and socially better placed than others. For example, P. Suwaris, P. Pina and P. Siriya who had more highland than others were socially looked upto by the rest of the Ambana folk.<sup>16</sup>

Pina, Suwaris and Siriya, owned more individual highland plots and more total highland extents than the rest of the village. A certain proportion of the highlands were owned singly and more were owned jointly by all three individuals.

For example, Pina owned (singly and jointly) a total extent of 7.45 acres in 6 separate holdings; Siriya owned (singly and jointly) a total extent of 12.75 acres in 5 separate holdings; Suwaris owned (singly and jointly) a total of 5.41 acres in 4

separate holdings. The two largest single highland parcels were owned by P. Bandiya (5.50 acres) and Mrs Leela Jayakody (4.00 acres) - who were residents of the Ambana village.

In 1961 a small block of land (7 acres in extent) was distributed among 28 households to build houses. Individual allotments were about .25 of an acre in size - sufficient to build a house and other basic constructions. This group of allotments is called by the other Ambana folk as 'the colony' or in more derogatory tones "Koriyawa". The setting up of a 'colony', in the middle of the Ambana village, though motivated by human feelings towards the plight of Ambana folk, had created an additional division (the colony in the village besides the two already existing ones - Ihalagama and Pahalagama). These two divisions look down upon the 'colony' households as a pauper lot of low social status.

## Chapter 3

### POPULATION AWARENESS AND EXPOSURE TO INFORMATION SOURCES

#### 3.1 Population Awareness : Present Position

Almost everyone (103 respondents or 97%) was aware of the population growth in the village in the last decade and all of them regarded it as a problem requiring urgent solutions. The sharp increase in population was felt in a number of ways: less land for housing and cultivation (71 respondents), fewer employment opportunities in the immediate environment (50 respondents), an increase in thefts and other anti-social activities in recent years (26 respondents).

The 106 respondents advocated birth spacing intervals which ranged from 2-5 years, with an average of 3 years. The first child was generally born to an Ambana family within 2 years of marriage, the second within 4 years, and the third child after 8 years of marriage. The spacing between births were 2 years for the second child and 4 years for the third child, the first two births occurring fairly close to each other.

The tendency to increase the birth space between the second and the third child is probably due to economic pressures. For example, 70 respondents pointed to the need to consider the future of their children; 60 were concerned about the health of the children and the mother, and 41 gave reasons like landlessness, low family incomes, food and housing shortages.

Although the ideal Ambana family was perceived to be 4 children (2 males and 2 females) many of the Ambana folk (47%) had equal or more children.

The majority (75 respondents) thought that techniques of family planning should be taught only to the older villagers, while 68 respondents felt that everyone over 20 years of age, whether they be married or single, male or female should have these instructions.

Of the 100 persons who responded to a query about nominal awareness<sup>17</sup> of contraceptives, while 25 had no knowledge of them. Of the 75 persons who were aware, 71 were able to name a method or more. Of them 26 respondents were only able to name a single method; 45 were able to name two or more methods. Of the 75 respondents a majority (44 persons) were able to name the condom as a contraceptive, followed by tubectomy (41 respondents), the pill (34 respondents) and the rhythm method (21 respondents). IUD and vasectomy were least known with 16 and 9 respondents respectively.

Of those who were able to identify the contraceptive by name, more knew how to use the condom (38 respondents). They knew about the method of use and benefits and shortcomings of the use of the condom, followed by the pill (28 respondents), tubectomy (18 respondents) and the rhythm method (16 respondents). IUD and vasectomy were least known as far as a practical awareness<sup>18</sup> was concerned.

The records kept by the midwife, for the Mirigama M.O.H. area who serviced the Ambana village showed that during the four year period between 1971-74, the condom as a contraceptive had gained a wider acceptance than the pill or tubectomy methods of contraception. Both pills and tubectomy which gained some ground in the 1972 and 1973 were found to have declined by the end of 1974 (Table 1).

Table 1            Ambana acceptors of contraceptives for the years 1971-74\*

Contraceptives	No. of acceptors			
	1971	1972	1973	1974
Preethi (Condom)	15	32	24	36
Pill	23	25	30	23
Tubectomy	-	4	4	2
Total	38	61	58	61

\* Source : Records of midwife for Mirigama M.O.H. Area.

Both pills and tubectomy suffered a set back between 1973-74 because of their reported ill-effects on several Ambana mothers. Of the 38 respondents identified in the survey to possess a practical awareness of the condom, 35 were regular users. It is very likely that on the basis of its adoption trend between 1971-74, the actual number of regular users may have been much higher than the 35 individuals who were identified. A certain proportion of regular users may have been reluctant to provide the information.

### 3.2 Exposure to Information Sources

Of the 103 heads of households who responded to queries concerning newspaper readership 62 (60%) said they read newspapers either daily, once a week, or occasionally and 41 (40%) respondents that they never read newspapers. Seventy four percent (74%) read the newspapers at tea-kiosks, at the nearby Indiparape junction and 26%<sup>19</sup> in neighbouring homes. Seventy percent (70%) read newspapers to know more of local happenings and 30% to improve their general knowledge of domestic and foreign affairs, for advertisements, cartoons and short stories.

Of the 102 heads of households who responded to a query concerning exposure to radio, 45 (44%) listened daily; 39 (38%) occasionally and 18 (18%) said that they did not listen at all. The village had 31 transistor radio sets at the time of the survey.<sup>20</sup>

Forty (48%) of the radio listeners listened at home, while 44 (52%) at a friend's or a neighbour's home, at the tea-kiosk, at market places in the Mirigama town, etc.

A majority of the radio listeners (55%) said that they listened to the radio for its news programmes on local and world affairs, while 27% stated listening in to the radio for entertainment purposes. Only 2 persons listened to the radio for its commercial advertisements.

Of the 97 who responded to queries about films 61 (63%) said they viewed films at least once a week, once a month, or occasionally. Only 36 (37%) did not have the opportunity or the money to view films. Seventy five percent (75%) viewed films mostly for their entertainment value, while 25% said they saw films for its story and artistic values.

#### Importance of Information Sources as Perceived by Respondents

Of the 104 heads of households who responded to queries concerning sources of information about extra-village incidents and personalities, 101 (97%) mentioned gossip to be a major source through which they received the information. Seventy-eight quoted the radio as a source of information followed by newspapers (52 respondents), hearsay (44 respondents), film (31 respondents) and formal interpersonal contacts with Government officials (7 respondents).<sup>21</sup>

In terms of the reliability of information sources the radio emerged first with 41 (39%) of the respondents quoting it, followed by the gossip (35 or 34% of the respondents), newspapers (23 or 22% of the respondents) and hearsay (6 or 5% of the respondents).

Radio audiences of Ambana listened in to the radio more for the news value of its programmes on local and world affairs than for

its entertainment programmes. Though the information coming through the radio was selective, because of time-constraints, yet, more Ambana listeners believed in the importance of its messages, than those coming through newspaper and other sources.

In an order of perceived importance the people of Ambana relegated newspapers to a lower position than gossip. The strong political bias in information coming through the newspapers, and then often confused and contradictory information bits about incidents and personages in the immediate village environment and in the country, have contributed much to reduce the image of the newspaper as a reliable source of information. More respondents preferred to believe information coming through gossip than through the newspapers. People judge the reliability of messages on the basis of what they perceived in their immediate environment and in what they encounter in their day-to-day lives. The news from sources like the newspapers contradict what they see and believe in, they begin to rely more on other sources like gossip which carry messages more in accordance with their beliefs.<sup>22</sup> Also, the fact that newspapers did not function as instruments of mass media in Ambana (only 3 households bought daily newspapers, 7 households only Sunday newspapers - footnote 19) may have encouraged the people to rely more on personal sources of information.

Mass media as information sources for increasing awareness about population problems and contraception were found to be less effective than interpersonal sources, both formal (e.g. midwife, Public Health Inspector, and physicians), and informal (e.g. friends, neighbours or relatives). However, more persons were found to listen to radio programmes on family planning, family health and other population matters (32 respondents) than those who read such topics in newspapers (18 respondents).<sup>23</sup>

The film as a medium of information on family planning was unknown in Ambana. However, the intrinsic appeal of the medium could be effectively utilised for a population programme in the village.

### 3.3 Exposure to Public Health Activities

Of the 105 who responded to a query concerning the nature of their awareness of public health, 74 (70%) were found to be quite aware of its function as related to their village. All of them interpreted public health to be broadly one of maintaining an environmental cleanliness to eradicate diseases.

Sixty eight (64% of the total respondent population) were found to be aware of public health activities in the village. Of them 42 (62%) stated that such activities were mainly in the nature of preventive services through vaccinations etc. Only 26 (38%) stated that such services were essentially of a curative nature. In actual fact both types of services were accorded to the Ambana village by public health authorities.

For example, the following are some of the statistics on the involvement of the public health nurse (Mirigama area) in public health activities in the village.

Table 2 Number of infants and pregnant mothers attended to by the public health nurse (1970-75)\*

Year	Pregnant mothers (registered as attended)	Infants (registered as attended)
1970	17	5
1971	18	14
1972	14	9
1973	10	9
1974	8	7
1975**	-	3

\* Extracts from records of the public health nurse (Mirigama area).

\*\* During the survey period of 3 months, January 15th - April 15th.

Both the Public Health Inspector and the public health nurse were found to be active in the village. Of the 106 respondents who replied to queries concerning the activities of the above two persons, 81 (76%) were aware of the activities of the Public Health Inspector and 99 (93%) were aware of the activities of the public health nurse in the Ambana village.

The public health nurse was found to be active in maternal and childcare and health activities. She also was found to be active on family planning advice and in the distribution of contraceptives among the female population as evidenced by the number of recorded condom acceptance of Ambana, who received the contraceptives from her.

Table 3 Acceptor record of contraceptives\*  
in Ambana  
(on the basis of contraceptives distributed by the  
Public Health Nurse)

Year	Condom (No. of acceptors)	Pill (No. of acceptors)	Tubectomy cases some on her advice (No. of acceptors)
1971	15	23	-
1972	32	25	4
1973	24	30	4
1974	36	23	2

\*Extracts from : Records of Public Health Nurse (Mirigama MOH area)

Similarly, the Public Health Inspector was instrumental in encouraging and advising Ambana folk about the necessity of supporting public health measures like building latrines, community wells, refuse disposal measures etc., (burying, burning, compost-making and dumping). He with the public health nurse was instrumental in conducting immunisation programmes in the village.

The Ambana village was also exposed to a baseline survey of Community Health<sup>24</sup> around 1972-1973 period. According to the survey Ambana had :

- i. 1 permanent pit-latrine for 24 persons or (5 households);
- ii. 1 well for 23 persons (or approximately 5 households);
- iii. 1 in 4 houses with adequate light and ventilation conditions.

During the period of the present survey (January-April 1975) the conditions were found to have improved to an extent that the village boasted of :

- i. 1 permanent latrine for 16 persons (or 3 households);
- ii. 1 well for 15 persons (or approximately 3 households);
- iii. 1 in 3 houses with adequate light and ventilation conditions.

The improvement in public health facilities in the village, on one hand was a result of the public health campaigns conducted by the Public Health Inspector supported by the public health nurse in the village, and on the other, a result of the efforts made by certain youthful groups to inculcate a public health awareness among the Ambana folk through the formation of a Public Health Society<sup>25</sup> in 1975.

## Chapter 4

### VILLAGE LEADERS

#### 4.1 Positions of Influence

Three individuals K.P. Siril Sagara (R 62), P. Suwaris (R 73) and P. Pina (R 102) in that order emerged as the main opinion leaders in Ambana.

Siril Sagara (R 62) emerged as the single most accepted opinion leader in the village but among those who quoted more than one opinion leader Siril Sagara had a smaller following. While Suwaris and Pina represented the older generation in the village, Siril Sagara was active among the village youth. Many therefore who regarded Suwaris and Pina as opinion leaders did not treat Siril Sagara with the same regard.

Both Suwaris and Pina had been active in the Ambana society, Suwaris being elected Secretary of the Ambana Rural Development Society on many occasions while Pina was a member and later on the President of the Society. Siril Sagara's influence was more recent and flowed from his position of Chairman of the Ambana Cultivation Committee and President of the Ambana Sri Lanka Freedom Party organisation. While accepting Siril Sagara for his political position, many members preferred Suwaris and Pina because of their social acceptance. All in all Suwaris was accorded a higher position than either Pina or Siril. Siril was accorded a position closer to Pina than to Suwaris. For example, the scores of the three individuals based on the number who recognised opinion leader combinations are as follows :

Table 1 Opinion leader combination scores of R62, R73 and R102

Opinion leader combinations <sup>26</sup>	Siril (R62)	Pina (R102)	Suwaris (R73)
R62 + R73	11	-	11
R62 + R102	3	3	-
R73 + R102	-	13	13
R62 + R73 + R102	12	12	12
Total	26	28	36

The difference in political beliefs between Siril Sagara and Suwaris + Pina is underlain by a deeper bifurcation on the basis of family grouping and relative affluence (on the extent of lands owned).

Both Pina and Suwaris belong to the Ihalagama sector of Ambana. The Ihalagama sector mainly consists of two broad family groups, the Labbalage group and the Perumbadage group, who were considered to be relatively more affluent than the Pahalagama sector in which K.P. Siril Sagara had his home, and which also had a higher concentration of the Kekulupurage, Menikpurage and Hehathpurage families. Seven and a half acres of paddy (or 53% of the total paddy acreage owned by Ambana) were owned by the two family groups, Labbalage and Perumbadage - of which both Pina and Suwaris were prominent members. Similarly, the two family groups also owned 45 acres of highland (42% of the total highland acres of Ambana). In terms of manpower too, the two families accounted for 174 persons above 15 years of age (or 40% of the total population of the village of this age group).

Folks of the Pahalagama, represented by Siril's family group Kekulupurage, and immediate relatives the Menikpurage and Hehathpurage groups were relatively less affluent : They owned about 2.30 acres of lowland (16%) and 18 acres of highland (17%), while in terms of manpower they accounted for 22% of the total population of the village in ages equal to and above 15 years. Further 15, (50%) of the colonist (Koriyawa) households who occupied  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre plots of highland were from the Menikpurage, Kekulupurage and Hehathpurage groups.

Thus, while Siril Sagara drew his support essentially from the Pahalagama sector and the colony sector which were economically on a lower footing in the village, Pina and Suwaris drew their support from the relatively affluent and conservative minded groups of the Ihalagama sector.

Siril, however, was able to extend his influence over the entire village because of (i) his political commitments, (ii) his ability to mobilise both the youth and the less affluent families of the Ihalagama sector, (iii) his tactfulness in placating potential threats to his position by using the general feeling of isolation of the entire Ambana community.

Siril Sagara's active involvement in leftist political activities dates back to the mid 1960s. He soon became the chief organiser of the SLFP group in the village which formed part of the Ward No. 40 (other villages being Indiparape, Paruwela, Gangoda, Yapalane, Hinamulla and Siyambalagoda) in the Pallewela (Yatipaha) Village Council. Initially he received the party nomination to contest Ward No. 40 on the SLFP ticket, which however, was withdrawn after protests made by members of the Goigama caste in the surrounding predominantly Goigama villages. Instead, one S. Wijeratne, a Goigama caste member of the SLFP from Gangoda

village, was chosen as the party nominee. Siril in protest sent in his nominations as an Independent candidate. At the Village Council elections held on 21st May 1969 he lost to the SLFP candidate by only 7 votes :

Table 2 Results of the Village Council elections  
Ward No. 40 (21.5.1969)

Name of Candidate	Votes obtained
S. Wijeratne (SLFP)	298
K.P. Siril Sagara (Independent)	291
I.R. Charlis Singho (UNP)	67

A popular belief in the village was that Siril's defeat was mainly because of the refusal of a few individuals (e.g. Suwaris and Pina among others) of Ihalagama sector to permit a Pahala-gama member (of a lower economic status) to emerge in the village, championing the cause of the poor in Ambana. This belief was responsible in tarnishing the image of influentials like Suwaris, and Pina in later years - thus paving the way for Siril to emerge prominently in organisational activity in the village.

His strong political commitment (irrespective of the fact that he contested the Village Council elections as an Independent candidate) was mainly responsible in mobilising the support of the Ambana people for the SLFP in the 1970 elections. He continued to hold the post of President and chief organiser of the SLFP organisation in the village. After the general elections, his political commitments won for him the Chairmanship of the Ambana Cultivation Committee in 1974 and the Secretaryship of the Ambana Rural Development Society, in 1975, which he held during the survey period.

Siril was able to harness the youth in the village for productive work. For example, a Public Health Society was formed on the initiative of Siril Sagara in March 1975.

This organisation was composed essentially of youth below 30 years of age of both sexes. The only older member was P. Samaneris (age : 38 years) who was the Treasurer of the organisation : Both the Vice President and the Joint Secretary were women, while 3 of the Committee members (total 6 members) were also women.

He was also instrumental in the creation of a SLFP Women's Society (February 1965) in Ambana. The women in the Committee were in the age interval of 20-33 years. It consisted of the following :

President	:	P. Dayawathie
Vice President	:	K. Kusumawathie
Secretary	:	M. Seelawathie
Asst. Secretary	:	R.P. Somawathie
Treasurer	:	K. Sumanawathie
Chief Spokeswoman	:	R. Irin and a Committee of 6 members

Siril Sagara also provided a form of loose leadership to a Sports Society which centered around a group of about 40-50 youthful enthusiasts in the village. It however, did not have a formal Committee.

Siril also involved the youth in *shramadana* activities (e.g. cutting the Ambana-Mirigama road in 1969). In the post-survey period (1976 January) he was found to have formed a Death Donation Society. While donations were spontaneously collected from the village at the death of a villager the youth provided other services like decorating the funeral houses etc.

During the survey phase two regular gambling spots in the village associated with the homes of K.D. Romiel and L. Suwa were identified. Towards the latter part of the survey phase (around May 1975) it was found that increasing numbers of Ambana youth were being drawn into these spots. Professional operators from outside the village were conducting these games.

In the post-survey period Siril initiated a loosely knit vigilance group in the village (between October-December 1975). This group which had complete support of the village (even support of rivals like Pina and Suwaris) was able to eradicate the gambling habit by applying social and economic sanctions (in the lines of a *varige sabha*) on any villager who participated in these activities. The gambling spots were eventually closed down.

The involvement of Siril in broad social work of the type mentioned above where he united the members of both Ihalagama and Pahala-gama won for him wide favour and acceptance in the village. This was amply exhibited during a meeting of the Rural Development Society held on the 29th of March 1975.

#### 4.2 Observations of a Rural Development Society Meeting (29th March 1975 : 1500 hrs)

The meeting was held at a grocery store located near the railway lines in the outer Ambana area. It was attended by the Assistant Government Agent - Mirigama, the Rural Development Officer and the Public Health Inspector. The meeting began at 3.00 p.m. Signatures of those present were collected, in order to legitimize the initiation of a new Rural Development Society in place of the one which went defunct around 1973. The office holders of the defunct Society (President : P. Pina; Secretary : P. Suwaris, Treasurer : P. Bandiya and 10 Committee members) were present at this meeting. They too signed the document stating the declared need for a new Rural Development Society.

Siril Sagara proposed one K.P. John as a temporary President to conduct the meeting and N.A.D. Sarnelis as a temporary Secretary. An introductory speech was made by Siril stating the need for a new Rural Development Society. Nominations were then called in for various posts.

Both Siril and Pina were proposed for the post of President in the new Rural Development Society. Siril refused the post and in turn proposed L.P. Jayalath for the post of President. At the voting stage Jayalath was elected President by a majority vote.

This led to a situation of unrest among the supporters of Pina resulting in a cross-talk between Siril's and Pina's supporters. Intervention by the Rural Development Officer proved futile. The supporters of Pina left the meeting in protest. The remaining crowd unanimously elected Siril Sagara as the Secretary, K.S. Simion as the Vice President, K.P. John as the Assistant Secretary and K.P. Dharmasena (Siril's brother) as the Treasurer. Dharmasena withdrew pleading inability to devote sufficient time to attend to the duties of such a post. He in turn nominated H.P. Wije who was then elected for the post. Seven other Committee members were also elected.

Significant features in relation to leadership in Ambana which emerged from this encounter were :

- i. Siril was nominated alongside Pina for the post of Presidency. On declining the post, Siril's nominee, Jayalath, was elected to the post in preference to Pina. This showed the waning role of Pina as a village leader.
- ii. Siril was elected the Secretary/Rural Development Society which hitherto was continuously held by Suwaris from 1946. Suwaris himself was at the meeting of the Rural Development Society but left the meeting with the pro-Pina supporters.
- iii. Siril dominated the entire proceedings with his opening speech, and subsequently submitted his proposals for the development of Ambana. It was duly ratified by the new Committee, agreed to by the general membership and was forwarded to the Assistant Government Agent, Mirigama and the Mirigama Rural Development Officer.
- iv. It was observed that certain pressure groups were able to exert influence over the village leaders.

Three individuals H.P. Thega, P. Jathis and H.P. Nandasena were seen to advise both Pina and Suwaris on how they should react to Siril and his group. Similarly, two individuals K.P. Dharmasena and K.D. Sianeris were found to advise Siril.

The presence of such individuals points to the presence of pressure groups in the village. They in the guise of supporting the prominent village leaders, in fact manipulate them for their own ends.

Table 1

## Village-Level Organisation of Ambana

	Size of working committee	Estimated <sup>1</sup> general following	Frequency <sup>2</sup> of meetings (per month)	Offices held by <sup>3</sup> opinion leaders		
				Pina	Suwaris	Siril
Ambana :						
Cultivation Committee	10	-	1	-	CM	C
Young Farmers' Association	12	28	1	-	Ad	-
SLFP Branch Society	3	47	1	-	-	P
SLFP Womens Society	12	26	1	-	-	Ad
UNP Branch Society	6	17	-	VP	Sec.	-
Rural Development Society	12	86	-	-	-	Sec.
Public Health Society	11	20	-	-	-	Ad
Parent-Teacher Association	7	19	-	-	Sec.	-
Kirimetiulle Temple Society	14	54	-	VP	Sec.	-
Sri Piyadassi Dhamma School Society	16	25	-	-	-	P
Buddhist Youth Society	11	30	-	-	-	P

<sup>1</sup> Based on attendance of non-committee members at general meetings

<sup>2</sup> Only 4 of the organisations met once a month. The rest met at least once in 4 months

<sup>3</sup> Abbreviations :

CM - Committee member  
 C - Chairman  
 Ad - Advisor  
 P - President  
 VP - Vice President  
 Sec. - Secretary

BASES OF INTEGRATION

Ambana had 11 organisations at the time of the survey. Each had a Working Committee (elected or nominated), and a programme of action. Some had written constitutions. All the organisations showed the broad bifurcation of Ihalagama and Pahalagama groupings connected with the 4 broad family groups. The 11 functioning organisations of Ambana with details of their membership is set out on ~~the~~ page ~~xxxxxxxx~~ 27.

The Rural Development Society was the most popular in the village, because of its longer period of activity and its record of service.

Some of its accomplishments are given below :

- i. Successful negotiation with owners of the Cinnamon Estate to donate 2 acres to the Ambana Primary School (1952).
- ii. Construction of the foot bridge connecting the village with the Colombo-Mirigama road (1959).
- iii. Opening a road-way linking Ambana to the Colombo-Mirigama main road.
- iv. Construction of the RDS building (1960).
- v. Clearing and preparation of the Ambana school garden, and clearing of irrigation channels in the Ambana yaya (1974).

Suwaris may be singled out as one who had played an active role in the Ambana RDS from its inception upto 1975. He was its Secretary from 1946 upto 1975. Pina was also a Committee member of the RDS, who occasionally served as its Vice President. In 1969 after the death of P. Kawwa, who had been its President from early 1950s, Pina became the President and remained so until 1973. In 1975 a complete overhaul took place in the RDS when the existing leadership was replaced by a more dynamic and youthful group - led by Siril Sagara.

The emergence of Siril Sagara as a village leader was also observed in other organisations in the village : For example, Siril (at the period of the survey) was the Advisor, President, or the Secretary of 8 of the 11 active organisations in the village.

Besides the personal rivalry between the Ihalagama and Pahalagama groups and between the relatively more affluent and the truly depressed groups (colony residents + economically underprivileged Ihalagama and Pahalagama families), and between Siril Sagara and Pina + Suwaris, a form of political rivalry also underlay organised activity in the village. This at times resulted in the duplication of organisations on the basis of political ideologies. For example, (a) when the SLFP group under the leadership of Siril Sagara took over the workings of the RDS in 1975, the UNP group under Pina and Suwaris were displaced. They in turn reacted by initiating a separate RDS in Ambana (10th April 1975) - which, however, failed to gain registration as a society. During the post survey period (May 1975 - May 1976) this duplicate organisation became defunct due to the dissipation of the initial organisational fervour among Pina + Suwaris's adherents. (b) Among the 11 functioning organisations of Ambana are two temple societies, the Kirimetiulle Temple Society and the Sri Piyadassi Dhamma School Society - the former run by Pina and Suwaris and the UNP group and the latter run by Siril Sagara and his SLFP group. Similarly, even though Suwaris is represented in the essentially SLFP oriented Cultivation Committee, he also supervises a Young Farmers' Association - initiated by the UNP group in Ambana.

However, it should be noted that political differences among the leaders and other groups were not so rigid as to strain deeply the interpersonal bonds which existed among the people of Ambana. Though a great deal of cross-talk among rival groups was encountered at general meetings of organisations - e.g. at the formative meetings of the new RDS on 29th March 1975 and at monthly meetings of the CC - they are merely manifestations of underlying petty envies and fears of being pushed to the background in organisational activity as a result of action by rivals (individuals and groups) rather than a result of deep rooted hate among individuals or groups.

The duplication of organisations in Ambana may be interpreted as a result of a move by those who held posts of responsibility under a previous political regime favourable to them to maintain themselves in positions of influence in the Ambana society in a period where the political climate is hostile towards their ambitions.

The existence of a small group of individuals that manipulates both the leaders and organisational activity to their own advantage (see p. 25 ) was discerned during the survey (at the aforementioned RDS meeting). It was observed that these individuals goaded the more prominent leaders (Pina, Suwaris and Siril) to speak out against opposing factions.

These individuals were in fact reluctant to hold office in village organisations for fear of comprising their positions. For example, A.D. Sianeris, one of the persons who was observed to advise Siril at the RDS meeting on the course of action he should take, belonged to a poor family in the Ihalagama sector. He was for long a tenant in Pina's paddy lands. On one occasion due to a slur cast on Pina he was pushed out of the tenancy. He reacted by changing loyalties, and sought to reduce the image of Pina. K.P. Dharmasena and K.D. Sarthelis, two other advisors of Siril were close kinsmen of Siril and belonged to the Pahalagama sector. All of them apparently stood to gain the goodwill of the person they supported and advised, a mental satisfaction of having advised a leader, and an element of redress of grievances against a common opponent.

Ambana villagers in the final analysis were bound together by common problems of landlessness, poverty and discrimination on the basis of their caste status. Thus, as far as outsiders and outside forces were concerned they showed a relatively united front. This feature was evidenced at the Village Council elections of 1959 when Siril Sagara as an Independent candidate lost to a non-villager by only 7 votes.

#### 5.1 A Strategy to Harness Integrative Tendencies

Towards a programme of diffusion of family planning techniques it is considered suitable to bring together at least the Committee members of all of the 11 active organisations to an open discourse situation in order to level down existing group differences which may have an adverse effect on the programme. Unless these differences are initially ironed out the action programme itself may be used as a focal point of inter-group conflict.

Though the RDS would normally be a suitable central organisation to provide a forum of discussion for Committee members of all of the village organisations because of its broad acceptance as a working organisation for over 25 years, yet its recent role as a focal point of conflict between Siril's group and those led by Pina and Suwaris makes it unsuitable. The Public Health Society is similarly unsuitable since it is run entirely by Siril's group. A more suitable organisation which could be harnessed for such a task is the Cultivation Committee of Ambana, because :

- (a) the CC undertakes broad developmental activity affecting the entire village and thus the sponsorship of an action programme on family planning techniques comes within its purview;

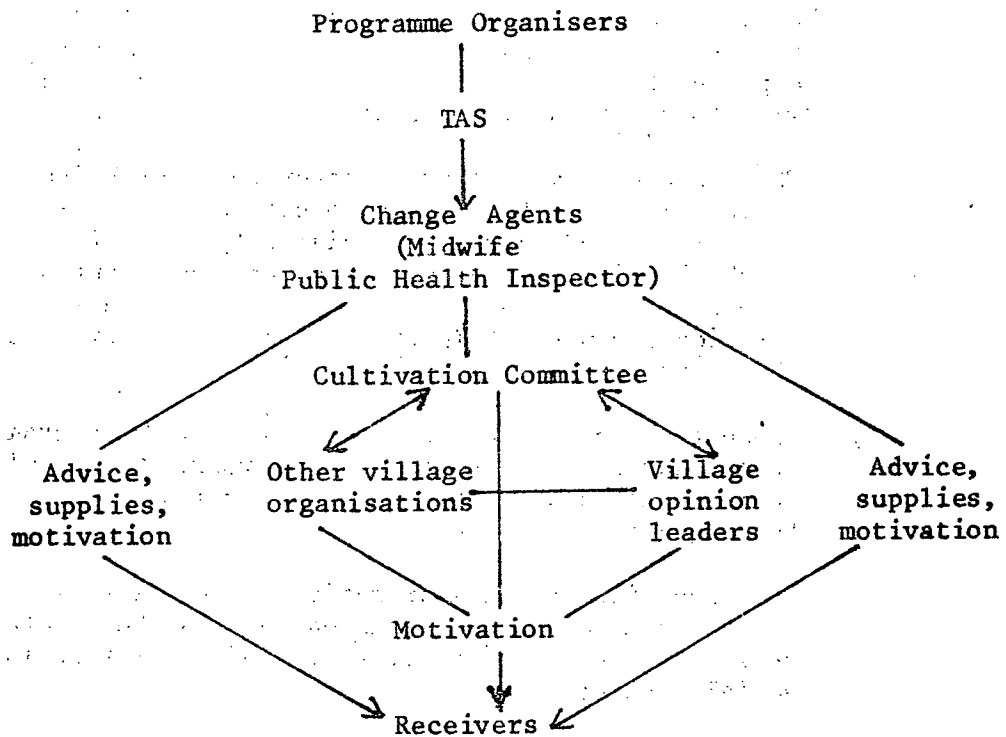
- (b) The CC has close liaison with the area politician whose help is vital in obtaining official recognition from the Department of Health, and in order to satisfy other more felt-needs like land, employment, education, sanitation, and so on.

The training responsibilities and requirements for the envisaged programme at Ambana, need to take several factors into consideration.

- i. Programme organisers;
- ii. Change agents; and
- iii. Sponsoring village-level bodies and persons (see Chart below).

Proposed Family Planning Information Diffusion Programme : Ambana Village

(Chart showing Training Requirements and Responsibilities)



TAS - Training  
Advice and  
Supplies

The Family Planning Communication Strategy Project of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the Department of Health and the Sri Lanka Family Planning Association may act as programme organisers while the International Planned Parenthood Federation-Community Based Distribution may be requested to supply contraceptives for the programme. The Agrarian Research and Training Institute may evaluate the project at a later stage.

The change agents namely the Public Health Inspector and the Midwife have already established firm rapport with the villagers. They may, however, be given a specialised training in communication techniques and a refresher course in modern methods of contraception. These officials in turn could train the office bearers of village organisations<sup>30</sup> and village opinion leaders who would eventually form the motivational cadres in the village. The change agents should continuously monitor the work of the motivators and offer expert advice and guidance when necessary. The programme organisers may constantly monitor the programme to evaluate its success and to redirect it if necessary. The proposed strategy has a number of advantages :

- (1) Since motivation and distribution of contraceptives are undertaken by the village-based organisations and change agents - as against field workers of out of village organisations - the artificial elevation of village aspirations will be minimised. Selection of village-level organisations is conducive to effective motivation as their attitudes and perception of village life are more or less consonant with those of the villagers;
- (2) The two change agents are already well established in the village. Since they do not reside within the village and have an official duty to perform which the villagers view with a certain amount of respect, they are not drawn into interpersonal relationship network in the village which may impede their work;
- (3) Since the central message of the diffusion programme is already familiar to the change agents they would require only a short training in communication techniques;
- (4) By allocating the task of motivation to village-level organisations and opinion leaders the strategy achieves a *de facto* participation of rural folk in social change;

- (5) If a form of land and occupational reform. (suggested in the Land Section of Chapter 3) coupled with a programme to improve the educational, health and sanitary standards of the villagers is implemented side by side with the operationalisation of the proposed strategy it would speed up the family planning adoption process in the village.

Ambana with a history of exploitation and social isolation would move in the desired direction only if the programme is perceived by the villagers to directly bring in or be associated with other programmes which confer material benefits to the village society - like land, employment, housing and sanitation.

## Chapter 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ambana where about 90% of the families were of the Panna caste was socially isolated from and exploited by the Goigama caste villages that surrounded it. Of the 602 persons in the village about 50 worked as tenant-cultivators on lands owned by persons in the surrounding villages. Consequently they were pushed into a position of complete dependence on these landlords for ande rights.

To earn a livelihood the Ambana cultivators were forced to do various casual occupations. These occupations were less routinised and largely because of this there was a high degree of absenteeism among those employed as labourers in the surrounding estates.

Originally Ambana had a large tract of highland and lowland which were subsequently acquired by the Government under the Waste Lands Ordinance of 1840, and sold to affluent families. These lands were demarcated to form a number of large estates around the village. The estate owners also obtained Government approval to buy a further 7 acres (Aluthhena) of crown land which divided the village into two distinct sections, the Ihalagama and the Pahalagama. In the 1960s this land was acquired by Government for a village expansion scheme and about 30 landless families of Ambana were each given  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre of land. Both Ihalagama and Pahalagama people regarded the 30 colonists as a miserable lot - the residents of the 'Koriyawa'.

In spite of the numerous differences that surrounded them the villagers tried to maintain a sense of solidarity. Yet these attempts were considerably weakened by the situation in the village, the rivalries among the three groups, the Ihalagama, Pahalagama and the Ambana colony, discontentment among the youth, the attitude of the older generation who had long controlled village activity and the opinion leaders who headed these factions. Rivalries and divisions within the groups also arose. This position appeared to be changing with the emergence of Siril Sagara, a youthful person with a charismatic personality, who was rapidly giving the village the much needed strong leadership.

The levels of education in Ambana were low, six years of formal schooling being the average for the 106 respondents. In the 15-30 age group the average was slightly higher. The village had a junior school but attendance was very poor as even the children had to work to supplement the family budget.

The economic difficulties they faced alerted the Ambana people to the population problem as one requiring immediate solution. Longer intervals after the birth of the second child may be an index of this.

The majority of persons (75) were aware of contraception. Of them more than half mentioned the condom and the pill. While the condom had gained acceptance the pill was waning in popularity on account of its reported ill effects.

Methods of contraception were publicised mostly by the Public Health Nurse and the Public Health Inspector. Information was also had from the local physician, friends, neighbours and relatives. Mass media, the radio and the newspaper were less effective as sources of information.

Opinion leaders and village institutions were found to be most useful in a programme of diffusing information in the village. There were 3 opinion leaders, Siril Sagara, Suwaris and Pina in the village whose support might be enlisted. These persons, however belonged to different camps: Siril Sagara to the Pahalagama group, of lower economic status but politically powerful especially with leftist oriented youths in the village. Suwaris and Pina belonged to Ihalagama, were economically stronger than Siril and enjoyed a position of higher social acceptance because of their long involvement in village activities. They were rightist oriented and conservative. These opinion leaders could work in collaboration with the other members of the Cultivation Committee which is a fairly stable organisation in the village. Suwaris and Siril Sagara were both members of the Cultivation Committee.

The Cultivation Committee could be the forum of discussion at which all groups in the village would be represented. The Public Health Inspector and the public health nurse who are respected in the village could give the group the necessary instructions and guidance. The group in turn could function as diffusers of information to the rest through group discussions, poster displays, film shows etc., arranged for by the Cultivation Committee and the two change agents.

The villagers of Ambana could be more receptive and better motivated if measures are simultaneously taken to solve their problems of landlessness, uncertain employment, nutrition, health and sanitation. It is axiomatic that people would heed the message and cooperate in a programme only if they were convinced that it would satisfy a strongly felt need.

## APPENDIX I

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AMBANA LANDS<sup>28</sup>

Ambana village with its Panna caste forms a societal incongruency in an essentially Goigama village environment. Oral traditions of Ambana voice that their ancestors were resettled by Sinhala kings in the general area for services done to them. Tradition also quotes a *gamvara* (a land grant) of an extent of 65 amunas of lowland and 65 amunas of highland given by the kings to four Panna families, who were originally installed in the area by a royal edict.

- (i) Labbalage
- (ii) Perumbadage
- (iii) Hehathpurage
- (iv) Menikpurage

The family names are retained to-date. The entire population (except recent immigrants) can be divided into 4 groups based on the above family names.

The Ambana village proper apparently existed side by side with a Rodiya village (Rodiya caste - the lowest rung in the caste hierarchy of the island) and a vast area of common land which was used for chena cultivation, for the food supply, for herbs etc.

Almost all of the common lands (highland) were lost to the Ambana village through the Waste Lands Ordinance of 1840. Tradition holds that when the declaration was made by the British Government that claimants should forthwith declare and prove their claims to the lands within a specified period only a few Ambana folk did so. Many of them did not understand the message; some were too cowed down by the social position of their caste to make a bid to claim the land. Whatever the causal factors may be Ambana lost nearly all of its common land. Over years the lands were resold to the low-country affluent who gradually converted the common lands into rubber, coconut and cinnamon estates.

The Rodiyawatte was bought over from the Government by the Wijesekera family in the late 19th century, and the Rodiyas were

evicted. Their village land was converted into a cinnamon estate, the *Kurunduwatte*. Subsequently the estate changed hands on account of marital links with the Beraniyaga's family (Galadole Walawwe) and it remained with them till the Land Reform Commission took over. It was during the period when it was under the Galadole Walawwe, that *Kurunduwatte* estate annexed the 'aluth hena' 7 acre plot of land - on which now is situated the Ambana 'colony'.

Similarly, a large segment of the former common lands was bought over by Beraniyagala family to form the Ambana Rubber Estate (213 acres). *Halgahapitiyawatte* coconut estate (226 acres) was similarly formed by Beraniyagala family. Smaller extents of highland remaining in the village were bought over by other influential families like the Jayakkodys until Ambana village highland became constricted to a total extent of about 100 acres by 1961. In 1961, with the land grant of 7 acres given through the efforts of Mr Wijayabahu Wijesinghe, member of the legislature for the area for the creation of the 'colony' the Ambana village highland increased to a total of 107 acres, and this catered to a population of 602 persons during the period of the survey.

Population growth, low-levels of education and mounting economic pressures caused some Ambana villagers to sell off their paddy lands. Many others lost their paddy holdings through the non-settlement of mortgages on the lands made with outsiders. At the period of the survey only 14.5 acres of paddy land was actually owned by the Ambana villagers themselves. Much of the Ambana yaya (paddy stretch bearing the name of the village), which traditionally belonged to the village was found to be owned by individuals in adjacent Goigama villages of Indiparape, Navana, Neligama, Mungama and Halpe.

Much of the estates which surround the Ambana village have now been taken over by the Land Reform Commission. The entire *Kurunduwatte* (35 acres), 103 acres from the Ambana rubber estate, 145 acres from the *Halgahapitiyawatte* are now with the Land Reform Commission. The only salvation for the expanding population of Ambana lies in these lands.

Much of the present apathy in the village resulting from lack of sufficient employment opportunities and land to build homes could be solved by judicious decisions over the future of the Land Reform Commission estates around the village.

Ambana folk have been victims of the ignorance and heedlessness of the colonial rulers. The rural affluent who bought up their lands also exploited their lower social position to buy up their paddy lands and to expand the estate frontier into the village itself, dissecting the village into two divisions.

Ambana folk were victims of social ostracism by the surrounding Goigama villages which even affected representation at elective bodies like the Village Council.<sup>29</sup> Even political organisations were reluctant to support their cause fully for fear of antagonising the Goigama majority in the surrounding villages.

One solution would invariably be associated with setting up of a group of cooperative farms in these lands so that Ambana folk could commute daily from their homes to their work places. The incomes they derive through such employment would serve to boost the morale of the people which at present is at a low ebb.

In creating a daily commuting situation from homes to work places to estates, residential out movement of talented youth vital for village development could be averted. It further is a less problematic solution than one which aims at resettlement of the landless Ambana people in locations away from the home village.

However, this form of solution should have a village expansion component to ease the existing population pressure on land. For example, each depressed family may be given about an acre of land sufficient to build a house of their own. If these families are also provided employment in farms created on estates and in agro and cottage industries generated in the village environment their economic status may be lifted sufficiently so that the village expansion scheme population could avert a "Koriyawa" situation.

APPENDIX II

Table 1

Ambana Population (Specific Age Groups)

Age groups (years)	Males	Females	Total
Below 1	3	7	10
1 - 4	25	27	52
5 - 9	25	33	58
10 - 14	24	27	51
15 - 19	29	37	66
20 - 24	37	29	66
25 - 29	43	32	75
30 - 34	27	25	52
35 - 39	24	19	43
40 - 44	17	9	26
45 - 49	12	11	23
50 - 54	9	16	25
55 - 59	12	4	16
Equal to and over 60	15	24	39
Total	302	300	602

Table 2

Number of Children in Families

N = 106

No. of children	No. of families
0	7
1	16
2	9
3	10
4	14
5	14
Over 5	36

Table 3

Age at Marriage  
N = 100\*

Age group	Males	Females	Total
10 - 14	-	1	1
15 - 19	6	6	12
20 - 24	39	1	40
25 - 29	29	6	35
30 - 34	8	-	8
Equal to and over 35	4	-	4
Total	86	14	100

\* 6 could not recall the age of marriage

Table 4

Formal Education Status (a)

N = 106

Type of education	No. of respondents
Government school	74
Temple or Pirivena	4
Technical school	-
University	-
Other types of institutional education	-
No not received formal education	28
Total	106

Table 5

Formal Education Status (b)

N = 106

Duration of education (years)	No. of respondents
0	28
1 - 4	38
5 - 7	25
8 - 10	7
Over 10	8

Table 6

Employment Status

N = 106

Type of employment	No. of respondents
Cultivators	43
Labourers (both agricultural and non-agricultural)	43
Traders	4
Bakers	3
Government employees	2
Technical workers	1
Unemployed	10
Total	106

Table 7

Information Sources for Primary Awareness  
of Extra Village Incidents

N = 104\*

Information sources	No. of respondents
Gossip	101
Radio	78
Newspaper	52
Hearsay	31
**Others	7

\*  
2 did not respond

\*\*  
Includes Government and semi-  
Government officials of various  
types.

Table 8

Information Sources for Primary Awareness of  
Extra Village Incidents (on the Perceived  
Content Variety of Messages)

N = 104\*

Information sources	Scale of information (No. of respondents)
Radio	41
Gossip	35
Newspaper	23
Hearsay	6

\*

2 did not respond

Table 9

The Newspaper

Frequency of Newspaper Readership (a)

N = 103\*

Frequency	No. of respondents
Daily	14
Once a week	4
Once a/month	1
Occasionally	43
Never	41

\* 3 did not respond

Newspaper Reading Locations (b)

N = 62

Location	No. of respondents
At home	14
Other locations*	48

\* A friend's or relative's home, tea kiosks at Indiparape Junction

Reasons for Newspaper Reading (c)

N = 62

Reasons	No. of respondents
To know about local affairs	43
To improve their existing knowledge	9
For commercial advertisements	7
For entertainment (reading cartoon quips, short stories and so on	3

Table 10

The Radio  
Frequency of Radio Listenership (a)

N = 102\*

Frequency	No. of respondents
Daily	45
Occasionally	39
Never	18

\* 4 did not respond

Radio Listening Locations (b)

N = 84

Location	No. of respondents
At home	40
At a neighbouring home	21
At the tea kiosk	10
At a friend's home	4
Other places*	9

\* at market places, at hotels in Mirigama town, and so on.

Reasons for Radio Listening (c)

N = 84

Reasons	No. of respondents
To know local affairs	46
For entertainment	23
To improve knowledge	8
For commercial news	2
Others*	5

\* to know the time, to reduce the monotonous atmosphere at home and village, no particular reason.

Table 11

The Film

Frequency of Film Viewing (a)

N = 97\*

Frequency	No. of respondents
Once a week	10
Once a month	16
Occasionally	35
Never	36

\*

9 did not respond

Reasons for Film Viewing (b)

N = 61

Reasons	No. of respondents
For entertainment	47
For the novelty of viewing a new plot	8
For the artistic value (about songs, dances, filming)	6

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 The head of a family was usually a male (the husband). However, in situations where the husband may have died, divorced, or separated (in all cases where the husband is permanently removed from participation in decision-making action in a family) the wife was treated as the head of the family. The term "husband" was defined as the socially accepted conjugal partner of a woman. The usual family unit comprised the husband, the wife and children. A single house may have more than one family. In such a case, the head of each family was interviewed.
- 2 Panna is a sub-caste of the Kandyan Durawe caste. Goigama is the farmer caste. Karawe is the fisherman's caste (a low-country caste). Rajaka was the broad laundrymen's caste of which Palli was a sub-caste. (See : Peiris, R. (1956) *Sinhalese Social Organisation* (Colombo) Ceylon University Press).
- 3 Children in over-crowded homes moved for the night to homes relatively less congested which seriously affected their education.
- 4 The average age of marriage for Ambana women was 20 years.
- 5 The extent of land (highland and lowland) owned by an average household at the time of the survey was .45 of an acre. An average household had about 5.7 persons - which shows the magnitude of the problem.
- 6 Elites in the village context are individuals and groups who exert control over its economy and/or organisational activities.
- 7 A few rupees being paid for a specific work task, e.g. clearing a homegarden, cutting drains, digging, wells etc.
- 8 See Appendix I for an account of the historical background of Ambana lands.
- 9 Eighty eight (88) individuals did not own any lowland; 17 individuals did not own any highland (they also did not own any lowland).
- 10 One (1) owner-cultivator owned 2 parcels of land which fell into  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an acre and  $\frac{1}{4}$  to below  $\frac{1}{4}$  an acre categories respectively.

- 11 Rotation of tenants on one or more parcels of paddy is being done by land owners in order to prevent the tenants from claiming tenancy rights to the land. Usually tenants are changed in parcels of land on an yearly rotation basis. However, with the setting up of new land reforms it appears that land owners have reduced such risks to a minimum by rotating tenants on a seasonal (kanna) basis.
- 12 The fact that a majority of the tenants undertook cultivation work in paddy plots about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an acre or more in extent shows their response to the adverse economics of cultivating micro-holdings below  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an acre - especially when they are owned by outside land owners on whom social pressure cannot be brought to bear to obtain a better deal in harvest-sharing.
- 13 It is interesting to see why the 28 non-Ambana landowners, the Goigama caste (conventionally accepted as the highest caste in the island) group in the surrounding villages essentially Goigama caste chose Panna caste (a depressed caste) tenant-cultivators of Ambana in preference to their own village and caste-men to have a greater degree of domination over them. Probable causes are :
- (a) the non-Ambana land owners had more control over Ambana tenants who were conditioned over centuries because of their depressed caste position, to accept a portion of servitude towards the Goigama land owners. Such a form of dependence could not have been possible with tenants of their own villages;
  - (b) traditionally a greater part of the Ambana Yaya belonged to the Ambana village which apparently was sold off in early 20th century to "outsiders" to overcome economic difficulties and because of general *naivete* of Ambana folk. This reversal of roles from land owners to tenants in their own lands ensured a steady loyalty to the new landlords because (i) they were not left completely destitute after the land sales but were enlisted by the landlord as their tenants; (ii) a greater assurance of a steady harvest from bought over land was possible when former owners continued to operate the paddy lands which they knew so well;
  - (c) the fear that the entire Ambana village could sabotage the cultivation work in parts of the yaya which were lying adjacent to their village if they were not given the tenancy rights;

- (d) the fear that not giving tenancy rights to Ambana folk could have repercussion in politics, especially at the Village Council elections. Ambana, because of its population size, had a greater say in the particular Village Council ward where Ambana and 3 other (Goigama) villages were members. Many of the landed interests in the surrounding villages also had political ambitions;
  - (e) giving tenancy rights to cultivators in their own villages would create status changes, inter-family conflicts and jealousies and much more, the danger of tenants claiming the right to register themselves as permanent tenant-cultivators of the land.
- 14 Ninety nine persons were registered in the Cultivation Committee lands register as joint owners. However, the actual number of joint owners of highland in the village was bound to be very much more. Many did not bother to register their claims with the CC since in most cases the claims amounted to a perch or two or even less.
  - 15 Registered in the highland register maintained by Ambana Cultivation Committee.
  - 16 Until recently they were sought to provide leadership in various village-level organisations. They, in turn, took every opportunity to show that they were altogether of a different social class than the rest. In the course of conversations had with them they frequently spoke of the higher harvests in their patches of lowland, the fertility of their highlands, the extents of lands they owned, besides elaborating on their roles in village-level activity.
  - 17 Nominal Awareness is defined as the awareness of the name of a contraceptive.
  - 18 Practical Awareness was defined as the awareness of how a particular contraceptive is used and by whom.
  - 19 Only 3 households bought daily papers while an additional 7 households bought only a Sunday paper. The remaining 4 who stated that they read newspapers at home. In fact the four borrowed the papers to read from neighbouring homes.
  - 20 Of the 45 respondents who stated they listen daily to the radio, 14 listened to it at the homes that had radios.

- 21 It should be noted that of the 104 who responded to the particular query, 76 respondents quoted more than one information source.
- 22 Information transfer through informal paths like gossip gains its transfer-velocity through the fact that most of the recipients along the message path have some prior notion about the message content. Messages transmitting through gossip (e.g. rumours) generally exaggerate the notion rather than contradict it. It is probably because of this tendency - that of not contradicting existing notions - that gossip as an information source gains a greater importance than the newspaper in the minds of the recipients. On the other hand the radio with its selective information-transfer and the formal nature in which news items of day-to-day events are conveyed attributes to its messages a greater importance than those of the newspaper and even of gossip. The radio also conveys verbal communication. Apparently the verbal nature of messages transforms passive radio audiences to a particular mental state where they actually feel that they are participants in a face-to-face situation with the radio announcers. The known reactions of audiences to announcements of sports events, rallies, radio drama, quiz programmes etc., illustrate this effect.
- 23 Newspaper readership is intimately tied up with education levels of readers. When the average education levels of the 20-30 age group was 6 years of formal education and of the +30 age group was 4 years of formal education, it is hardly surprising that only 13 respondents quoted reading about family planning and population matters in the newspapers. Though 62 respondents quoted newspaper readership, it is to be expected that a majority of them formed the audience to a few - who read out loud to the rest. Many of the alleged readers, in reality, formed the discussion group on news items of interest contained in the newspapers.
- 24 Report of the Baseline Survey of Community Health Project : Kal-Eliya (1972-73) : W.M.G. Bandara (PHI - Kal-Eliya).

25 A Public Health Society was formed on the 22nd February 1975 at Ambana through the efforts of Siril Sagara - a very active youthful leader. This organisation was responsible for digging pits for latrines, cutting of drains and clearing of wells - on a *shramadana* basis. The Ambana primary school headmaster, the public health nurse, the Kal-Eliya Public Health Inspector, and the Public Health Inspector (Mirigama hospital), were instrumental in encouraging the formation of the society. It consisted of the following :

President	-	W.J. Somapala
Vice President	-	P. Karunawathie
Secretary	-	M.P. Kapilapamankumara
Asst. Secretary	-	A.D. Sayaneris
Treasurer	-	P. Rapiel

and 9 Committee members (including Siril Sagara, Advisor).

26 In each of the first three combinations respondents quoted only 2 of the opinion leaders. In the fourth combination the 12 respondents quoted all three as opinion leaders. Thus scores of 11, 3, 13 were placed alongside 2 opinion leaders in each of the first three combinations, and 12 was placed against each of the three opinion leaders.

Thus : R73 - R62 = a respondent difference of 10  
R73 - R102 = a respondent difference of 8  
R102 - R62 = a respondent difference of 2

27 The two temple committees are excluded.

28 The historical background was compiled from data collected through charting folk tradition, cross-checking the information with persons of authority in and around the village like the chief incumbent: Kirimetiulle Temple, who has in his possession certain title deeds to Ambana lands, Perumbadage Pina, a traditional influential in the village; examining title deeds of Ambana property sales kept by Ambana villagers and outsiders like Jayakody Ralahamy (a member of an influential Goigama family who resides within the outer borders of the village).

29 See for details on this aspect on Section on Base of Community Aggregation.