

Changing your Name Legally: Gazette Notification for Adults and Minors

CHAITANYA KAMAL
ADVOCATE



by Chaitanya Kamal, Advocate

Delhi High Court

Overview

Changing one's name is not just a matter of personal choice; it is a legal process that requires proper documentation and compliance with government procedures. In India, the Official Gazette serves as the conclusive record of such a change, ensuring its recognition by all government authorities, educational institutions, banks, and courts.

This article explains in detail the legal process, step-by-step requirements, and practical implications of Gazette publication for name changes of both adults and minors.



Legal Basis for Change of Name

There is no single codified law in India that governs name changes. Instead, the process is regulated by a combination of:

- Ministry of Home Affairs guidelines for name changes.
- Department of Publication, Government of India, which handles Gazette notifications.
- State Gazette offices in individual states.
- Judicial precedents that uphold the right to change one's name as a facet of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Thus, while the process is administrative in nature, the Gazette notification gives the change of name its final legal sanctity.

Common Reasons for Name Change

People change their names for a variety of reasons, such as:

- Correction of spelling errors or inconsistencies in records.
- Change in surname after marriage or divorce.
- Religious conversion or adoption of a new faith.
- Numerological or astrological reasons.
- Simplification or modernization of names.
- Adoption cases or guardianship-related changes for minors.
- Reclaiming cultural or community identity.

Step-by-Step Process of Gazette Publication

Step 1: Preparation of Affidavit

The first and most important step is preparing a sworn affidavit before Notary Public, or Oath Commissioner.

The affidavit must contain:

- Full name of the applicant (old name).
- Father's/Husband's name.
- Full residential address.
- Date of birth and age.
- Profession (if applicable).
- Proposed new name.
- Clear reason for change of name.

For Minors:

The affidavit is executed by the parent or natural guardian. It must clearly state that the change of name is being done on behalf of the minor child. Both parents' consent, while not mandatory, is advisable in cases of school/university record changes.

Step 2: Newspaper Publication

The affidavit is followed by a public notice in newspapers: In Hindi or English language of the area where the applicant resides. The notice must include:

- Old name and new name.
- Father's/Husband's name.
- Complete address.

This step provides publicity and transparency, allowing anyone with objections to raise them before final notification.

Step 3: Gazette Notification

This is the conclusive step in the process. The application is made to the Department of Publication, Central Government, Civil Lines, Delhi.

Documents Required:

1. Prescribed proforma in duplicate duly typed with signature of two witnesses (ie Request letter, depending on the Gazette office).
2. Undertaking signed the applicant / Guardian in case of minor
3. Original affidavit duly notarized/attested.
4. Original newspaper publications.
5. Identity proof (Aadhaar, Voter ID, Passport, etc.).
6. Residential proof (ration card, electricity bill, Aadhaar, etc.).Two self attested passport-size photographs.
7. CD containing the soft copy of the proforma without the witness portion (as per Gazette rules).
8. Prescribed fee (₹1400 for adults and ₹1700 for Central Gazette to be submitted via bharatkosh portal).

Process:

Submit the application in person or by post at the Gazette office. After scrutiny and approval, the new name is published in the Official Gazette.

No physical copy is provided to the applicant and the same can be downloaded from the egazette website.

Post-Gazette Formalities

Once the Gazette notification is published, the applicant should use it to update all personal records:

Aadhaar Card / PAN Card / Voter ID/ Passport / Driving License / Bank accounts / Property documents or Educational certificates and school/university records.

The Gazette copy serves as the final documentary proof, and no authority can legally refuse to recognize the new name once notified.

Special Considerations for Minors

The application is always filed by a parent/guardian.

Schools and educational boards often insist on Gazette notification before updating the student's records. In disputed cases (e.g., divorced parents), schools may seek a court order along with Gazette publication. In adoption cases, the Gazette notification is often accompanied by the Adoption Deed or Court Order.

Validity and Scope of Gazette Notification

A Gazette notification once published has permanent validity. It is accepted all over India by public and private authorities.

Conclusion

The Gazette publication is the final seal of authenticity in the name change process, whether for an adult or a minor. Without Gazette notification, affidavits and newspaper publications alone may not be sufficient for updating official records.

By following the legal steps of affidavit → newspaper publication → Gazette notification, individuals can ensure that their new identity is recognized by all government and private authorities without dispute.

Changing a name is more than just a personal decision—it is a legal transformation of identity, and Gazette publication makes that transformation official, permanent, and indisputable.

Thank you!

9810416514
chaitanyakamal.adv@gmail.com
www.ncplegal.in

CHAITANYA 9810416514