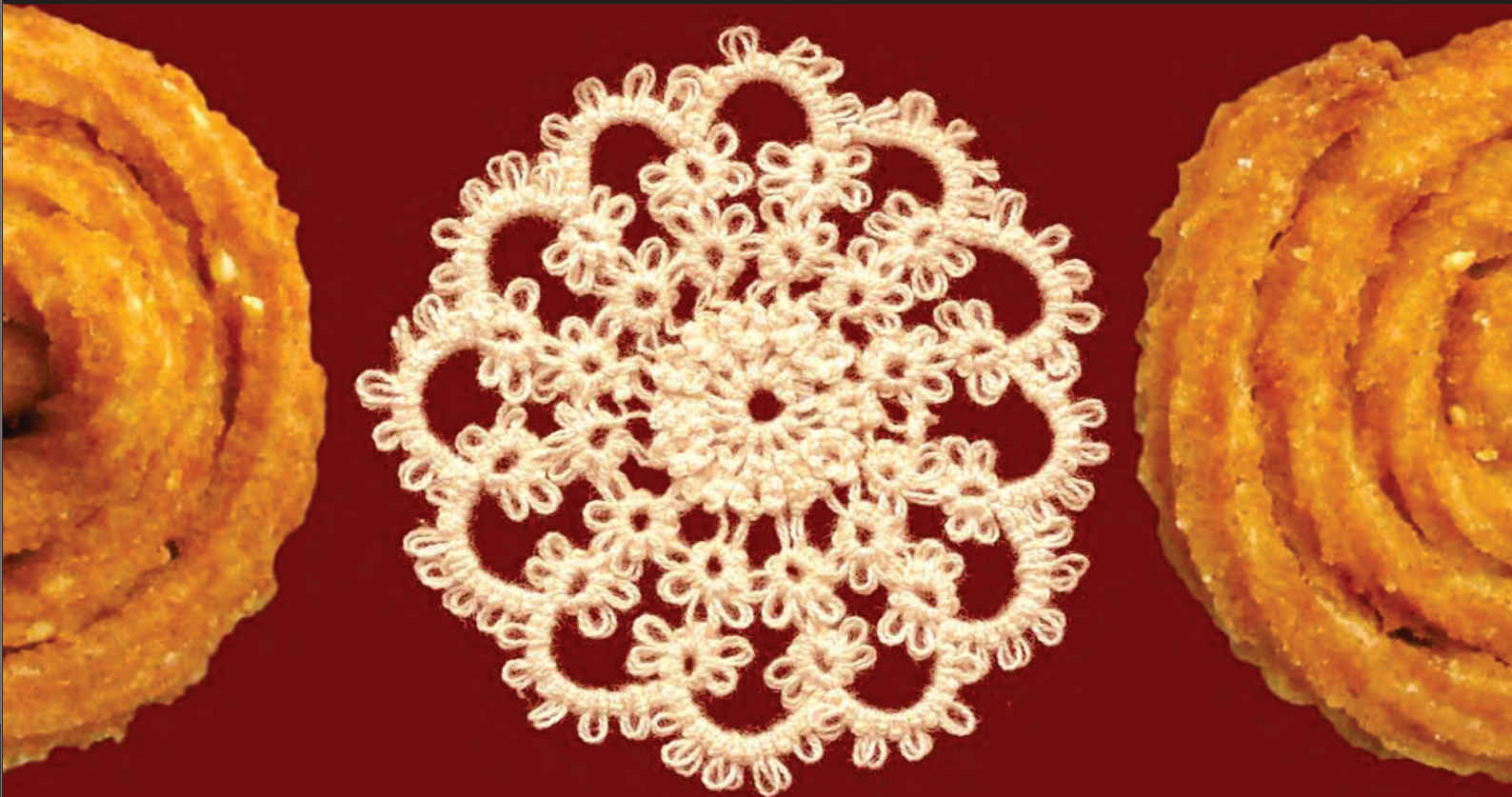


An Aid to Female Rural Entrepreneurship



An Aid to Female Rural Entrepreneuers

2013 March, Colombo, Sri Lanka

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This book is supported by the Asian Co-operative
Development Fund by the Consumer
Co-operative Institute of Japan.

Production and Publisher:

NGO TECH JapanTokyo,Japan.& Suvendrini Kakuchi 4,2/1,Regent Flats, Colombo 01 .

**This book is a self-help tool for rural
businesswomen and is dedicated to
thousands of courageous women
path-breakers working at grass-roots level**

*Specially to the Sri Lanka's Women's Bank
(Sri Lanka Women's Development Services
Cooperative Society) .*

Introduction

Dear Readers,

The compulsion to publish this booklet and turn the spotlight on a crucial economic sector grew when I heard the words of a young woman who spoke at a recent workshop we held for rural women on learning business skills. She proudly displayed the delicate flowers she had made from cellophane paper, red roses, pink carnations and yellow araliyas, and sold to vendors who then resell for much higher prices in the more lucrative markets in the cities. She then asked a poignant question: “what steps do I take now to expand and improve my business?. I need to make more

money to support my children who are growing up and have larger ambitions than I ever had.”

The young woman displayed wonderful courage and determination. She had four children to support with her husband whose income barely covered their daily expenses. Unlike her counterparts who live in the cities and belong to wealthy Sri Lankan families, she does not boast collateral nor does she have rich parents who could give her the cash she needed to start a business. But the woman`s words did not hint at despair.

Rather she was hungry for knowledge and the right encouragement to make her dreams come true.

I will call her Rajini. And I have met many Rajinis in Sri Lanka. They are eager and hardworking women who make ends meet in their small communities and illustrate deep-rooted entrepreneur skills that need to be carefully nurtured. Indeed, if they are extended sustainable financial, managerial and other skills building they can become important contributors to the growth of the national economy by becoming rich businesswomen and contributing to market dynamism.

This booklet is aimed in this direction. The book compiles telling success stories of the small entrepreneur to encourage peer learning for we believe it is only the rural woman grappling with the diverse odds

towards their goals, who is the best teacher. In addition, the booklet written with illustrations for easy reading, provides a wide variety of useful contacts and tips for networking. Thus, it is a vital platform for budding female entrepreneurs who plan to take the next brave steps in their lives. Please join me in wishing the very best to the rural businesswoman!

Suvendrini Kakuchi

Representative: NGO TECHJapan.
Tokyo, Japan.


Madiwadini's Story

From Northern Sri Lanka
Survivor of the War

Be a good wife and
maintain our inherited
culture and good manners.

Madiwadini got married
at the age of 18 years.
Madi's parents advised
her to be a good wife.





Mother! I feel
very hungry!

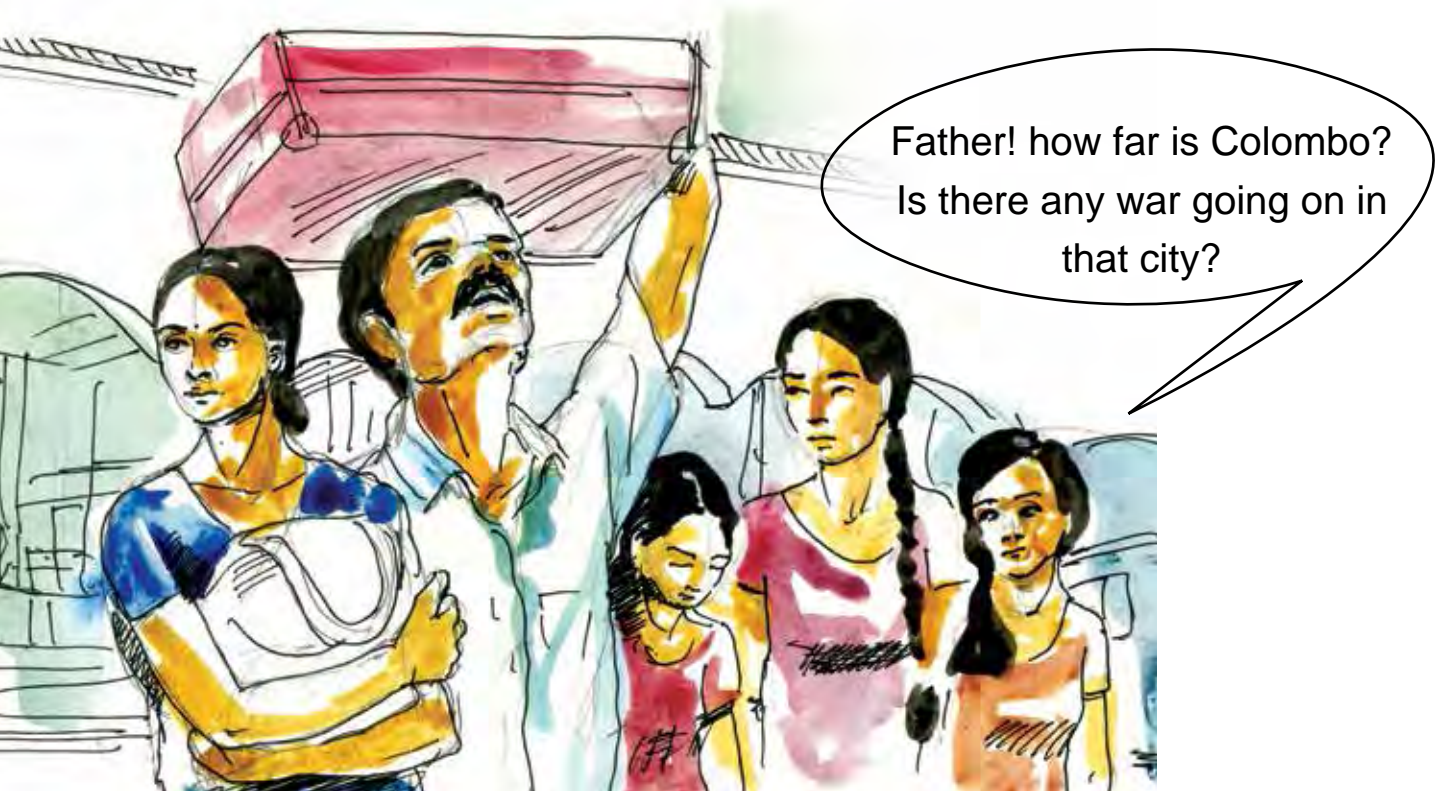
Her husband, Kandasamy, earned a daily allowance by doing minor work. He got only Rs 25/- or Rs50/- per day. They lived in a tiny hut with three children and were very poor. They were all daughters. The war destroyed their hope to live better lives.

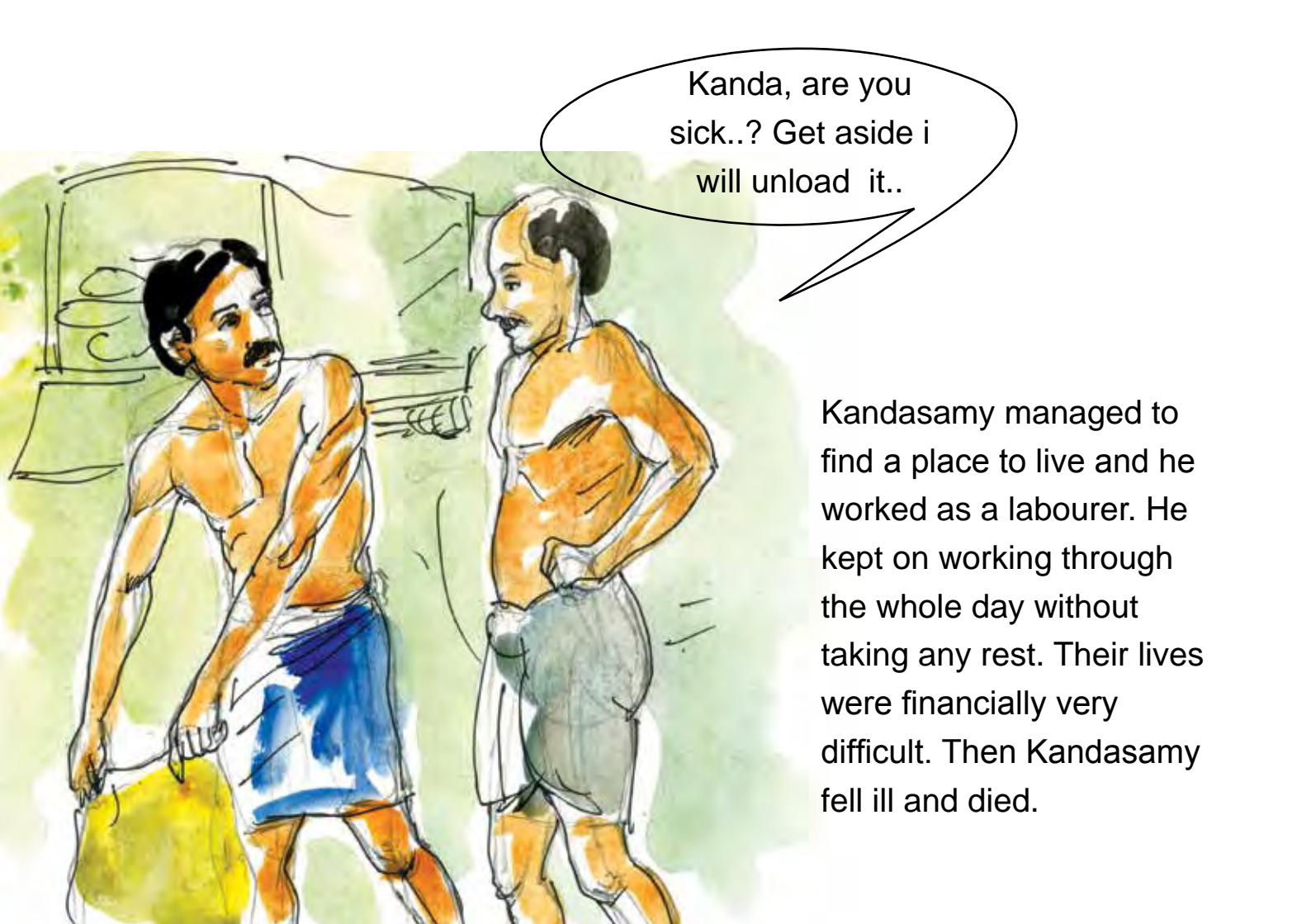
How can the children
bear this suffering..
my dear!

When life became very difficult she thought she must start to make some money herself. She decided to make small dry food packets using the contributions she received as part of the aid that was given to families like her in the war areas. Her mother-in-law helped her.



One day Madiwadini arrived in Colombo with her husband and children because they wanted to escape the war and start their lives again.





Kanda, are you sick..? Get aside i will unload it..

Kandasamy managed to find a place to live and he worked as a labourer. He kept on working through the whole day without taking any rest. Their lives were financially very difficult. Then Kandasamy fell ill and died.

Madiwadini was left all alone in Colombo with her three daughters. They wept together because they had no means to survive.



Oh' God! what will happen to us?

Madee.. there is no use
of crying..join with me to
make papadam..

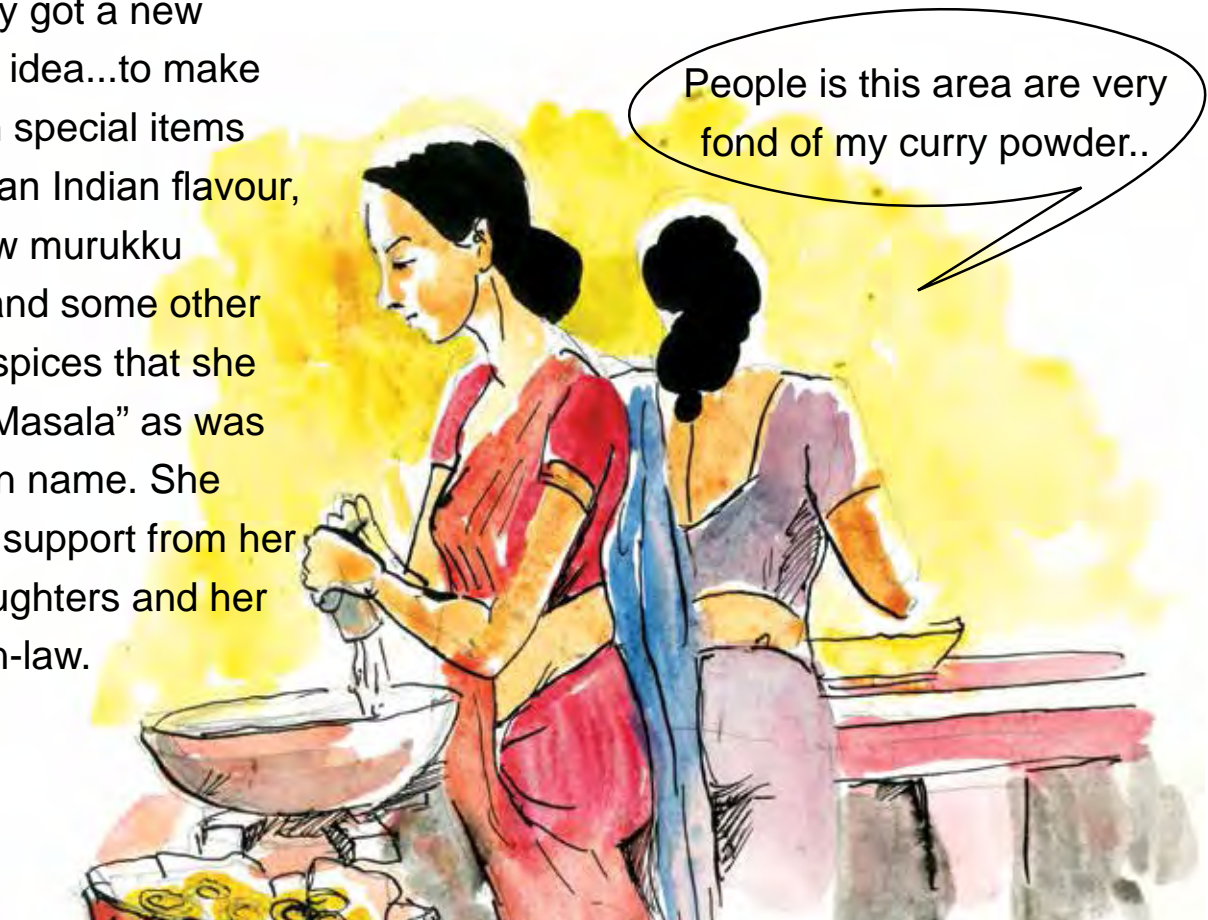
One day her neighbour gave her an idea of making “papadam” for sale. Madiwadini decided to get involved in the papadam business with the help of her eldest daughter. They began working hard with their neighbour.



Madiwadini and her daughter decided to also make sweets for sale. They could earn a little extra money.



Then they got a new business idea...to make their own special items that had an Indian flavour, like a new murukku mixture and some other kinds of spices that she named "Masala" as was the Indian name. She received support from her three daughters and her mother-in-law.



People in this area are very fond of my curry powder..

This was an excellent idea. With these unique food items and good quality spices, she could win the hearts of many customers. Her products became famous and they got many orders for special events and weddings from other families.



She then registered her murrukku and spices business as a small company and gave all the responsibilities to her eldest daughter who became the chair person. Her second daughter studied hard and was selected to go to university to pursue higher education. The third daughter got married. Madiwadini and her daughters had made enough money to pay for a grand wedding.



She started her business in her small house that also became a little street shop. She was really busy with the business. She also continued with her habit of saving a little money in the bank.



Madiwadini wanted to expand her business by buying a new building. They went to the bank to get a loan. However, the manager declined and told them to find a male guarantor.

As there is no male to guarantee you, we cannot approve this loan ...



She was so disappointed because she didn't like to bother or depend even on her male relatives. Then a female customer informed her about the Women's Bank. Madiwadini decided to find the Women's Bank where she can find help to develop her business.

Please go to the Women's Bank .. They will explain everything to you.



Her Message

- Do not hesitate to try new methods when producing food items and to also use new flavors, new and safe food colourings, and modern techniques.
- A key to good business is to be able to cook good and tasty food for your own family. Your food should be healthy without extra oil and fat and be more nutritious than the other food sold in the market.
- Your business can contribute to better society by employing single women including widows and women from low income families.

Women's entrepreneurship is amazing

Working with women from different walks of life for the past twenty years has helped me to experience the energy, the obstacles and the hardships women go through in their life time. Women's Empowerment is a subject that has been discussed for decades and has focused on the practical and the strategic needs of women with the aim of changing their difficult conditions and unequal social status. With time we have learnt the lesson that no theory can replace the need for practical solutions for situations that need immediate action. On the other hand, relying on welfare programmes that would provide

immediate cover would not generate results in the long-term and foster sustainable change towards equity and equality.

The women selected for the workshop were from southern and the north eastern regions of Sri Lanka. They have gone through different hardships in life, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, religion or the geographic locations where they come from.

The women's experiences were analysed in focus group discussions, presentations and through individual questionnaires. The depth of information collected at these workshops showcased the different forms of marginalizations they have gone through and their struggle to balance their triple role as wives, mothers and income generating women. The stories and the experiences of these women has provided the content for this booklet.

It was amazing to see how women have become entrepreneurs to be able to overcome the struggle of their lives and their level of knowledge in doing so. We experienced the choices that was available for these women to select their livelihood strategies and identified the opportunities around them to enhance their entrepreneurial skills in sustaining their small businesses. It was a common understanding that women prefer to follow business ideas that they have learnt in the family and they feel comfortable to try small endeavours on their own. We also found out they badly needed information and a support network that could refer to when they needed help to expand or try out something new.

This above mentioned situation implies a need widely information bank or text book specially in the rural sectors of Sri Lanka. During the last two decades the usage

of telephones, TVs and printed material have increased rapidly and provides new inroads for low-income women who have limited opportunities and time available to gather information and skills in most user friendly ways. In this context I feel this booklet has addressed an important practical need identified in the country. I am sure community based organizations and women hoping to start their own incomes would find this booklet a crucial step in their plans as this will be a good resource to be used in women's entrepreneurship development programmes.

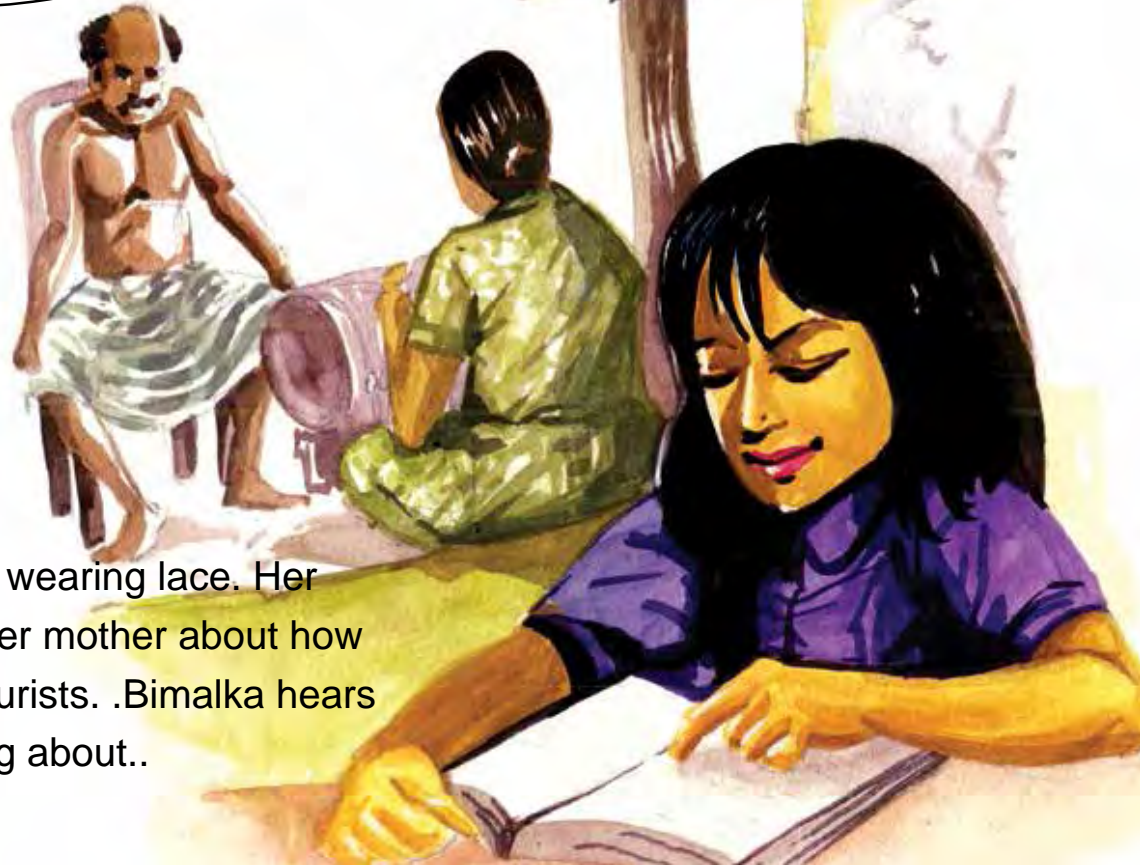
Kala Pieris

Chairperson
HomeNet, Sri Lanka.

Bimalka's Story

From Southern Sri Lanka
a Survivor of the Tsunami

That white lady said ten table covers weren't enough for her.



Bimalka's mother is wearing lace. Her father is talking to her mother about how to sell the lace to tourists. .Bimalka hears what they are talking about..

Bimalka's father gets a little income after selling the lace to tourists in the town.

Her father dies suddenly.
Mother is left all alone with
her children.



Bimalka's intention is to get a government job. So she studies hard for that. Her dream is to support a good education for her sisters' and brothers' too. While she is waiting for her exam results she goes for an interview at a company. She sees a young girl who is insulted in that office by her boss.



Bimalka gives up the idea of finding a job in an office. She decides to help her mother to weave more lace. Her mother is pleased with the decision.

Bimalka joins an organization that helps the development of small industries in the area. She pays a small amount for the membership fee.



I must make some different designs with the money given by my brother.

She successfully completes the sewing course and participates in many workshops to study sewing.

She gets a loan of Rs 20,000/- from one of her relatives who lives abroad.



She works throughout the day without taking any rest because she wants to develop her lace industry and is making new plans.

Her aim is to introduce these lace products to foreign buyers and also to the local Colombo market as well. She takes time to study new fashion styles and changes the traditional designs that her mother uses to make modern creations for dresses. She makes stylish garments with her lace very effectively.





"Your fashion designs are in high demand by our customers."

She meets the other women in the area who make lace and decides to also ask them to make her new designs. To promote her products she takes them to the "Trade Sale" in Colombo.

The tsunami hits her area in December 2004. The disaster destroys all her hard work.



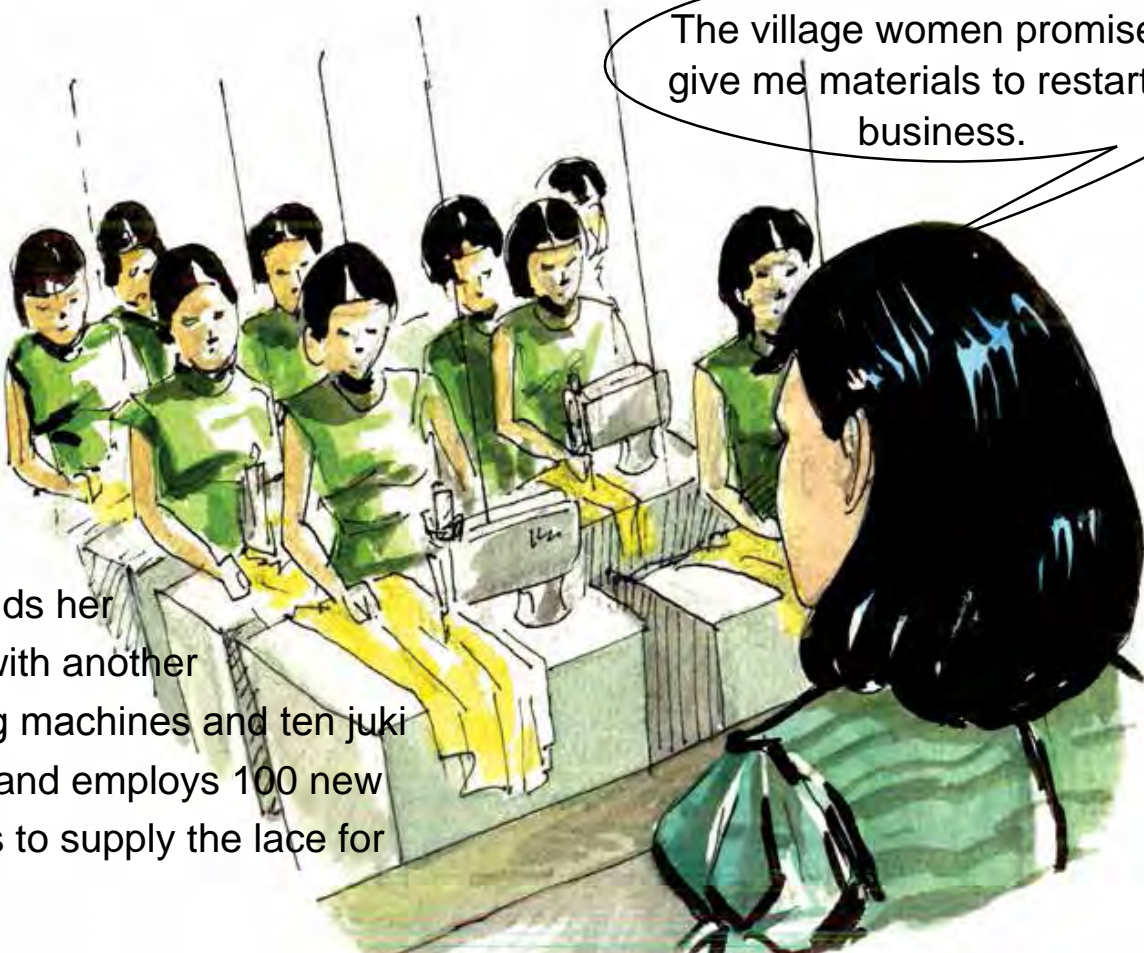
Bimalka has to live in a refugee camp but later moves to her grandmother's house in Ambalangoda.

Bimalka's mother and her grandmother help her to start the business again. A small-industry office in the area also helps by donating a sewing machine to them.



Bimalka decides to rebuild her house and her business with the money she saved in the bank. She again introduces stylish Salwar Kamiz, Sarons and Sarees with traditional lace work. She works hard and achieves her targets in a short period of time. Her brother who lived abroad returns home and joins her business too.





The village women promised to give me materials to restart the business.

She expands her business with another five sewing machines and ten juki machines and employs 100 new employees to supply the lace for her.

Her products have a very good market in Colombo. She gets many orders from the leading shops in Colombo.



Bimalka completes her new house and her business store. She logs on to the Internet in search of new designs and techniques for her creations. She also has a new idea to add lace work to shoes. To make this new product she joins a course for shoe production.



It is very difficult to sell in the market by following old designs. So we must start new methods without hesitation.



Her dream is to get a shop for her business in Colombo.



Now, my dream is to start a new business place in Colombo.

Bimalka's message.

- Find and try every opportunity to get the necessary knowledge for starting your own business.
- Maintain a good relationship with all your customers and the employees.
- Build up your self confidence and determination to do your business perfectly.

Assess your business strategy through self-analysis

There are many experiences, which can be gained when carrying out a business. All the decisions you take, whether they are right or wrong, depends on your knowledge. You can assess your business yourself based on the honest answers given to the following questions:

What are the answers you an give to the following questions?

Assess each and every answer one by one and find solutions to the problems in your answers. It will pave the way for a successful business.

01. How do you calculate your monthly profit?
02. Have you taken any loans for your business?
03. Have you defaulted paying your installments?
04. What is the special talent you use in your business?
05. How do you assess the quality of your goods or services?

06. Have you faced a situation in which you were unable to handle your business alone?

07. Have you made any arrangement to withdraw money from your business for your personal use?

08. Do you sell goods or services for credit?
09. Does your credit recovery method work efficiently?
10. Do you pay any rent for the business premises?

11. What is the percentage of your rent when compared with your income?
12. Have you reached the point of recruiting employees?
13. How do you control your employees?
14. If your employees resign from their jobs will it affect the business?
15. How many customers do you have?

16. What is the percentage of your most regular customer's purchases out of your total sales?
17. How do you make new customers?
18. How much has your business expanded?
19. Is there any challenge from the products of large companies?
20. What are the barriers faced by your business?

21. Is there a need to replace the present technology of your business with a new one?

22. What steps should you take in order to expand your business?
24. What are the personal factors that affect your business?
25. Do your sales deteriorate when you are out of the business premises?

Sanjeewa Senarathne

Management Consultant &
Researcher

Financial Institutions

DFCC Bank
73/5, Galle Rd, Colombo 03.
011 244 2442 (General)
www.dfccbank.com

NDB Bank
SME unit, NDB Bank, No 40,
Nawam Mw, Colombo 02.
011 244 8448, www.ndbbank.com

Bank of Ceylon
Development Banking Division,
25 th floor, Head Office, Colombo 01
011 244 5808/ 220 5005,www.boc.lk

Lankaputhra Development Bank,
80, Nawala Rd, Nugegoda.
0112 821 031, www.lankaputhra.lk

People's Bank
Department of Development &
Micro Finance,
9 th floor, People's Bank Head Office,
Sri Chittampalam A Gardiner Mawatha,
Colombo 02 tel.011 248 1348 , 011 248 1461
www.peoplesbank.lk

RDB- Regional Development Bank
12th Floor, Access Tower, 278,
Union Place, Colombo 02.
011 230 2360
www.rdb.lk

SANASA Development Bank
No 12, Edmonton Road, Kirulapone,
Colombo 06
011 2832531
www.sdb.lk

Sampath Bank
Development Banking Division,
Sampath Bank PLC, 110,
Sri James Peiris Mw, Colombo 02.
011473 0219
www.sampath.lk

Hatton National Bank PLC
HNB Tower, Level 19, No 479,
T.B.Jaya Mawatha, Colombo 10.
011 266 1988-92
www.hnb.lk

Commercial Bank
Development Credit Dept,
Commercial Bank of Ceylon PLC
21, Bristol Street, Colombo 01.
011 235 3841
www.combank.net

Central Bank – Refinanced Schemes
Regional Development Department,
Central Bank of Sri Lanka,
No 30, Janadhipathi Mawatha,
Colombo 01. tel. 011 247 447
www.cbsl.lk

Ministries and Institutions

FCCISL-SMED -Small & Medium
Enterprise Division
Federation of Chamber of
Commerce & Industry of Sri Lanka
Federation House, No 53, Vauxhall Lane,
Colombo 02, 011 230 4287 - 9
www.fccisl.lk

CNCI –The Ceylon National
Chamber of Industries
Promote & foster Industrial Growth in Sri Lanka
The Ceylon National Chamber of Industries,
Flat No; 20, Galle Face Court 2, Colombo - 03.
011 233 1444, 245 2181, www.cnci.lk

NCCSL – The National Chamber of
Commerce of Sri Lanka
SME Development Programme
No, 450, D.R.Wijewardana Mawatha,
Colombo 10.
011 474 1788, www.nccsl.lk

CCC- The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce
Credit Support to “Financially Challenged
Youth” YBSL Secretariat, No 50,Navam
Mawatha, Colombo 02
011 558 8884, www.ybsl.lk

NIBM – National Institute of Business
Management – Sri Lanka
Training & Development
120/5, Wijerama Mawatha, Colombo 07
011 267 2940, 011 564 4317
www.nibm.lk

NAITA – National Apprentice and
Industrial Training Authority
Ministry of Youth Affairs
NAITA, No 242, Havelock Town,
Colombo 05. 011 286 3680

SEDD – Small Enterprise
Development Division
Ministry of Youth Affairs
Entrepreneurship
Development Training &
facilities for other Business
Development Services
Small Enterprise Development Division
No 1334, Old Kotte Road, Rajagiriya.
011 2869844, 0112 886855
www.youthentrepreneur.gov.lk

CEFE Net Sri Lanka
Providing Entrepreneurship Development and
Management training to SME
33/1, Thimbirigasyaya Rd,
Colombo 05.
011 4527521, 011 2681375
www.cefenetsilanka.com

IDB – Industrial Development Services
Ministry of Industry & Commerce
Encouragement, Promotion and Development
of Small & Medium Industries in Sri Lanka
615, Galle Road, Katubedda, Moratuwa.
011 260 5323, 011 260 5326 - 7
www.idb.lk

ITI – Industrial Technology Institute
Technical Services
ITI, 363, Baudhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 07
011 237 9800
www.iti.lk

NERDC – National Engineering Research &
Development Centre
2P/17B, IDB Industrial Estate, Ekala,
Ja- Ela.
011-2236284, 011-2236384
011-2236307, 011-5354597
www.nerdc.gov.lk

Vidatha Programme – Ministry of
Technology & Research
Technology Transfer Services
Ministry of Science & Technology
No 408, Galle Road, Colombo 03.
011 237 2289
www.most.gov.lk

Ministry of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources
National Aquatic Resources Development
Authority (NAQDA)
No 758, Besline Road, Colombo 07.
011 267 5316
www.naqda.gov.lk

Ministry of Environment
Geological Survey & Mines Bureau
No 82, “Sampathpaya”,
Rajamalwatta Road, Battaramulla
011 288 2112 - 3, www.gsmb.gov.lk

Ministry of Agriculture
Services for Agri Entrepreneurs
Ministry of Agricultural Development &
Agrarian services,
80/5, Rajamalwatta Rd, Battaramulla
011 288 7431, www.mimrd.gov.lk

SLEDB – Sri Lanka Export
Development Board
P.O.Box 1872, Level 5 - 6, 42, DHPL Building,
Navam Mawatha, Colombo 02.
011 230 0712, 011 230 0701
www.ebd.tradenets.lk

SLECIC – Sri Lanka Export
Credit Insurance Corporation
Export Performance Guarantees
Marketing Department
Level 4, DHPL Towers, 42,
Navam Mawatha, Colombo 02.
011 488 3561 - 64, 011 230 7519 - 23,
011 230 7578, www.slecic.lk

BOI – Board of Investments – Sri Lanka
Incentives for Investment Projects
Level 26, West Tower, World Trade Center,
Colombo 01
011 242 7032, www.boi.lk

SLSI - Sri Lanka Standards Institution
Standardization and Certification
No 17, Victoria Place, Elvitigala Mw,
Colombo 08.
011 267 1567 - 72 Ext 320
www.slsi.lk

Inventors Commission
Promotion and Encouragement
of Innovativeness
SLIC, Ground Floor, 46/56, Lanlib
Building, Navam Mawatha,
Colombo 02.
011 2394952, www.slic.gov.lk

Ministry of Industry & Commerce
No 73/1, Galle Road, Colombo 03.
011 243 5105, www.industry.gov.lk

NEDA – National Enterprise
Development Authority
Facilitate & Support SMEs in
Sri Lanka, Level 2, West wing,
Ceylinco House, Janadhipathi
Mawatha, Colombo 01.
011 243 9843, www.neda.lk

Department of Census & Statistics
No 104 A, Kitulwatta Road,
Colombo 08.
011 267 6194, www.statistics.gov.lk

Divisional Secretariat Office
Business Registration Service
Colombo (Colombo Urban Area
Nugegoda, Rajagiriya, Thibirigasyaya, Kotte, Rathmalana, Mount Lavinia, Dehiwala)
Provincial Department of Registration of Companies,
167, 1/1, Union place, Colombo 02.
Other Areas - Relevant Divisional Secretariat office
Colombo - 011 244 0187
Other Areas - 1919 Government Information Centre
www.gov.lk

Mutual Aid Institution

The Sri Lanka Women's Development Services Co-operative Society Ltd (Women's Bank)
145/80, Zone E, Sivalipura, Colombo 08.
011 2681355
<http://www.slwb.org/WB/>

source; **SME Guide Book--NEDA 2011-2012**

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

Special Thanks

Ananda Wijesuriya
Bimalka and her family
Chandraguptha Thenuwara
Dr Nandasiri Gamage
Dr Sunil Wijesiriwardene
Dr Udan Fernando.
T. P. G. Amarajeewa
K.T.A.Perera
Madiwadini and her family
National Enterprise Development Authority
R.Bharathy
Radika Lawrance
Rupa Manel De Silva
Savindra Chandimali
Udeni Jayaweera
Women's Bank

ISBN: 978-955-44333-0-4



9 78 955 44333 04

NGO TECH Japan

Tokyo, Japan. & Suvendrini Kakuchi 4, 2/1, Regent Flats, Colombo 01.