

Inspirational stories of Shirley Jayawardana

Breaking barriers and shaping successes



With husband Dr. Ananda Jayawardana
By ZANITA CAREEM

Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world, a statement made by Hilary Clinton that packs quite a punch. It's obvious that women face many challenges when it comes to establishing their own business. Shirley Jayawardana has broken the glass ceiling like many others and established herself as a successful business woman.

A die-hard entrepreneur at heart, Shirley helps people define what true entrepreneurship is and what it takes to be a leader, and helps people to dispel the myth of business.

Shirley Jayawardana is the first women President of Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industries, Sri Lanka which is the Apex body of the chamber movement in Sri Lanka established in 1973. (2020/2022.)

Also presently the chairperson of Ceylon Chamber of women entrepreneurs, she is also a long-standing and well-known member in chamber activities. She is the immediate past president of Central Province Women's Chamber of Small Industry and Commerce and also has served as senior VP of Central province Chamber of Commerce and Industry for several years.

She is wellknown in the SAARC region serving as Vice president (VP) of South Asia women's development forum (Sri Lanka chapter) in Nepal and Executive committee member of SAARC chamber of Commerce and Industry in Pakistan. She has also been appointed as the Vice Chairman at Sri Lanka chapter of SAARC Council of Women Entrepreneurs (SCWEC) affiliated to SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Pakistan.

She started her career as a business woman by establishing Media Vision (Pvt) Ltd that was published Kandy Today she functions as chairperson of Wisewell Lanka private Ltd - global trading companies based in USA.

An active social worker, she has many accolades and awards to her credit. The list is too long to mention.

She is the recipient of international award "Professional Women top 50 Global award" and "Priyadarshini Lifetime achievement award". Also, she has many outstanding achievement awards from Lion's district 306C1

She has widely travelled and has addressed many international business forums on behalf of FCCISL and other portfolios. She is also a member of the Institute of Management of Great Britain.

Q Tell us about your background, lifestyle and family life?

A I was a miss Cabraal, eldest in the family of six children. My late father Cyril Cabraal was an Agricultural Instructor.

I studied at the Matara Convent, and did drama, acting and singing in school.

I married Dr. Ananda Jayawardana at the age of 24 and a mother and a housewife for twenty four (24) years. My husband Dr. Ananda Jayawardana was a retired Executive Director of Link Natural Products and Ceylon Tobacco Company. I have three grown up children

Q How would you define true entrepreneurship?

A First, to do the stuff I want to do but you have to deliver value and do it constantly and secondly you should have clarity of thought. A true entrepreneur can explain what they do in any language that the stakeholder needs to understand it. Always one should have clarity and purpose.

Q What motivated you to take up entrepreneurship?

A I never thought I will become a business woman. In school, I had multi-faceted talent, everyone thought I might take up acting or singing but my parents were opposed to this move. I started working after 25 years of marriage, when my husband joined the Lion's Club of Senkadagala Kandy, At the Lion's Club I gave wholehearted support to my husband, by taking up many responsibilities and challenging projects, which helped me to built



Shirley Jayawardana
die-hard entrepreneur



At FCCISL annual
general meeting



Luncheon meeting with US envoy

A The desire I had within me is to be a woman of substance. The support I received from my family, specially my eldest son, who helped me to set up an international trading company Wisewell Lanka (Pvt) Ltd., and as the Chairperson of the company, I had the opportunity to spread my business tentacles far and wide. The support I received from the family was a great encouragement to move forward in my business ventures later on in my career. Building an agile team was the biggest and the best strategy which helped me to be successful.

Q What drives/ motivates you? What is your opinion?

A Success for me is to enjoy every moment of life and look forward to a new tomorrow. I love to take up challenges. any leadership role will have as it needs you to be always inspiring and motivating. Taking responsibility of the "Kandy News" newspaper was a huge challenge. Being the first woman president of FCCISI was also a benchmark for my career

Q Your achievements and accolades?

A To be a woman, from the status of a house wife, to go beyond breaking the glass ceiling was a major achievement. I was the first women president of FCCISL, founder MD/Editor of the first regional newspaper for Sri Lanka, president of central province Women's Chamber, senior member for several years in the Central province main chamber, chairpersons of Wisewell Lanka private limited, an international trading company, Vice President for Sri Lanka South Asia Women's Development forum, Executive member of SAARC chambers, Vice President of SAARC women entrepreneur council, Member of the international visitor program organized by the US Embassy and many others.

Q How proud are you with your achievements?

A I am very proud by the fact that I can influence and support other entrepreneurs who needs support and encouragement. Women-owned business are increasing in the economies of all countries. Sri Lanka is no exception, they too have emerged into successful business ventures and sending out messages that cannot be dismissed. However I try to empower more women entrepreneurs to empower them by providing financial and other support by providing the challenges they face. These are my proud moments.

Q The Ceylon Chamber of women entrepreneurs and their goals?

A Ceylon Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs is a national level women's chamber with members representing different provinces. There are also individual business women and professionals to whom we give new membership

This was concept created by me and Ayanthi Gurusinghe, founder director of Cord 360 e-commerce platform. My main goal is to promote women entrepreneurs for cross boarder trading and support regional women's chambers to build their leadership capacity.

Q Any support from the government to support women entrepreneurs?

A Yes, we do get much support from government to develop women entrepreneurs. Product technology, financial support, skill development, creating a better bureaucratic environment for women to start their own business and increase their participation. I also like to attribute my success to my husband and family who have been a great pillar of strength

Q Your other interests and passion

A My goal has always to help women and give them all the support and encouragement. I am passionate about supporting fellow women to pursue their dream of entrepreneurship.

Any women entrepreneurs who needs my support can contact me on shirley.j@algotechsys.com or www.cewe.lk



With women entrepreneurs-a delegation to Turkiye



As the first woman President of Lion's Club
Senkadagala in year 2009

up my confidence to give up my role as a simple housewife. I started

"Kandy Newspaper" and took up the post of the Managing director/and Managing editor, this was stepping stone for her career and turned her into an entrepreneur. I was joined by late Lion Professor Samarasinghe who volunteered to be the Chief Editor.

What are problems faced by women entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka?

A Bureaucracy in Sri Lanka is a major obstacle for entrepreneurs to move forward. But if you have courage

and determination, then nothing can stop you from becoming successful. There were other factors too, like country's financial constraints, lack of modern technology, labour issues were some of the major impediments. I needed people with high enthusiasm and innovation. Sometimes at the initial stage people are not aware of the intricacies of business and attribution rate remains high.

Q Women's entrepreneurship contributes to economic growth and social empowerment. How does the Chamber support and promote women entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka?

A Ceylon Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs, work as a service provider for all women entrepreneurs. CCWE is always willing to help to initiate projects in different provinces, through regional chambers, who are members. Lobbying with the Government and other institutions to strengthen the regional women's Chambers and build up the capacity of women entrepreneurs are some of my goals.

We create new projects and businesses to promote Sri Lankan products abroad, one such project is in Turkiye. Already the Honorary Consul in Istanbul is helping Sri Lanka to promote Sri Lankan products in Turkiye. All arrangements are made to help local women, in Turkiye to open a special branch to sell their products.

Q Going back to your early life experiences, what factors influenced your decision to be a female entrepreneur?



Women



A journey of flavours... Kolkata to Colombo

Master Chef Swapan Giri of the iconic 'Sonargaon' fame from Taj Bengal, will showcase the rich and aromatic tastes of Bengal cuisine, at the 'Navratna' of Taj Samudra, Colombo from 15th to 24th of September 2023 said a press release.

The release said "We invite you to delve into this unique world of textures, aromas, and flavours, choosing from a wide array of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes.

During Lunch and dinner

12.30 pm - 2.45 pm & 7.30 pm - 10.30 pm

About the cuisine of Kolkata and the history behind it.

The Bengali cuisine in Sonargaon, reflects age old traditions of the Zamindari style of



Chef Giri has an Experience of over 40 years and is the Chef D' Cuisine for Sonargaon restaurant at Taj Bengal.

of Bengali cuisine highlights the single spice usage in each dish making that flavour distinctive. Indulge in the all-time popular vegetable chop (vegetable cutlets deep-fried), mangshor chop (deep fried mutton cutlets), Macher Jhol (homestyle fish curry with potato and cauliflower), Dhokar dalna (Bengal gram cakes cooked in slurry of spices), Chingri malai curry (prawns cooked in coconut cream), Luchi (puffed fried flat bread), Mishti doi (sweetened yoghurt) and many more unique dishes featuring in the curated menu said the release.

About Chef Swapan Giri

"Cooking is something that makes me happy, and I love cooking for others" is what Chef Giri's words are, whenever you ask him about his career. He says, "When I serve a bowl of a rice, it contains my love, hardwork, and passion for my profession."



Bengal. Zamindars were considered equivalent to Lords and Barons and in some cases, they were seen as independent sovereign princes.

The cuisine is rich in flavours, textures, and colours with a surprising range of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. The uniqueness

Flattering and modern, this cut is proving popular with Gen-Zers and Boomers alike

The fringe, which gets its name, unsurprisingly, from a butterfly's wings, is designed to skim the cheekbones to create a diamond shape, which is not only forgiving on faces that have softened with time, but also gives the hair a jaunty lift. Hence why it's popular with Gen-Zers and Boomers alike. For the Princess of Wales, this micro update is the perfect way to freshen up an end-of-summer hairstyle in line with the new autumn season without forsaking polish. Andreas Wild from Larry King's Notting Hill salon says: "I love the Princess's new look; It's very soft and modern. Sometimes when you have long hair it can hide your features. What's beautiful about this style is that it brings out Kate's eyes more."

This isn't the first time that the Princess has refreshed her look with a fringe. Just



Kate in flattering fringe

days before her first pregnancy was announced in 2012, she appeared with a choppy, flicky new fringe, and in 2020, she also paired a long bob haircut with a new subtle, face-framing fringe.

The butterfly haircut is a hybrid of the

bouncy blowouts of the 1990s modelled by Cindy Crawford, Claudia Schiffer and Helena Christensen and the flicky shags of the 1970s inspired by Farrah Fawcett and Goldie Hawn.

By slicing through the front of the hair without losing overall length, you get the best of both worlds: a fresh look without the loss of identity that can sometimes happen when you take too much off in one go.

And it's practical, too. "When you put your hair up in a ponytail or in a loose knot, you can pull out the front tendrils to softly frame the face," says Wild.

"It's very low maintenance," he adds. "I remind my clients that you can go into your salon every three or four weeks for a fringe trim, which you can do on your lunch hour."

