

ASHA ABEYASEKERA-VAN DORT

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EDUCATION

UK 2013	PhD - Dept. of Social and Policy Science, University of Bath DISSERTATION: Marriage, Middle-class Identities, and Modernity in Contemporary Sri Lanka
SRI LANKA 2007	Master of Arts (MA) in Women's Studies, University of Colombo THESIS: From Public Agendas to Personal Transformation: Assessing Women's Empowerment in the Development Sector in Sri Lanka
MA, USA 1998	Bachelor of Arts (BA) - magna cum laude with Honors in English, Mount Holyoke College <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ MAJOR: English MINOR: Economics♦ SENIOR THESIS: A Pattern of Silence: Women and Gender in the Novels of Anita Desai (Honors)
SRI LANKA 1993	GCE A-LEVELS - Bishop's College

ACADEMIC HONORS

- ♦ Overseas Research Scholarship, University of Bath, 2008
- ♦ University of Bath Research Studentship, 2008
- ♦ Democracy Studies Fellowship Award – Social Scientists' Association, Sri Lanka, 2007
- ♦ Humanities and Social Sciences Research Award – for the research 'Quantitative and Qualitative Dimensions of Gender Equity in Sri Lankan Higher Education', The Open University of Colombo 2005-06
- ♦ Phi Beta Kappa – Outstanding Academic Achievement & Top 10 percent of the Class, 1998
- ♦ Susan B. Reynolds Award – Most Outstanding English Major of the Graduating Class, 1998
- ♦ Sarah Williston Scholar – Top 15 percent of class, 1996 – 97

PUBLICATIONS

- ♦ 2010. with Harini Amarasuriya. "Why aren't we empowered yet?' Assumptions and silences surrounding women, gender, and development in Sri Lanka. In: *Charting pathways to gender equality*. Colombo: Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR). 25th Anniversary publication
- ♦ 2010. Youth mobility and overseas migration in Sri Lanka. In: R. Gunatilaka, M. Mayer, M. Vodopivec (eds). *The challenge of youth employment in Sri Lanka*. Washington DC: The World Bank
- ♦ 2008. Core principles. In: *A tool, a guide, and a framework. Introduction to a psychosocial approach to development*. Colombo: Social Policy Analysis and Research Centre, University of Colombo.
- ♦ 2008. with Harini Amarasuriya and Mihiri Ferdinando. Understanding wellbeing in Sri Lanka: a psychosocial framework. In: *A tool, a guide, and a framework. Introduction to a psychosocial approach to development*. Colombo: Social Policy Analysis and Research Centre, University of Colombo.
- ♦ 2008. *Gender ideologies in the school curriculum. A textual analysis of secondary school text books*. Colombo: Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR).
- ♦ 2008. with Harini Amarasuriya and Jeanne Maracek. "The Shape of Water – Film Review". *Feminism and Psychology*. 18(1): 133–149.
- ♦ 2006. with Chandra Gunawardena et al. "Quantitative and Qualitative Dimensions of Gender Equity in Sri Lanka". *Women's Studies International Forum*. 29(6): 562-71.
- ♦ 2005. "Curriculum Transformation in the University of Colombo". In: Chandra Gunawardena (ed). *Counting Women: Looking Beyond Numbers. Gender Equity in Higher Education in Sri Lanka*. Colombo: Open University Press.
- ♦ 2005. with Marsha Cassiere-Daniel. "A rose by any other name may not smell sweet at all. Psychosocial Work in the Tamil Language: Issues and Challenges facing Trainers and Translators". In: *Glossary of Terms used in Psychosocial Capacity Building: English-Tamil*. Colombo: The Psychosocial Support Programme.

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TEACHING

2012 - to date	Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo Visiting Lecturer – Masters in Counseling and Psychosocial Work Modules: Advanced theoretical, policy, and programming issues; Research Methods and skills for mental health and psychosocial support
2008 - 2011	Dept. of Social and Policy Sciences, University of Bath Teaching Assistant Modules: Qualitative Research methods; Principles and Skills of Social Research; Introduction to Social Analysis of Development; Introduction to Development
2007 - 2008	Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo Visiting Lecturer – Master of Arts in Women’s Studies Module: Women and Development: Theoretical Perspectives
2003 - 2004	Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo. Visiting Instructor – Post-graduate Diploma in Psychosocial Work and Counseling Module: Academic Writing

OTHER PUBLICATIONS AND CONFERENCE PAPERS

Member of the Drafting Committee:

- ♦ Psychosocial Forum (2007). *What is Psychosocial? Understanding Terminology in the Psychosocial Sector*. Colombo: Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA)
- ♦ Ministry of Youth Affairs (2007) *National Action Plan for Youth Employment, Sri Lanka*. Sri Lanka: Ministry of Youth Affairs
- ♦ National Peace Council (2006). *Gender and Conflict Transformation: A Training Manual with Dilrukshi Fonseka*
- ♦ The Psychosocial Support Programme (2005). *A Glossary of Terms used in Psychosocial Capacity Building: English-Sinhala*. Colombo: The Psychosocial Support Programme.

Changing Gender Orders in Sri Lanka. Challenge, Backlash, and Change. American Centre for Lankan Studies

“Changing marriage practices among the urban middle-class Sinhala Buddhist community. (Colombo: December 2012)

Giving Youth a Voice - Joint Regional Conference, SPARC - University of Colombo & IGS - BRAC University

“Marriage and the making of modern identities in contemporary Sri Lanka.” (Colombo: March 2012)

ENQUIRE Post-graduate Conference, University of Nottingham – Identity Research: Past, Present, and Future

“Gender, middle-class identities, and modernity in contemporary Sri Lanka”. (UK: September 2010)

Sri Lanka Evaluators’ Association (SLEvA) - International Conference on Evaluation.

“Understanding the Impact of Development Interventions on Psychosocial Wellbeing: Developing a Wellbeing Assessment Tool for long-term Impact Monitoring”. (Colombo: March 2007)

WHO-CRED - Expert Consultation on Improving The Outcome Research On Mental Health And Psychosocial Programs In Post-Disaster And (Post)-Conflict Settings. .

“Assessing the Impact of Development Interventions on Psychosocial Wellbeing”. (Bangkok, Thailand: October 2006)

Centre for Women’s Research - Tenth National Convention on Women’s Studies.

“In Search of a Feminist Work/Life Ethic: Beyond the Public and Private”. (Colombo: April 2006)

ATN WEXDEV International Women's Executive Development Conference - Change in Climate? Prospects for Gender Equity in Universities.

“A Curriculum for Women by Women: Curriculum Transformation at the University of Colombo”. (Adelaide, Australia: April 2006)

International Women’s Rights Action Watch (IWRAP) Asia Pacific – Regional Thematic Meeting on Violence against Women

“Country Presentation Paper – Domestic Violence Act”. (Dhaka, Bangladesh: December 2005)

Centre for Women’s Research - Ninth National Convention on Women’s Studies.

“Curriculum Transformation Initiatives in the University of Colombo”. (Colombo: March 2004)

RESEARCH WORK

<p>COLOMBO, SRI LANKA Mar 06 – to-date</p>	<p>Programme Coordinator (2007); Programme Officer (2006) Social Policy Analysis and Research Centre (SPARC), University of Colombo</p> <p>Research Project: Psychosocial Assessment of Humanitarian and Development Interventions (PADHI)</p> <p>This two-year research study aimed to develop a conceptual framework for understanding the determinants of psychosocial wellbeing under particular cultural, socio-economic, and political conditions and propose a model for wellbeing in Sri Lanka. The second phase of the research study aimed to develop and pilot a methodology and related tools to assess the impact of development interventions on the wellbeing of individuals and communities. The research was conducted in three major districts in Sri Lanka with all major ethnic groups.</p>
<p>Oct 06 – Sep 07</p>	<p>Technical Advisor Reducing Effects and Incidents of Torture (RESIST) project The Asia Foundation</p> <p>As part of the RESIST project, culturally relevant and ethical assessment methodology was developed with the assistance of Dr. Jon Hubbard of the Centre for Victims of Torture (CVT) to measure the effectiveness of counseling and related services in enabling torture-affected persons and families to resume their roles within family and community. The Technical Advisor's role included providing training for management and counseling staff, supervising the implementation of the assessment tool, and modification of the tool based on field implementation.</p>
<p>COLOMBO, SRI LANKA Feb – Sep 07</p>	<p>Principle Researcher Gender Stereotypes in Secondary School Text Books Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR)</p> <p>This study involved conducting an in-depth textual analysis of the treatment of gender and identity in secondary school text books. The study has been selected for publication and will be published as part of CENWOR's study series.</p>
<p>COLOMBO, SRI LANKA Aug 06 - Jul 07</p>	<p>Research Coordinator Media Representation of Women as Political Actors The Women and Media Collective</p> <p>This study involved designing a survey of the newspapers in Sri Lanka to understand how the print media reportage on women as political actors can be analyzed as a gendered discourse. I worked with a committee of three advisors to develop the research design and survey instrument. I was responsible for developing the training workshop for the research assistants and am primarily responsible for writing the research report.</p>
<p>COLOMBO, SRI LANKA Nov 05 – Aug 06</p>	<p>Researcher Youth Mobility and Migration International Labour Organization (ILO) & Social Policy Analysis and Research Centre (SPARC)</p> <p>The objective of this study was to investigate youth mobility and migration in the overall context of Sri Lanka's international and internal labour migratory patterns and trends for the specific purpose of exploring employment opportunities for youth. The paper was mainly a desk review of available literature on migration and looks at key characteristics of Sri Lanka's export and internal labour market, the trends and patterns of migration in Sri Lanka, the impact of migration on individuals, and the policy environment and provides recommendations based on key findings.</p> <p>The research paper from this study contributed to the drafting of a National Action Plan for Youth Employment in Sri Lanka. Was selected to be on the drafting committee of the National Action Plan and was one of the four member team responsible for the final draft that was adopted by the Ministry of Youth Affairs.</p>

RESEARCH WORK (CONT.)

<p>COLOMBO, SRI LANKA Jun – Aug 05</p>	<p>Researcher <i>Property Ownership and Inheritance Rights of Women for Social Protection</i> Centre for Women’s Research (CENWOR) & International Centre for Research for Women (ICRW)</p> <p>The purpose of this study was to explore the co-relation between women’s rights of property ownership and their experience of domestic violence. The objectives included generating empirical data documenting the association of between experience of domestic violence and women’s ownership of property across different cultural contexts; documenting the ways in which property ownership reduces women’s vulnerability and enhances their ability to deal with domestic violence; and exploring community perceptions, attitudes and practices around women’s property ownership. Was responsible for writing up the research findings for the final report.</p>
<p>COLOMBO, SRI LANKA 2003 - 2005</p>	<p>Member - Research Team <i>Gender Equity in Commonwealth Higher Education</i> Open University of Sri Lanka & Uni. of London, Institute of Education</p> <p>The two-year study aimed to examine sustainable strategies and interventions adopted for gender equity at Colombo University and assess how far such policies have contributed to gender equity in the academia. The study examined the accessibility of higher education to women; assessed gender equity initiatives on staff development; and analyzed the impact of initiatives undertaken to transform the curriculum. Was responsible for conducting interviews with students and faculty, contributed to data analysis and report writing.</p>
<p>COLOMBO, SRI LANKA Sep – Nov 04</p>	<p>Member - Research Team <i>Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment</i> Social Policy Analysis and Research Centre (SPARC) & German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)</p> <p>The study involved understanding how to apply the principles of ‘Do-No-Harm’ and ‘Psychosocial Work’ to food security and livelihood projects being implemented in the Eastern province. The ‘Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA)’ project was commissioned by the Food Security and Conflict Transformation (FSCT) programme of the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). Designed 03 training workshops for project coordinators and local government authorities on how to apply PCIA methods in project implementation.</p>
<p>COLOMBO, SRI LANKA Jan – Jun 03</p>	<p>Research Assistant <i>Gender, Justice, and Transition</i> UNIFEM</p> <p>Worked with a Gender Consultant at UNIFEM to develop a conceptual framework and resource tool for UNIFEM’s work on gender justice in post-conflict countries. Through a comparative study of the issues, schools of thought, mechanisms and approaches to promoting justice and reconciliation, the study assessed how gender justice is addressed in countries undergoing transition.</p>

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PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

<p>COLOMBO, SRI LANKA Oct 05 – Aug 08</p>	<p>Programme Consultant The Women and Media Collective</p> <p>The Women and Media Collective works towards achieving equal rights for women through multi-level interventions with a focus on grass-roots activism, policy reform, and research. Its main strategies are Legal and Policy Reform, Peace Advocacy, Political Participation of Women, Media, Publications, and Networking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Overall consultant for ‘Legal and Policy Reform’, ‘Peace Advocacy’ and ‘Media’ programmes ◆ Coordinate and provide direction to annual strategic planning of organization, which includes development of workplans, assessment indicators, and report writing. ◆ Research Coordinator – Media Monitoring on Women’s Political Representation in the Media ◆ Coordinator – CEDAW Shadow Report
<p>COLOMBO, SRI LANKA Oct 05 – Aug 08</p>	<p>OPTIONS Magazine – Editor</p> <p>‘OPTIONS’ is a feminist magazine published by the Women and Media Collective. It provides a platform to discuss the issues and challenges faced by women in Sri Lanka and South Asia. It has a local and international readership. ‘OPTIONS’ aims to spread awareness on women’s rights and concerns, to challenge patriarchal values, and to develop a feminist perspective through the publication of writings by South Asian women and men.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Re-designed the magazine in 2006 to appeal to a wider audience, namely young professional women. ◆ Expanded the network of young writers and photographers
<p>COLOMBO, SRI LANKA Jun 03 – Aug 05</p>	<p>The Psychosocial Support Programme (PSP) – Programme Manager</p> <p>PSP is an independently administered programme of the International War Trauma and Humanitarian Intervention Trust (IWTHI). PSP’s mission is to contribute to the wellbeing of individuals and communities through multi-layered support structures. Its activities include capacity building at the district and national level, contributing to the psychosocial sector’s networking and exchange, and engaging in applied research.</p>
	<p>Primary Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Developed institutional and strategic policies for the PSP ◆ Conceptualized and designed capacity building activities, including training programmes with project teams for district-level partner organizations. ◆ Developed reading groups and seminars to enhance networking and exchange of information among psychosocial personnel ◆ Developed the Resource Centre with the objective of creating a reference library for the psychosocial sector ◆ Monitored the standards of ethical integrity and technical quality within all programme activities including providing feedback and support to staff and conceptualizing mechanisms for developing and strengthening good practices and quality of services in line with good development principles. <p>Administrative Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Strengthened and developed capacities of the PSP, which involved developing the systems of management, administration, monitoring and evaluation and modifying organization structure in accordance with psychosocial principles and functions. ◆ Responsible for organizational assessment process and implementing systems and structures within PSP ◆ Designed and prepared project proposals, budgets and reports
<p>COLOMBO, SRI LANKA Oct 02 – Mar 03</p>	<p>Institute of Policy Studies – Information and Communications Officer</p> <p>IPS is an economic policy research institute set up by the Government of Sri Lanka and promotes policy-oriented research and works to strengthen the country’s capacity for medium-term policy analysis.</p>