

HARSHA M. DE SILVA

SUMMARY

Economist, researcher, lecturer and one-time public servant. Has Fourteen years experience in policy reform, public interest regulation, development finance and social, market and opinion research. Current interest is on both supply and demand side issues in information and communications technology infrastructure in emerging Asia. Is a leader in Sri Lanka's political-economic dialogue with popular weekly discussion program on local television.

EDUCATION

University of Missouri, Ph.D Economics [1993], M.A. Economics [1993]
Truman State University, B.S. Business Management [1988]
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Executive Program on Evaluating Social Programs [2006]

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2001 - to date

**Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia,
Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand**

Consultant Economist

- **Lead Economist, LIRNEasia** since September 2004 [www.lirneasia.net]; the Asian affiliate of LIRNE.NET a collaboration among leading universities in Denmark, the Netherlands, South Africa and the United Kingdom. LIRNEasia endeavors to transform governance and regulation of information and communications technology [ICT] in the emerging Asian region from obstructive, inhibiting regimes into ones that will allow opportunities for people to use ICT in ways that will improve their lives.
 - 2006-07: Lead Asian team of researchers on impact of reforms in the telecom infrastructure from a supply side perspective and the use and affordability of services by the poor from a demand side perspective in India, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Examine the ICT contribution in improving life conditions of those engaged in agriculture.
 - 2005-06: Led projects on analyzing programmes to extend telecom coverage to the rural households in India; on assessing Asia's first least-cost subsidy auction designed for rural telecom connectivity in Nepal; and on designing and developing the framework to assess impact of telecom liberalization and ICT benefits to the poor across six countries in Asia.
- **Independent economist** with a focus on macroeconomic management; has written extensively in the local press on matters relating to monetary and fiscal policies of the country.
- **International Consultant** with USAID-International Resources Group [IRG] for Government of Nepal to increase private sector participation in hydropower development in that country.
- **Architect and implementer of Govi Gnana Service** [agricultural knowledge Service: GGS], an innovative ICT enabled link across the agriculture value to find a viable solution to the twin problems of farmer poverty and high cost of agricultural produce in Sri Lanka. [ongoing]
- In the **panel of consultants** to the World Bank funded Renewable Energy for Rural Economic Development project aimed at fostering rural economic development and improving the quality of life of rural citizens by providing access to electricity. [ongoing]
- **Government of Sri Lanka [GoSL], Senior Consultant Economist** with the Public Interest Program Unit [PIPU] of the Ministry of Economic Reform of the GoSL. The PIPU was, inter alia, mandated with establishing the Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka, the first of its kind in South Asia. As PIPU's senior most economist, played an important role in PIPU's contribution towards the wave of telecom and petroleum liberalization. [2002 - 2004.]
- **Advisor** to the Rural Knowledge Centre Project, '*Nenasela*', of the eSri Lanka project. As a key contributor to the original design of the innovative mechanism to provide rural ICT access to bridge the digital divide, contributed immensely to the success of this eSri Lanka project including the design of the Regional Telecommunications Network component and the connected telecentre component. Also co-authored the project on voucher design. [2002-2004]

SELECTED RECENT RESEARCH PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Selected infrastructure [ICT and other] related work

- Two chapters; [1] The dumbing-down of smart subsidies, Nepal and [2] Access Deficit Tax, India in *ICT infrastructure in emerging Asia: Policy and regulatory Roadblocks*, book in press 2007, New Delhi and Ottawa, Sage and IDRC.
- Teleuse at the Bottom of the Pyramid in Pakistan and four other emerging Asian nations. *Pakistan Telecommunications Authority*, June 2007
- Telecom at the Bottom of the Pyramid. *Wireless Opportunities and Solutions: LIRNE expert meeting*, Montevideo, Uruguay, March 2007
- The next billion [telephone] users. *GSM 3G India 2007*, New Delhi, India, January 2007
- Impact of inequality in access to telecoms in poverty reduction. *CEPA Annual Symposium on Poverty Research*, Colombo, Sri Lanka, December 2006
- Opportunities and new revenue streams at the 'bottom of the pyramid'. *ESOMAR World Conference on Telecom*, Barcelona, Spain, November 2006
- Telecom use on a shoestring: Expenditure and cost perceptions among financially constrained. *World Dialog on Regulation*, May 2006. <http://www.regulateonline.org/content/view/713/31/>
- Smart Subsidies: Getting the conditions right. Experience of expanding rural telecoms in Nepal. *World Dialog on Regulation*, Jan 2006. <http://www.regulateonline.org/content/view/642/31/>
- An Innovative agricultural marketing solution in Sri Lanka; The Govi Gnana Service [GGS], USAID and World Bank sponsored *Inaugurating New Partnerships in the Global Food Chain at the 15th Annual World Food and Agribusiness Forum, Symposium and Case Conference*, Chicago, USA, June 2005. www.ifama.org/conferences/conf.asp and at *Regional Consultation on Linking Farmers to Markets: Lessons and Successful Practices*, Cairo, Egypt, January 2006.
The objective of GGS is to create value for the farmer via ICT based marketing links between isolated farmers and the rest of the players in the agriculture value chain by reducing the transaction and intermediary costs.
- Universal Service Funds, Access Deficit Charges & Least-cost Subsidy Auctions at Pro-poor, Pro-market ICT Policy and Regulation at the *World Summit on Information Society* conference, Tunis, Tunisia, November 2005. <http://www.lirneasia.net/wp-content/HARSHA.pdf>
- Diversifying Participation in Network Development: Moving Beyond the Market: A study of the Universal Service Fund of India, *World Dialog on Regulation*, September 2005. www.lirneasia.net/projects/universal-service-india-case-study
- The Govi Gnana Service: A Multistakeholder Partnership to Bring Dividends of ICT to Rural Sri Lanka, ITU sponsored *WSIS Thematic Meeting on Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships in Bridging the Digital Divide*, Seoul, Republic of Korea, June 2005
- The role of ICT in Fighting Agricultural Poverty: GGS, *Annual Conference of the Southeast Asia Regional Computer Federation*, Malaysia, Oct. 2004. www.mncc.com.my/searcc2004
- The Govi Gnana Service: An ICT Intervention to Fight Agricultural Poverty in Sri Lanka, *The Annual Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization Forum*, Sri Lanka, September 2004. <http://www.cto.int/forum/programme.php>
- Chapter on Regulation and Investment: A Case Study of Bangladesh in *Stimulating Investment in Network Development*, edited by Amy Mahan and William Melody; InfoDev, IDRC and LIRNE.NET, June 2005. <http://www.regulateonline.org/content/view/435/31/>
- The Govi Gnana System: an agriculture info-structure to fight poverty in Sri Lanka, *National IT Conference*, Sri Lanka, July 2004. http://www.cssl.lk/conference_papers.htm
- Socioeconomic Impact Analysis of Bhutan Rural Electrification and Network Expansion Project, with Dr. Aleta Domodom, *Asian Development Bank*, unpublished, 2003.
- Innovative Mechanisms to Reduce the Digital Divide in Sri Lanka: The Vishva Gnana [global knowledge] Programme, *National Information Technology Conference*, Sri Lanka, July 2003. www.cssl.lk/it_conferences.htm
- The Sri Lanka Development Gateway, *The Baramati Initiative*, India, June 2003

H A R S H A M . D E S I L V A

- Vishva Grama [global knowledge] Fund: an effective and efficient funding mechanism for rural connectivity through multi-service platforms and rural network extension, Public Interest Programme Unit, *Ministry of Economic Reform, Science and Technology*, Sri Lanka, 2002
- E-readiness and e-needs assessment for Sri Lanka, *Development Gateway Foundation*, World Bank, <http://gateway-dev.worldbank.org/node/220151/ereadiness/downloads/ereadiness.pdf>
- Has written numerous other reports as Team Leader of all research undertaken by AC Nielsen Lanka from 1997 to 2001.

Selected recent general economics related work

- Interest and Exchange Rates: Impact on Economy, *Certified Management Accountants of Sri Lanka Annual Sessions*, September 2007 [forthcoming]
- Mahinda Chinthana 10 Year national development program; In search of excellence or just mediocrity, *University of Colombo*, July 2007
- The Sri Lankan Economy: Past, Present and Future, UN workshop in preparation for the implementation of the *UN Development Assistance Framework 2008-2016*, June 2007
- Sri Lanka's 10-Year National development Strategy, *UNDP Centre in Colombo*, June 2007
- Macroeconomic Framework of the National Development Strategy 2006-2016, *CIMA Sri Lanka Division*, May 2007
- Aid and Sovereignty: Role of International Financial Institutions in Developing Countries, *Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies*, May 2007
- Peace Process in Sri Lanka: Challenges and Opportunities, and Economics Perspective, International Seminar by the *Centre for Security Analysis* and SLFI, February 2006.
- Big government and a national economy or a small government and an open economy: A choice between Mahinda Rajapakse and Ranil Wickremesinghe, *Organization of Professional Associations and the Sri Lanka Economic Association*, October 2005.

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES: TEACHING

2005 – to date **University of Moratuwa** **Sri Lanka**
Visiting Lecturer Department of Civil Engineering MBA

- Teach units in Industrial Organization of Infrastructure and Law and Regulation of Infrastructure. Introduce economic analysis of real-world markets characterized by structural features and firm-conduct that affect economic performance.
- Currently supervise two dissertations: Tariff Reform for Pipe-borne Drinking Water in Greater Colombo and Designing a Infrastructure Platform for Specialized Business Process Outsourcing Zone in Sri Lanka

2007 – to date **CPRsouth** **Philippines and Sri Lanka**
Faculty Member

Taught in the first Communication Policy Research South event Research: Improving ICT governance in the Asia-Pacific held at the Asian Institute of Management, Manila in January 2007. Courses were on Measuring the Effects of ICT and Basics of Infrastructure Economics.

2007 – to date **SAFIR** **South Asia**
Faculty Member

Faculty in the 8th South Asia Forum for Infrastructure Regulation [SAFIR] Core Training Course in March-April 2007. Developed and conducted a panel on Special Aspects of Infrastructure Reforms in Developing Countries with experts from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

2007 – to date **LIRNE.NET** **Worldwide**
Faculty Member

Taught in the 11th LIRNE.NET course on Telecom Reform: Strategies to achieve connectivity and convergence, in Singapore in Feb-March 2007. Lectured on two areas; demand for telecom among the poor in Asia; how universal services programmes can be made more efficient.

2005 – 2006 **Northwood University [Michigan, USA]; Colombo campus** **Sri Lanka**
Visiting Professor at NU International Program at American National College Colombo

H A R S H A M . D E S I L V A

1995 - 2000 **University of Sri Jayawardenepura** **Sri Lanka**
Visiting Lecturer

- At the Postgraduate Institute of Management, University of Sri Jayawardenepura MBA programme, taught Theory and Practice of Economics and Dynamics of Financial Markets of Sri Lanka. This course analyzed issues relating to theoretical models of financial markets and the practical reality given the specific financial deepening problems in Sri Lanka.
- Supervise MBA theses focusing on developing financial markets. Selected supervisions: Development of a derivatives market in Sri Lanka: its potential and ability to stabilise commodity trade through risk management, 2003; An action plan for the Colombo Stock Exchange to increase the number of listings, 2000; and Recommendations for the development of a listed debt securities market in Sri Lanka, 2000.

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES: PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS ON ECONOMICS

2006 Jan - to date **Biz 1st In Focus** **Sri Lanka**

- Hosts weekly prime time discussion on how economic policy impacts upon the population on Channel 1 MTV and on Shakthi TV. *More than 80 shows completed.*
- Some recent guests have been 2006 Nobel Laureate Muhhamad Yunus, Mr Praful Patel, VP South Asia Region of the World Bank; Mr Liqun Jin VP Operations of the ADB; Dr. Abhijit Banerjee and Dr Esther Duflo; Professors of Economics at MIT and a host of other economists at a number of universities both in and out of Sri Lanka, the World Bank, ADB and other agencies; a regional head of UNDP; chairpersons of trade chambers; senior officials of state enterprises; and top private sector executives.
- Independent people-meter based television ratings indicate that the 30 minute show has moved up from the bottom position at the start to the top position currently among all English language business programmes on Sri Lanka television.
- Have written dozens of articles on economics issues to newspapers [example from 11 October 2005 <http://servesrilanka.blogspot.com/2005/10/how-to-lose-cost-of-living-battle-thru.html>] and regularly give interviews to both the English and vernacular press [example from 22 April 2007 <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/070422/FinancialTimes/ft315.html>].

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

1990 - to date **Sri Lanka Economic Association [SLEA]** **Sri Lanka**
Member, ex. Council member and ex. Treasurer

As a council member of the SLEA participate actively in the promotion of study and discussion of matters of interest to the Sri Lanka economy.

1996 – to date **Ceylon Chamber of Commerce** **Sri Lanka**
Member of Subcommittee on Economic Affairs and Taxation
Member of the Power and Energy subcommittee

As a member of two important subcommittees of the leading chamber, participate in formulation of private-public strategies on economic issues in general and on energy issues in particular.

2006 – to date **Superbrands Lanka** **Sri Lanka**
Council Member

Invited to be a member of the newly established Superbrands Lanka council; part of the globally acclaimed Superbrands organization that selects and rewards exceptional brands.

2003 - to 2004 **Consumer Affairs Authority of Sri Lanka** **Sri Lanka**
Board Member

- Appointed by the Hon. Minister of Trade and Consumer Affairs to the Board of Directors of the Consumer Affairs Authority. [CAA]. The CAA is the apex agency with wide powers to regulate all consumer related activity in the country.
- Played an important role in decision making on certain complaints of anti-competitive practices and in several consumer services issues.

H A R S H A M . D E S I L V A

2002 **Hon. Prime Minister's Committee on Globalisation, Trade Development and International Economic Policy**

Contributed to the preparation of the policy document to make Sri Lanka a country of competitive value addition while making her a hub for commercial activities in the South Asian region.

SHOLARSHIPS AND TRAINING

Selected scholarships

- MIT, USA. Executive program in evaluating social programs, 2006
- World Bank-Development Gateway. Economic, social and legal aspects of the Internet, 2002
- National Institute of Bank Management, India. Treasury management techniques, 1996
- Euromoney, Singapore. Emerging instruments in global financing, 1995
- International Center for Monetary & Banking Studies, Geneva, Switzerland, 1994
- University of Missouri, USA. Full tuition scholarship and teaching assistantship 1989 – 1993
- Truman State University USA. International student scholarship, 1985 – 1988

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- **Charter Member of the Rotary Club of Colombo Regency.** Personally led the effort to collect funds and the subsequent construction of fifteen homes and a community centre for the resettlement of equal number of tsunami displaced families. See *The Rotarian*, March 2005 and http://www.rotarycregency.org/kalutara_FINALupdate_30Sep2006.pdf
- Member, **Board of Management, Sahanaya: The National Council for Mental Health.** Celebrating 25 years in 2007, Sahanaya is a leading charitable organization involved in the promotion of mental health in the community. Involved in establishing the nation's first large – scale privately funded residential facility for mentally disturbed persons.
- Member, **Board of Governors, Sri Lanka Saukyadana Movement.** As a key decision-maker of the country's largest volunteer health camp service provider indirectly participate in treating and counseling thousands of poor annually.
- Key contributor to **Vanguard Foundation** in preparing a design for an effective All Hazard Public Warning System; NEWS [National Early Warning System] as a response to the devastating Tsunami that killed 31,000 Sri Lankans in Dec 04. www.vanguardfoundation.com and presentation to forum www.lirneasia.net/wp-content/HdeS%20Lessons%20Learnt.pdf

LANGUAGES

Excellent reading, writing and speaking ability in English and Sinhala.

REFERENCES

- Professor Rohan Samarajiva, Executive Director, LIRNEasia, 12 Balcombe Place, Colombo 00800, Sri Lanka. Telephone + 94 77 735 2361. email samarajiva@lirne.net
- Professor Whitney Hicks, Emeritus Professor, Department of Economics University of Missouri, 909 University Avenue, 118 Professional Building, Columbia, MO 65211-6040, USA. Telephone + 1 573 882 0063. email hicksw@missouri.edu
- Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka and current Leader of the Opposition, No. 2 Cambridge Terrace, Colombo 00700, Sri Lanka. Telephone +94 11 535 2997. email sandrap@sltnet.lk

PERSONAL

Male, Sri Lanka citizen. Born 30 August 1964. Married with two children. Determined golfer!