

Maya

27-year-old Maya is a young mother of two girls, abandoned by her husband and left to deal with all the problems of life on her own. Her strong will and her parent's support kept her going and eventually brought her to Tea Leaf Vision Centre for Professional Development.

She married when she was young and moved to her husband's home, to live with his family as is the general custom in Sri Lanka. She had two daughters, after which her husband left her. For years she did not hear from him. She worked at the hotel his family owned from morning until nightfall, making most of the food for the hotel. His mother paid her Rs. 2000/= per month (approximately £12) to meet the needs of her and the children. Later on, she found out that he had got married to another woman and they were having a baby. Furthermore, she had repay all of the loans taken by her husband. Desperate, Maya took her children, left his family and sought refuge with her own family. Her parents accepted her back and has been looking after them ever since.

She lives in Lakshapana, where one of the hydro-power plants is situated (approximately 130 km east of the Capital City, Colombo). Her parents helped her to put up a shop of semi-permanent structure, where she sells snacks and tea to the pilgrims of Adams Peak. During the pilgrimage season (December to May), she has a good business. Other times are hard.

When she heard about the "Basic English Programme" conducted last year by the Tea Leaf Vision Centre for Professional Development to prepare student for the 1-year Diploma Course, she came to the interview. Her objective was to become better educated in English, so that she can help her young daughters in English education. She wanted them to do well in their lives through better opportunities for good jobs. Ever since, Maya has worked hard at school, balancing well her responsibilities as a mother and the bread-winner for her family. Indeed, she has excelled in her class, who recently voted her the student leader.

Her day begins at the crack of dawn (4 am) when she starts preparing eatables for her boutique. Then she makes breakfast and prepares lunch boxes for her school-going daughters and gets them ready for school. After long waits of about 45 minutes at the bus station, she travels 8 km. to Maskeliya by bus with her daughters and drops them at their school. After a ½ km walk, it is time for lessons at Tea Leaf Vision Centre for Professional Development. At school, Maya is learning English (Speech and Grammar), I.T., Business Studies, Success & Ethics. Through the speech class and numerous activities where she has to practice speaking English, she is gaining confidence. Now she has more business because she is able to speak to the tourists who travel en-route to Adams Peak and not just the locals. Furthermore, she feels that the Business Studies lessons will help her to manage her modest semi-permanent structured shop well and turn it into a big restaurant in the future.

Maya, who was once discouraged and confused very much in life, today is facing the future with confidence due to her lessons in Success & Ethics, which are devised to bring the best out of a person and overcome life's battles. Thanks to the generous contribution of the donors, Tea Leaf Vision Centre for Professional Development stands among the tea leaves as a symbol of hope and new vision for many like Maya.

**** Student's name has been changed to protect her identity. Exchange Rate :- SL Rs. 168 = £1 approximately.**