

Sri Lanka

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| Capital: | Colombo |
| Legislative Capital: | Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte |
| Religion: | Sri Lanka is considered the 3 rd most religious country in the world and Buddhism is the principle religion. About 70% of the society is Buddhist. Other religions include: Muslims (7.6%), Hindus (7.1%), Christians (6.2%) and others (10%). |
| Government: | Democratic Republic – A Unitary State with a semi-presidential system. The national government consists of three branches: Executive - involves president, who is the head of the state, commander in chief and the head of government, Legislative - involves parliament and Judicial - involves Supreme Court and the lower federal courts. |
| Ethnic Groups: | Sinhalese (major ethnic group) about 75 %, Sri Lankan Moors - 7.2%, Indian Tamil - 4.6% and Sri Lankan Tamil about 4 %. The remaining fraction of the society is represented by Burghers, Austronesian and Vedda people. |
| Language: | The official language is Sinhala, usually called Sinhalese or Singhalese. It is spoken by 16 million people in the country. Tamil is another constitutionally-recognised official language, whereas English is used as their linking language. Other common languages are Portuguese Creole, Dutch and Creole Malay. |
| Currency: | Sri Lankan rupee (LKR) |

- Sri Lanka is an island-country situated on the Indian Ocean, southwest of the Indian Subcontinent. According to the Hindu mythology, a land bridge exists between Sri Lanka and the Indian mainland. The island is rich in minerals such as kaolin, limonite, silica feldspar, graphite, thorium and mica.
- The total population of Sri Lanka is about 20 million. It is the 53rd most populated country on the world. The density of population is highest in the western part of the country and in its capital Colombo, with the population of nearly 753,000. Dehiwala-Mount Lavinia is the second most populated city with nearly 246,000 inhabitants.
- Sri Lanka is called "**The tear drop of India**" because of its shape and location. It has been widely recognized that its people are very lively and friendly, so it is also known as "**The nation of smiling people**". The land of beauty contains tropical forests and astonishing landscapes. Because of its natural beauty, the island has been also named "**The Pearl of the Indian Ocean**".



- The Sri Lankan nation has had a long history of international involvement; it is a founding member of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and a member of the G77, the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Commonwealth of Nations. Sri Lanka is classified as an emerging market by the FTSE Global Equity Index and an upper middle-income economy by the World Bank.
- Sri Lanka is the only country in South Asia, which is currently rated 'high' on the Human Development Index.
- Hinduism and Buddhism have a culture of caste system and Sri Lankans are quite considerate about the social status and order. All relationships, whether within family or in business, are based upon people's positions within the hierarchy.

Business and Social Etiquette

- Sri Lankan business and social etiquette is not too formal. As a foreign business person or a guest, you will be given some margin in terms of adhering to the local cultural customs, but you will be also expected to follow certain rules.
- To foster a positive business relationship, you need to be on time for a meeting and prior to that, it is recommended to send some background information of your company, as well as the agenda for the meeting. You will be expected to have all of the materials and printed documents ready with you.
- Maintaining face and eye contact is important for Sri Lankans. As they are not very confrontational in their communication, there is a need to read between the lines to clearly understand what they actually mean.
- Avoid disagreements and criticizing people openly, as it might put them in an awkward position or under pressure. They do not like to admit publicly that they are incorrect.
- Show respect and honor to those who are in a position of authority and avoid being informal with them. When dealing with people at the same level, business communication can be more informal and relaxed.
- Shaking hands is the most common form of greeting in Sri Lanka, but handshakes should be firm. Men can shake hands with other men and women can shake hands with other women. As many Sri Lankan women may not want to shake hands with men, it is advisable to wait for a woman to extend her hand first.



- In business, building relationships is very important; it is always recommended to invest time in conversation at the start of a meeting. As a foreign business person, you also need to provide a small background about you and your company so that they feel comfortable in doing business or discussing business with you.
- Initial meetings usually are taken with the middle level management, who gather information about the project to present it to the decision makers (top level management). In order to reach higher authorities directly, you need to establish a good rapport with the middle managers.
- You are expected to have your business cards along with you. These are usually exchanged after the handshakes and greetings. Always present your card with two hands. As far as the information written on your business card is concerned, add your title and qualifications. One side of your card should be translated into Sinhala or Tamil and other side should be in English.
- Professional attire must be formal. It is recommended for both men and women to wear conservative clothing. Men can wear dark-colored business suits. Women can wear sari, shalwaar qameez or a formal business suit. Skirts, sleeveless blouses or extremely form-fitting dresses are considered inappropriate.
- Following local business culture will help you to make your business dealings smoother and more effective.



Language

- Titles are very important in the local culture. Sri Lankans use professional titles, like Doctor, or Professor, along with person's name or surname.
- If someone does not have a professional title, using "Sir" or "Madam" would be the most appropriate form
- It is not a customary, or sometimes even considered impolite to address people by using Mr, Mrs or Miss or by using their professional titles only

- **English** **Tamil** **Phonetics**

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| Hello | வணக்கம் | Va-nat-kam |
| Good morning | காலவை வணக்கம் | Ka-laj-va-nat-kam |
| Good night | கூட் நடை | Tut-ajit |
| Good bye | கூட் பாய் | Dut-paj |
| Yes | ஆம் | aa-m |
| No | இல்லலை | i-ju-laj |
| Please | தயவு செய்து | Va-ja-vu-sen-du |
| Thank you | நன்றி | Nan-vi |
| You're welcome | வரவறேகிறனே | Va-ra-ven-ki-men |
| I don't understand | எனக்கு புரியவில்லை | Ju-nut-kiupa-vira-vij-laJ |

