



National Values Survey

Sri Lanka 2011



The Asia Foundation



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The Asia Foundation

Colombo, Sri Lanka

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society with four major religions: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Roman Catholicism. As the country emerges from decades of war, new ethno-religious dynamics are emerging which have implications for peace and coexistence between communities. This survey is meant to help uncover some of those dynamics. In Sri Lanka, ethnicity and religion are intertwined: Buddhists are Sinhalese; Hindus are Tamils; Muslims comprise a separate ethnic category and are still referred to as 'Moors', especially among older Sri Lankans. While Muslims' mother-tongue is Tamil, they are not Tamils. Christians are either Sinhalese or Tamil and the overwhelming majority is Roman Catholic.

Within this complex and evolving ethno-religious landscape, The Asia Foundation conducted the National Values in Sri Lanka Survey in late 2011 to gain a more grounded understanding of people's perceptions of religious beliefs and practices, influence of religious leaders, inter-religious relations, and tolerance for religious expression. The survey revealed the following key findings:

- **A plurality of Sri Lankans believe the country is moving in the right direction, however religious minorities are less positive than Buddhists.** Overall, 43 percent of Sri Lankans believe the country is moving in the right direction while just 15 percent see it moving in the wrong direction. An additional 23 percent feel some things are going in the right direction and some things the wrong direction. Differences in perception can be seen between religious groups: forty-nine percent of Buddhists feel the country is moving in the right direction compared to 38 percent of Muslims and just 22 percent of Hindus. Nearly twice as many Muslims (21%) and Hindus (23%) as Buddhists (12%) believe the country is moving in the wrong direction. Infrastructure improvements and the end of the war are the most common reasons cited by those who feel the country is moving in the right direction. Increases in the price of goods, corruption and bribery are the main reasons given by those who feel the country is moving in the wrong direction.
- **Most Sri Lankans feel that the conclusion of the war has not brought an end to ethnic conflict in the country, but that it has been reduced.** Over half (53%) of Sri Lankans feel that the end of the war has not ended ethnic conflict in the country but that it has been reduced, while a third (32%) believe that the conclusion of the war has indeed brought an end to ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Just 7 percent believe the end of the war has not changed anything.
- **Sri Lankans overwhelmingly perceive their society as becoming significantly more religious.** Nationally, 63 percent believe people are much more religious now than 5 years ago. More Buddhists (70%) and Muslims (53%) say they are "much more religious than other either Hindus (39%) or Catholics (44%).
- **Adherence to core religious practices is very high among Sri Lankans of all faiths.** The vast majority of respondents from all religious groups report regular attendance at places of worship as well as adherence to core rituals and practices such as praying, fasting, and reading holy books.
- **Local religious leaders are highly influential and by far the most respected leaders for Sri Lankans of all faiths.** Nationally, 80 percent feel local religious leaders are 'very well respected', compared to 32

percent for Grama Niladhari (GN) officials (who are appointed by the central government to carry out administrative duties in a grama niladhari division) and just 12 percent for politicians. Only 2 percent say religious leaders are 'little respected' or 'not respected' compared to 55 percent who say local politicians are little or not respected. Furthermore, Sri Lankans of all faiths indicate that religious leaders are central in validating the consistency of their personal actions/behaviors with their respective religious beliefs. Lastly, while the majority of Sri Lankans (66%) believe religious leaders should not be involved in politics, Muslims are relatively split on the issue, with just under half (42%) believing religious leaders should have some role to play in politics.

- **Sri Lankans unanimously believe religious leaders should play a central role in community level development, however few are currently involved.** While Sri Lankans believe local religious leaders should stay out of politics, a staggering 84 percent think that religious leaders should be involved in the development of neighborhood amenities. A further 81 percent believe that if religious leaders are not consulted on the problems facing an area, political leaders will make mistakes. Despite this sentiment, only a quarter (26%) say religious leaders in their area are actually participating in local development on a regular basis, and among Muslims the rate is even lower (17 percent).
- **Religious education is increasingly important for Sri Lankans of all faiths.** Overall, nine out of ten Sri Lankans claim that religious education is more important today than five years ago. Religious education among Sri Lankans is almost always pursued domestically with only a miniscule proportion (2%) indicating they have studied abroad. If presented with an opportunity to pursue religious studies abroad, Buddhists and Hindus would choose to study in India, while Muslims overwhelmingly would prefer to do so in Saudi Arabia.
- **Buddhists view foreign influence on their religious teachings negatively, while Hindus and Muslims generally view it positively and Catholics are split.** Just 9 percent of Buddhists believe foreign influence on their religious teachings is a good thing, compared to over half of Hindus (53%) and well over a third of Muslims (38%). In terms of the countries perceived as having the greatest influence on religious values and practices, India is cited by sizable margins from all four religious groups. Buddhists also point to the United States (20%), and Muslims identify Saudi Arabia (39%).
- **Religious minorities are more likely than Buddhists to perceive discrimination by the government.** Overall, Sri Lankans believe that the rights of minorities have improved at least to some degree compared to five years ago (47% much better, 32% somewhat better), however Buddhists believe improvement has been much more substantial than minorities themselves who are more likely to feel only minor or no change has taken place. Nine in ten Buddhists (90%) believe that people of all religions are treated equally in the government job market, compared to 66 percent of Muslims and 45 percent of Hindus. More than two-thirds (66%) of Sri Lankans feel religious leaders are most active in working to ensure that the rights of religious minorities are safeguarded, while only 2% feel local officials or national politicians are the most active. Roughly twice as many Muslims (41%), Hindus (50%), and Catholics (41%) than Buddhists (21%) strongly believe that government should enact special initiatives to protect the land and assets of minorities.
- **Erecting religious statues or places of worship in public places continues to be divisive within and between all religious groups.** Forty-two percent of Buddhists believe religious statues or places of worship should be allowed in public places compared to 30 percent of Muslims and just 23 percent of

Hindus. At the same time, nearly equal proportions within each group believe statues or place of worship should not be allowed in public places. Significantly more minorities than Buddhists believe government organizations should not display religious symbols or signage. Sixty-seven percent of Muslims and 66 percent of Hindus oppose government use of religious symbols and signage compared to 46 percent of Buddhists. More than twice as many Buddhists (38%) as Muslims (15%) believe government should be allowed to display religious symbols or signage.

- **While most Sri Lankans feel free to express religious opinions in public, a notable minority of Muslims and Hindus feel restricted.** The vast majority of Sri Lankans (91%) say they feel free to express religious opinions almost everywhere in their local area. At the same time, a noteworthy minority of Muslims and Hindus feel restricted. About one in four Hindus (23%) and one in eight Muslims (13%) say they feel free to express themselves only amongst friends and relatives or in rare instances nowhere at all.

METHODOLOGY

The survey questions and structure were developed by The Asia Foundation and administered by Nielsen Lanka Company (Pvt) Ltd between August 2 and September 23, 2011. The survey was administered across nine provinces, and included 5,553 face-to-face interviews yielding an overall margin of error of +/- 1.3% at 95% confidence level.

The sample is comprised of respondents from Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Roman Catholic¹ communities in Sri Lanka, and is designed to provide an understanding of each of these four religious communities at the national level. The sampling plan provides a wide spread across the country, covering all provinces for Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus. For Catholics, who constitute a relatively low percentage of the Sri Lankan population, a group of provinces were targeted that contain over 80 percent of the total Catholic population in the country. Margins of error for the four religious groups are as follows: Muslims +/- 2.2%; Buddhists +/-2.7%; Hindus +/- 2.7%; Catholics +/- 3.5%. All samples were split 50%-50% by gender.

	Population above 18 years	Percentage	Sample Size	Margin of error %
Buddhist	8,592,000	69%	1,344	2.7
Hindu	1,755,000	14%	1,356	2.7
Muslim	1,185,000	10%	2,070	2.2
Roman Catholic	898,000	7%	783	3.5
Total 4 groups	12,430,000	100%	5,553	na

***See Annex II for full methodology report**

¹ Roman Catholics were selected to represent the Christian community as whole because they constitute approximately 90% of the Christian population.

Respondents were randomly identified from citizens living in households (own/rent/lease etc.) in all the provinces during the survey time, aged between 18-70, and belonging to the targeted religions—Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, or Roman Catholicism. All nine provinces were included in the survey however some parts in the Northern Province were not included due to accessibility issues.

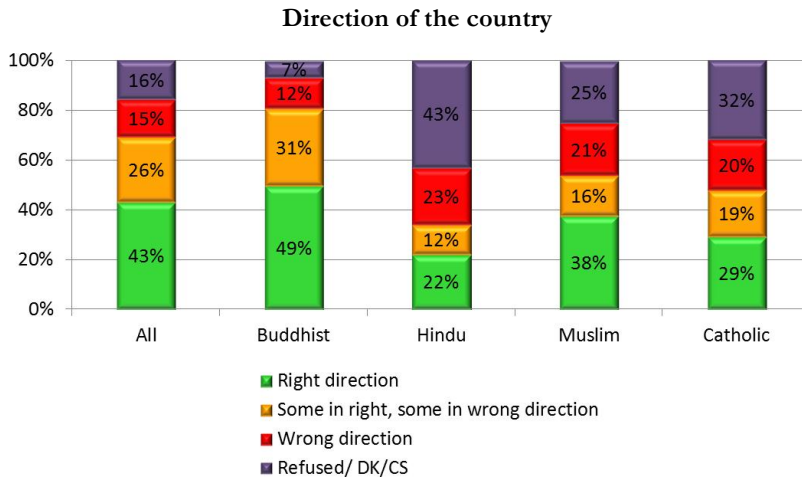
A stratified random sampling technique was used with the 5,553 sample split by province and the province sample further distributed across all the districts. The sample in each district was again split in order to cover the various Divisional Secretariats (DS divisions). In each DS division GN divisions were selected as clusters using SPSS software random number generation process. For 5,553 interviews, the total number of sampling points was designated at 556, however 563 sampling points were taken to compensate for areas in which interviews were not completed due to security related issues. Quotas were kept for each religious group, and urban – rural split was maintained based on actual proportions.

In each selected sampling point, 10 interviews were targeted and broken into two sets by starting the interviews from two separate starting points to enhance the representativeness of the sample. Five interviews were conducted in each starting point in every GN until 10 interviews were completed. Popular landmarks were selected as starting points for household identification and the interviewers used the right hand rule of field movement while selecting the households. In urban areas every 3rd household was selected while in rural areas every 2nd household was selected. Within households, respondents were selected using a Kish Grid.

Overall, 22 percent of interviews were subject to quality control checks, and 10 percent of interviews were accompanied by supervisors from the field partner organization.

NATIONAL MOOD

A sizable plurality of Sri Lankans perceive the country as moving in the right direction, however religious minorities are less positive. Overall, 43 percent of Sri Lankans feel the country is moving in the right direction, while just 15 percent feel it is moving in the wrong direction. A quarter of the country (26%) takes



the middle ground, indicating that some things are going in the right direction but others in the wrong direction. Fewer religious minorities than Buddhists feel the country is moving in the right direction. Forty-nine percent of Buddhists compared to 38 percent of Muslims and just 22 percent of Hindus say the country is moving in the right direction. Nearly twice as many Muslims (21%) and

Hindus (23%) as Buddhists (12%) believe the country is moving in the wrong direction. Also notable is the large proportion of religious minorities (Hindus 43%, Muslims 25%, Catholics 32%) who refused to answer or were uncertain, which stands in contrast to the low percentage of Buddhists (7%) answering similarly.

Infrastructure improvements and conclusion of the war are the main reasons cited by those who feel the country is moving in the right direction. Respondents who indicated that the country is moving in the right direction or said some things right/some things wrong were asked why they felt things were going in the right direction. The most commonly cited reasons are infrastructure improvements, cited by 35 percent of respondents, and that the war has ended mentioned by 30 percent of respondents. In addition, a further 18 percent cite development activities in the country or new development projects

Increases in the price of goods and an increase in corruption and bribery are the main reasons cited by those who feel the country is moving in the wrong direction. One in three respondents indicate increases in the price of goods (33%) as a key reason for feeling the country is going in the wrong direction, while one in five cite an increase in corruption and bribery (20%). Just one in seven respondents pointed to a lack of jobs. Interestingly, while at the time the survey was conducted

development projects

What are the top two reasons for the country going in right direction?*

	All	Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Catholic
Constructions of roads/bridges	35%	38%	21%	23%	26%
The war is over/finished	30%	31%	19%	29%	31%
Development activities in the country/ New development projects	18%	18%	15%	17%	21%
Can live peacefully	12%	11%	9%	20%	12%
Peace	10%	9%	12%	11%	13%
Economy is good	8%	9%	4%	6%	8%
Roads are open after the war is over /Can travel anywhere	9%	8%	18%	16%	7%
Preference is given to religious activities	5%	6%	2%	2%	2%
Getting job opportunities	5%	5%	6%	3%	4%

**Percentages reflect combined total of first and second mentions for each reason*

development projects

What are the top two reasons for the country going in wrong direction?*

	All	Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Catholic
Prices of goods are increasing	33%	31%	37%	44%	31%
Increasing corruption, bribery, frauds	20%	23%	6%	9%	25%
Lack of job opportunities	14%	13%	19%	12%	11%
Increase in living expenses	13%	13%	8%	16%	13%
Deteriorating economy	6%	7%	3%	8%	7%
Number of crimes are increasing in the country	6%	7%	4%	6%	3%
Increasing harassments/issues related to security of women	5%	2%	16%	16%	9%
Weakening of values, discipline, customs	5%	6%	1%	1%	8%

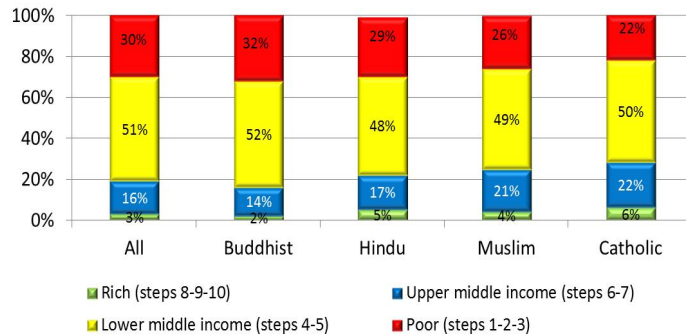
* Percentages reflect combined total of first and second mentions for each reason

several highly publicized incidents involving random attacks—mainly on women—had taken place throughout the country by so called “greased devils”, relatively few respondents cited increases in crime (6%) or increases in harassment or issues related to the security of women (6%). An exception to this trend can be seen in Muslim and Hindu communities, where about one in six cite increases in

harassment/threats to security of women as a reason for believing the country is going in the wrong direction.

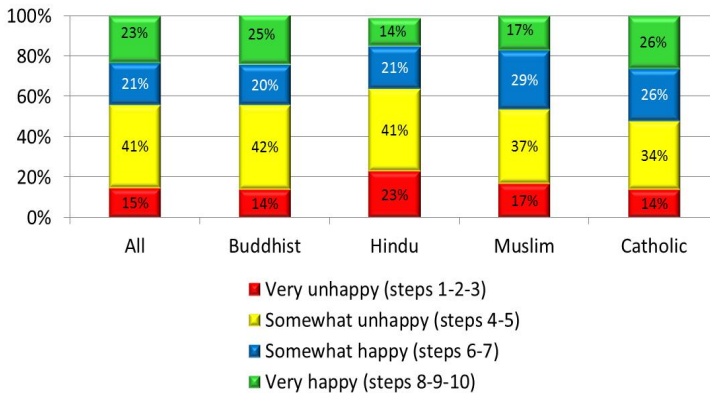
Just over half of Sri Lankans identify themselves as lower middle income. Roughly one third (30%) say they are poor, while 16 percent identify as upper middle income and just 3 percent as rich. A greater proportion of Catholics and Muslims identify themselves as upper middle income or rich, while Buddhists are least likely to identify as belonging to these income categories.

Wealth: On a scale of 1-10 (1 being poorest, 10 richest), where do you see yourself?



A majority of people are unhappy to some degree, with Hindus least happy and Catholics most happy. A combined

Happiness: On a scale of 1-10 (1 being very unhappy, 10 very happy), where do you see yourself?



56 percent say they are *either somewhat unhappy (41%) or very unhappy (15%)*. Meanwhile, a combined 44 percent are either somewhat happy (21%) or very happy (23%). Among religious groups, Hindus express the highest level of unhappiness, with a combined 64 percent either somewhat unhappy or very unhappy. Conversely, Catholics are the only group in which a majority (52%) identifies as somewhat happy or very happy.

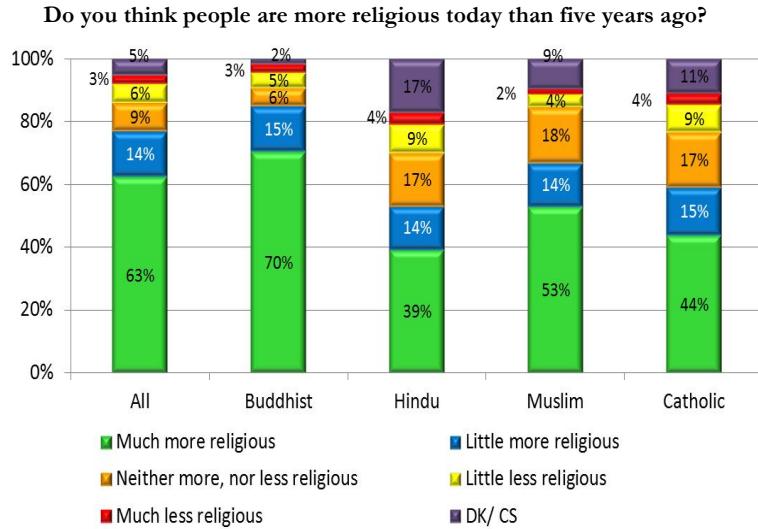
RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Sri Lankans overwhelmingly perceive their society to be more religious today than it was five years ago.

Nationally, approximately two out of every three Sri Lankans believes that people are more religious today than they were five years ago. Just 9 percent feel people are ‘a little’ or ‘much less’ religious than five years ago.

Broken down by religion, the data reveals that in all groups a majority perceive society to have become more religious to at least some degree. By a significant margin, more Buddhists (70%) than other religious groups indicate that people are “much more religious”. Muslims fall second behind Buddhists in perceiving an increase in religiosity with over half (53%) claiming that people have become much more religious. Hindus show the lowest level of

perceived increase in religiosity with 39 percent saying they are much more religious, while Catholics fall in the middle with 44 percent much more religious. It is notable that more Hindus and Catholics also claim that society has become less religious compared with respondents from other religious groups, although the proportion is still low at 13 percent each (9% a little less religious, 4% much less religious).



Most Sri Lankans identify local religious leaders as their main source of guidance on religious matters with the exception of Muslims who prefer holy books/ Quran.

Respondents were asked to think about the sources from which they obtain guidance on matters related to religion, and to determine which of those sources they utilize most often. Overall, the data show that just under two-thirds (63%) of Sri Lankans

Most often sought source of guidance

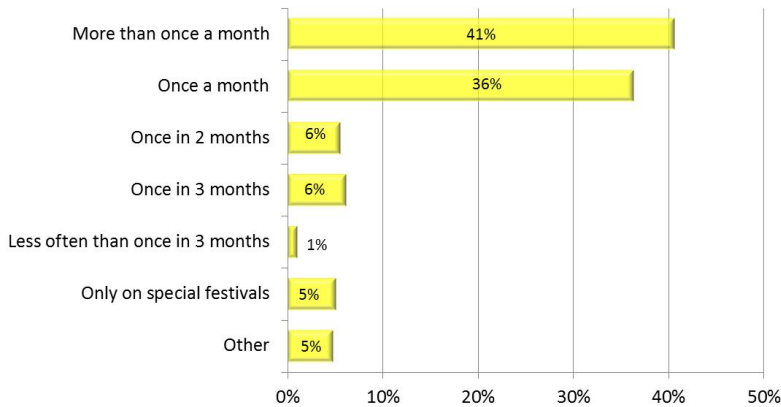
	All	Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Catholic
Local religious leader	63%	71%	42%	36%	54%
Holy books	16%	8%	27%	50%	29%
Religious scholar	7%	6%	13%	6%	5%
Other religious literature	5%	4%	10%	3%	6%
Internet	1%	0%	3%	0%	2%

prefer to consult their local religious leader, while 16 percent refer to holy books. A further 7 percent consult a religious scholar, while 5 percent refer to other religious literature, and just 1 percent the internet. Preference for utilizing religious leaders is consistent across all groups with the exception of Muslims, among whom religious leaders are certainly the first choice for a considerable proportion (36%) but holy

books are clearly the preferred source (50%). This preference among Muslims is likely a reflection of several factors, including the customary practice of Islam in Sri Lanka which emphasizes direct reference to the Holy Quran rather than interpretation by religious leaders or scholars. To a lesser degree, the combination of widespread availability of the Holy Quran in Tamil language and a high literacy rate may also be a factor.

Buddhists

How often do you visit a temple?

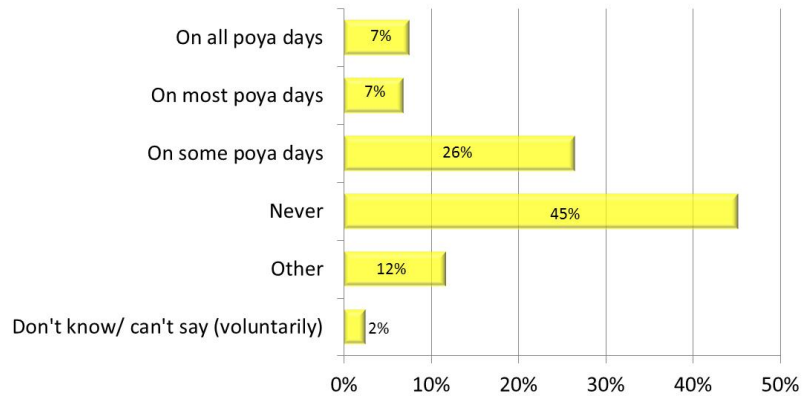


Attendance at temples is frequent among Buddhists.

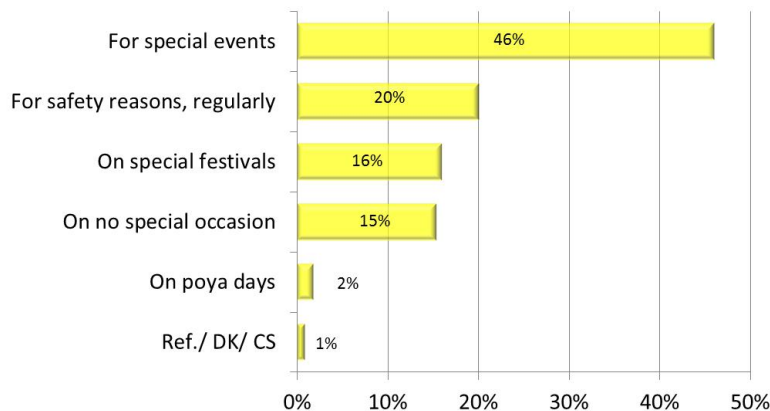
A plurality of Buddhists (41%) visit a temple more than once a month. A further 36 percent visit a temple once a month. The remaining 23 percent of Buddhists visit a temple every few months or only on special occasions.

How Often do you Observe Sil?

The concept of observing sil involves following the routine of an arahant (a spiritual practitioner) for at least one day. The data shows that few Buddhists observe Sil on a regular basis. A combined 40 percent observe sil with varying frequency, while 45 percent never do so. Among those that observe sil, just 7 percent do so on all poya days, while 7 percent observe sil on most poya days and 26 percent only on some poya days.



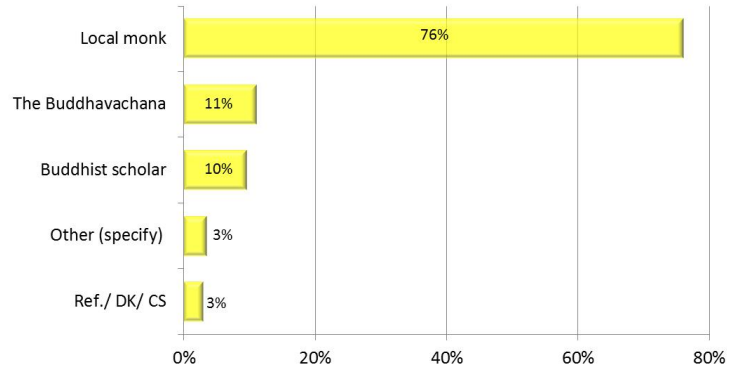
When do you chant pirit?



Buddhist respondents were also asked when they chant pirit. A large plurality (46%) indicate that they only chant pirit for special events. The second most commonly cited (20%) time for chanting pirit is for safety reasons (on a regular basis). Other times include special festivals (16%) and randomly/no special occasion (15%).

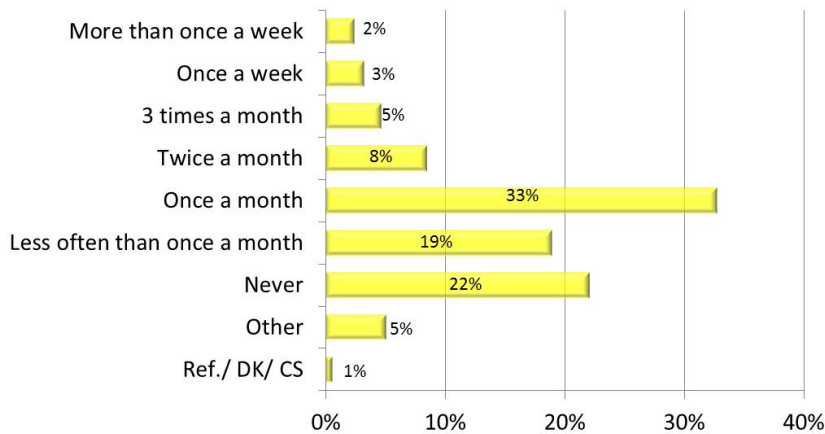
Buddhists strongly prefer to consult their local monk to validate Buddhist teachings. Buddhist respondents were asked, “If somebody were to tell you that a certain action was against the teachings of Buddhism, who or what would you consult for validation?” The vast majority (76%) say they would consult their local monk. Roughly one in five indicate they would consult either The Buddhavachana (11%) or a Buddhist scholar (10%). This overwhelming preference for consulting monks revealed by the data suggests high accessibility of monks in Buddhist communities, and substantial influence in establishment of social norms.

If somebody were to tell you that a certain action was against the teachings of Buddhism who or what would you consult for validation?



The survey also sought to gauge the frequency of attending religious discourses or meetings among

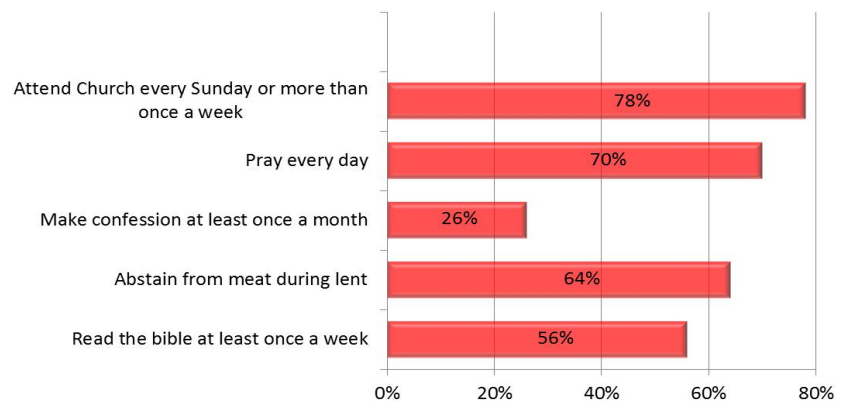
How often do you attend religious discourses or meetings?



Buddhists. The frequency of attendance was quite varied with a plurality (33%) of Buddhists reporting that they attend once a month, and a combined 18 percent indicating attendance more than once a month. Roughly one in five Buddhists (19%) attend less than once a month, while a similar proportion (22%) say they never attend religious discourses or meetings.

Catholics

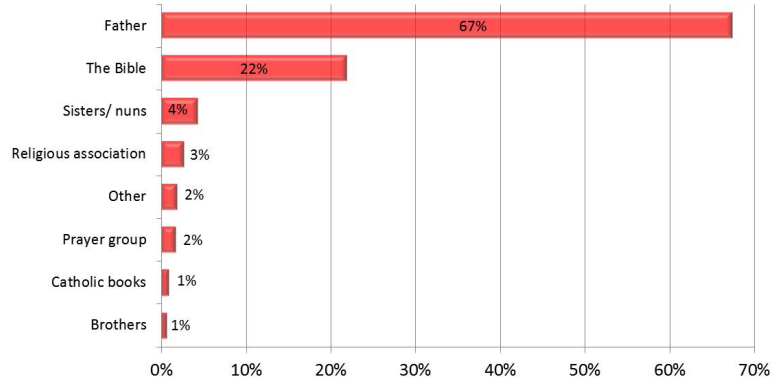
The vast majority of Catholics regularly attend church and pray every day. More than three-quarters of Sri Lankan Catholics attend church at least once a week (53% on Sundays, 25% more than once per week). A nearly equal proportion (70%) indicate that they pray every day. One in four Sri Lankan Catholics make confession at least once a month (47% make confession only on



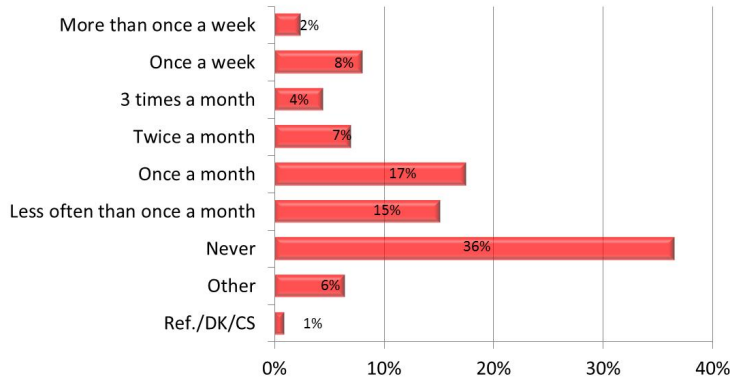
special occasions). Lastly, two-thirds (64%) abstain from eating meat during lent, while just over half (56%) read the bible at least once a week.

Sri Lankan Catholics strongly prefer to consult a Father rather than the Bible to validate teachings of Catholicism. Well over two-thirds (67%) of Catholics say that if someone told them a certain action was against the teachings of Catholicism they would consult a father(priest) for validation. As with the other three religious groups, this finding again reinforces a high degree of accessibility of religious leaders in Catholic communities, and the strong influence they wield in establishing social norms.

If somebody were to tell you that a certain action was against the teachings of Catholicism who or what would you consult for validation?



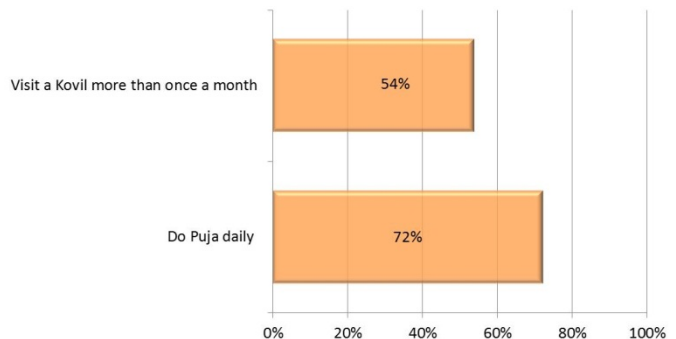
How Often do you attend religious discourses or meetings?



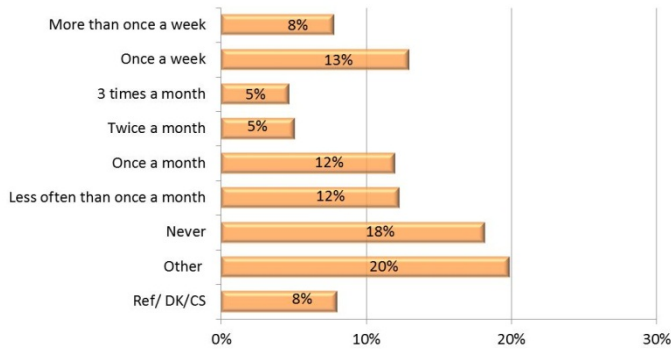
The frequency of attending religious discourses or meetings is moderate among Catholics. Roughly four in ten Catholics attend a religious discourse or meeting at least once a month. At the same time, a nearly equal proportion (36%) report that they never attend religious discourses or meetings, while a further 15 percent attend less than once a month.

Hindus

Most Hindus do puja everyday and visit a Kovil regularly. Just over half of Hindus (54%) visit a kovil (temple) more than once a month. The remaining 46 percent visit much less frequently, ranging from every 2 or 3 months to only on special occasions. A core practice for Hindu devotees is to perform puja, which involves showing reverence to a god, a spirit, or another aspect of the divine through invocations, prayers, songs, and rituals. Among Sri Lankan Hindus, the rate of performing puja is high, with nearly three in four (72%) stating that they perform puja daily.



How often do you fast?

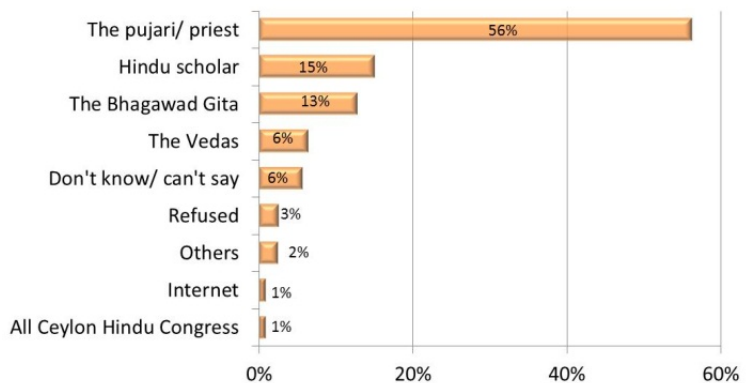


Another core practice of the Hindu faith is fasting, and among Sri Lankan Hindus, the rate varies widely. A combined 21 percent fast once a week or more (13% weekly, 8% more than once a week). A further combined 22 percent fast somewhere between three times a month to only once a month, while 18 percent say they never fast.

Hindus strongly prefer to consult a pujari/priest to validate teachings of Hinduism. Similar to the question posed to Buddhists and Muslims, the survey asked Hindu respondents, “If someone were to tell you a certain action was against the teachings of Hinduism, who or what would you consult for validation?”

Well over half of Hindus (56%) say they would consult a pujari/priest, while 15 percent point to a Hindu scholar, and 13 percent the Bhagavad Gita.

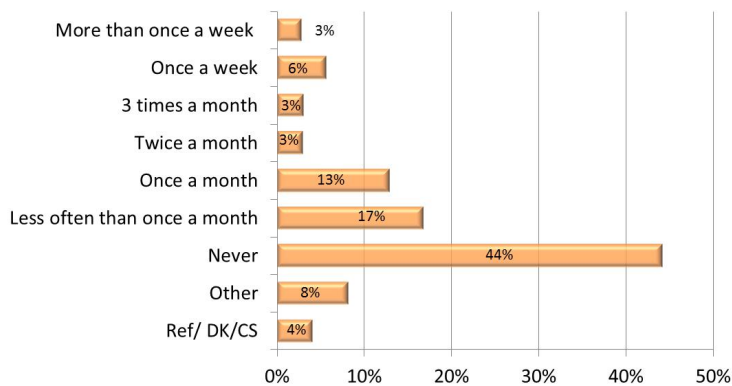
If somebody were to tell you that a certain action was against the teachings of Hinduism who or what would you consult for validation?



Hindus were also asked about the frequency with which they attend religious discourses or meetings. The frequency of attending these types of meetings is relatively low among

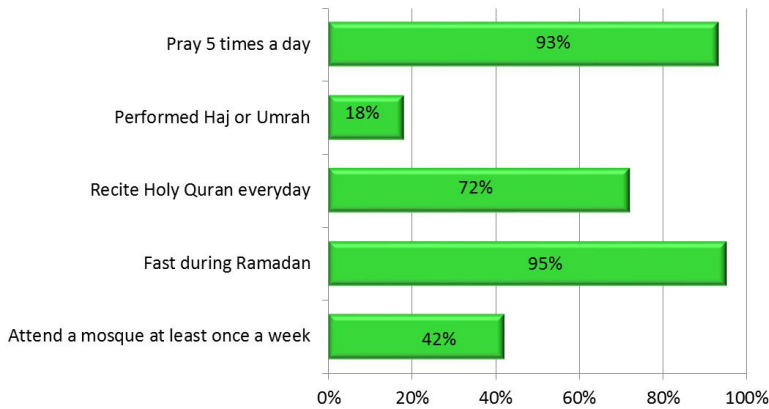
Hindus, with a large plurality (44%) reporting that they never attend. Among those who do attend, a combined 28 percent attend at least once a month, while a further 17% attend less than once a month.

How often do you attend religious discourses or meetings?



Muslims

Observance of core Islamic practices is very high among Sri Lankan Muslims. In Islam, two important indicators of religiosity are how many times per day people pray and how often they fast during Ramadan.

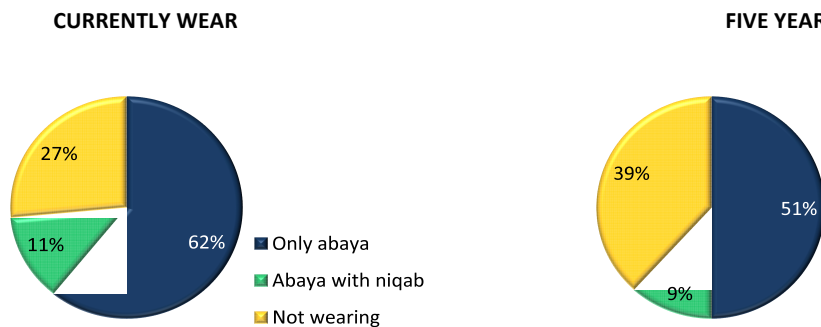


Nearly all Sri Lankan Muslims (93%) report that they pray five times a day and fast during Ramadan (95%). Furthermore, a substantial three out of four recite the Holy Quran everyday (72%). Roughly one in five Sri Lankan Muslims (18%) say they have performed the Haj or Umrah. It is important to note that while performing the Haj may be seen as an indicator of

religiosity, it is not obligatory for those who are physically or financially unable. Lastly, 42 percent of Muslims indicate that they attend a mosque at least once a week. Broken down by gender, it can be seen that as is customary, Muslim females do not regularly visit mosques (12% once per week vs. 72% of males).

Three out of every four Muslim women in Sri Lanka now cover representing a marginal increase compared to five years ago, however most only cover partially and primarily as a matter of personal choice. Currently, 75 percent of Muslim women in Sri Lanka cover, a 13 percent increase compared to five years ago. While a large majority of Sri Lankan Muslim women now cover, the survey revealed that most only wear the abaya (62%) rather than fully covering their face, feet, and hands with the abaya and niqab (13%). Interestingly, the data also shows that the increase in covering that has occurred during the past five years has almost exclusively involved adopting of the abaya only (partially covering), with the percentage of women fully covering with abaya and niqab staying essentially the same (11% current vs. 9% five years ago).

Whether women are/were wearing abaya/niqab?



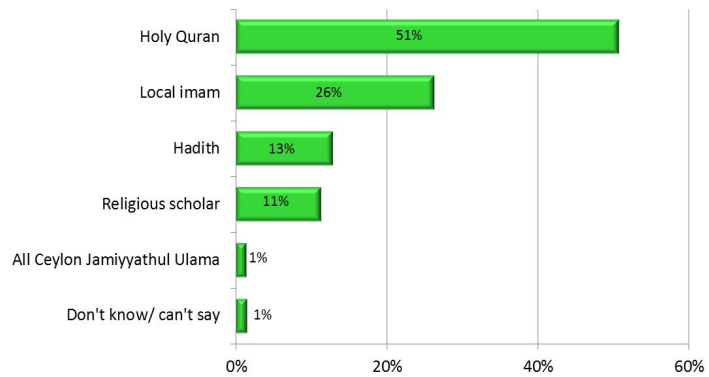
Female Muslim respondents who cover to any degree were asked why they do so, and correspondingly male Muslim respondents were asked why the women in their house cover. The responses of males and females closely match, with the most common response by both genders that covering is done as a matter of personal choice (female 49% male 45%). The second most cited reason, again for both females and

males, is that that Islam requires that abaya/niqab must be worn (female 27%, male 30%), followed by covering is done “in accordance with culture” (female 7% male 8%). Of particular note is that only 4% of women indicated that they wear abaya/niqab because their husband or father insists they do so.

Most Muslims prefer to consult the Holy Quran to determine whether or not a certain action is against the teachings of Islam. Respondents were asked if somebody were to tell them that a certain action was against the teachings of Islam who or what they would consult for validation. Just over half (51%) of Muslims would consult the Holy Quran, while roughly a quarter (26%) would consult their local imam. As mentioned previously, customary practices of Islam in Sri Lanka include emphasis on direct reference to the Holy Quran over interpretations by religious leaders or scholars. Additionally, the widespread availability of the Holy Quran in Tamil language

combined with a high literacy rate allows for immediate reference, in this case regarding consistency of personal actions with Islamic teachings.

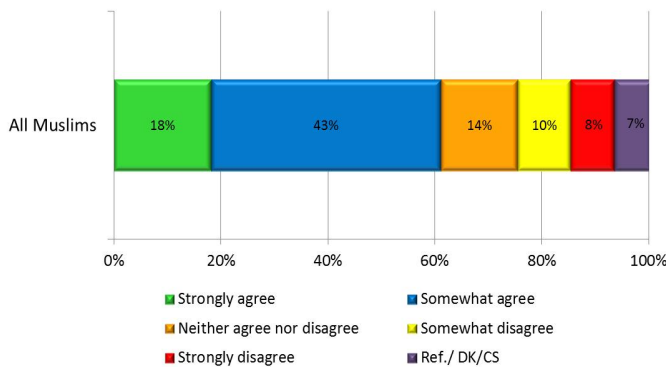
If somebody were to tell you that a certain action was against the teachings of Islam, who or what would you consult for validation?



A majority of Sri Lankan Muslims believe that at least to a certain extent traditions and practices of Islam in Sri Lanka are different from other countries with Muslim populations. While Muslims don't feel strongly that their traditions and practices of Islam are different than other countries with Muslim populations, they generally agree with the notion, with 43 percent saying they “somewhat agree” and 18 percent

strongly agree. Only 18 percent disagree (10% somewhat, 8% strongly) that Sri Lanka’s brand of Islam differs from other countries.

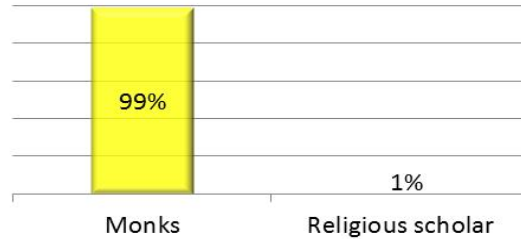
Agree or Disagree: Some traditions and practices of Islam in Sri Lanka are different from those of Muslims in other countries.



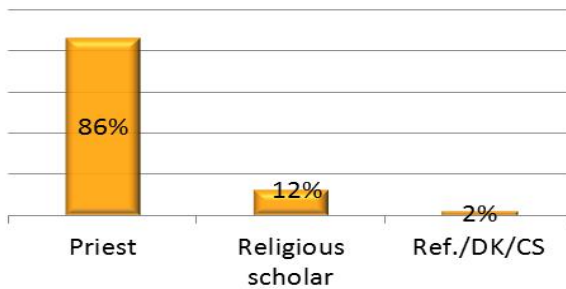
ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Buddhists unanimously identify monks as their local religious leader. In contrast to Muslims, Buddhists are uniform in terms of who they consider their local religious leader, with nearly all (99%) pointing to monks.

Who do you consider your local religious leader?
(Buddhists)



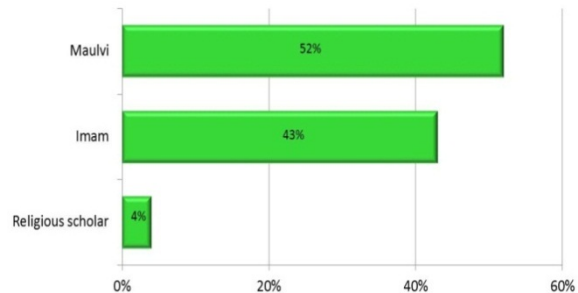
Who do you consider your local religious leader?
(Hindus)



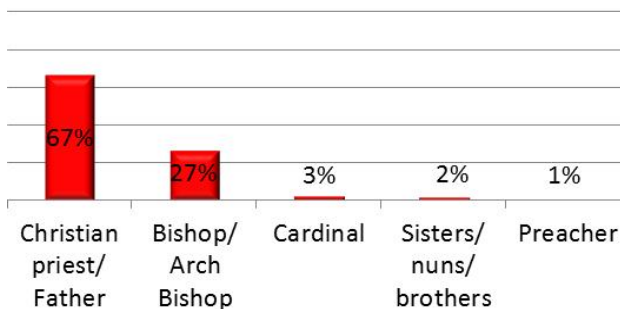
Hindus consider priests as their local religious leader. Nearly 9 in 10 Hindus identify priests as their local religious leader, while 1 in 10 point to Hindu religious scholars.

Muslims identify both Maulvis and Imams as their local religious leader. Just over half of Muslims (52%) consider Maulvis to be their local leader while a nearly equal proportion (43%) identify Imams. Rather than indicating internal disagreement, this split in perception among Muslims likely reflects the fact that in many communities Maulvis—who are primarily religious scholars—also often play the role of Imam, leading prayers and providing spiritual guidance.

Who do you consider your local religious leader? (Muslims)



Who do you consider your local religious leader?
(Catholics)



A majority of Catholics consider the Father/priest as their religious leader. Over two-thirds (67%) of Catholics consider the father as their local religious leader, while a sizable minority (27%) say the Bishop/Arch Bishop is their local religious leader.

Local religious leaders are by far the most respected leaders in the country for Sri Lankans of all faiths.

Respondents were asked to gauge the level of respect people have for a range of local leaders in their GN division. A substantial 80 percent of respondents say their local religious leaders are ‘very well respected’.



This compares to 32 percent for GN officials, and just 12 percent who say politicians are ‘very well respected’. Only 2 percent say religious leaders are ‘little respected’ or ‘not respected’ compared to 55 percent who say politicians are little or not respected. Perceptions are similar across each of the 4 religious groups.

Respondents were asked to identify which leaders they believe are most active in taking steps to safeguard the rights of minorities. Across all religious groups, religious leaders are unanimously (66%) viewed as being most active, while local and national politicians are seen as highly inactive in safeguarding religious minority rights, cited by just 2 percent of respondents.

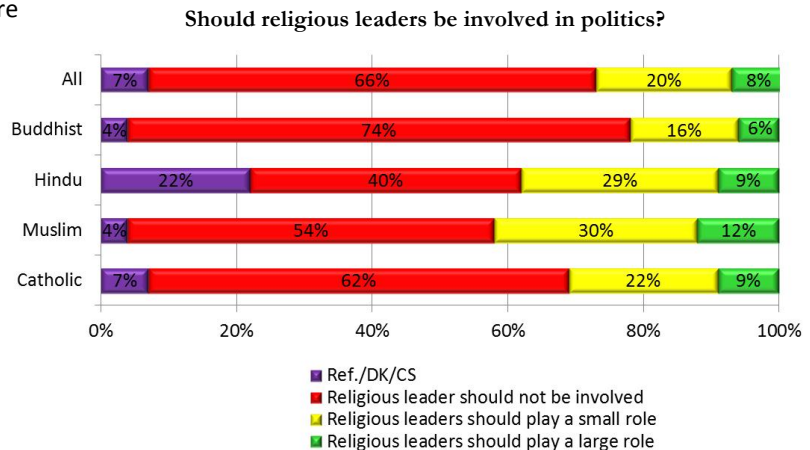
Who ranks first among those taking steps to safeguard the rights of religious minorities?

	All	Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Catholic
Religious leaders	66%	69%	50%	66%	72%
Media	12%	13%	13%	7%	11%
Teachers	8%	6%	19%	8%	8%
NGO	7%	5%	11%	14%	9%
Local Politicians	3%	4%	1%	2%	0%
Locally elected representatives	2%	1%	4%	2%	0%
National Politicians	2%	1%	3%	1%	0%

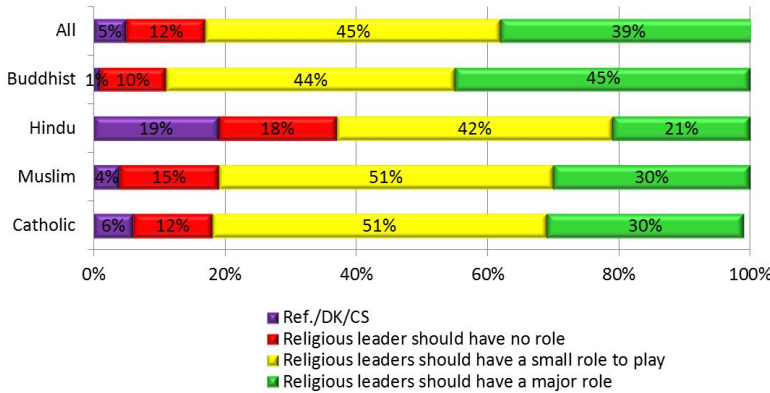
Buddhists responding considering religious minorities. Others considering their own religious community.

A large majority of Sri Lankans believe that religious leaders should abstain from involving themselves in politics. Overall, two-thirds of respondents (66%) believe that religious leaders should not be involved in politics, while 20 percent feel they should have a small role to play in politics and just 8 percent a large role.

Among religious groups, Buddhists are the most averse to the involvement of religious leaders in politics (16% small role, 6% large role), while Muslims stand out with the largest proportion (42%) believing religious leaders should have at least some role to play in politics (30% small role, 12% large role).



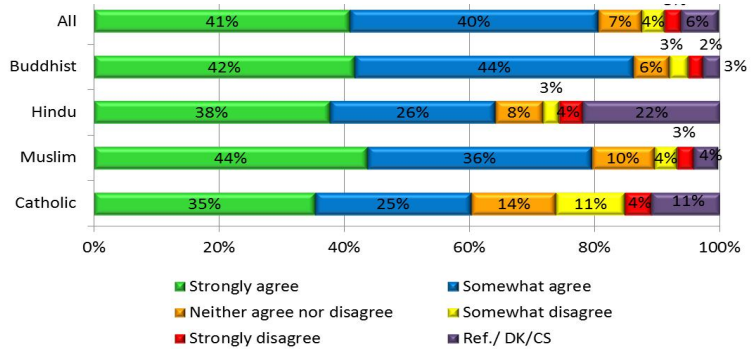
Should religious leaders have a role in the development of neighborhood amenities?



While overall, Sri Lankans strongly believe local religious leaders should stay out of politics, a staggering 84 percent feel that religious leaders should play a role in the development of neighborhood amenities (45% small role, 39% large role). This strong desire for the involvement of religious leaders in developing neighborhood amenities is consistent across all religious groups.

Consistent with the belief that religious leaders should be involved in local development efforts, respondents also strongly feel that politicians should consult local religious leaders in problem solving. Eight in ten respondents agree (41% strongly, 40% somewhat) that if religious leaders are not consulted on the problems facing an area, political leaders will make mistakes.

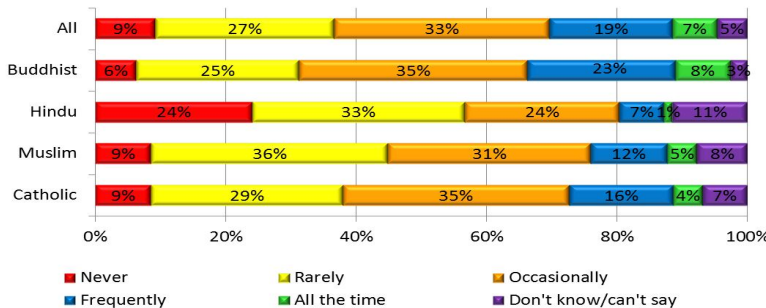
Agree or Disagree: If religious leaders are not consulted on the problems facing an area, political leaders will make mistakes?



At the same time, only a quarter say that religious leaders currently participate in local development efforts on a regular basis. Despite overwhelmingly believing religious leaders should be involved in local development efforts, just 26 percent

say religious leaders in their GN are actually participating on a regular basis. This gap between desired involvement and actual involvement of religious leaders is even greater among Muslims, only 17 percent of

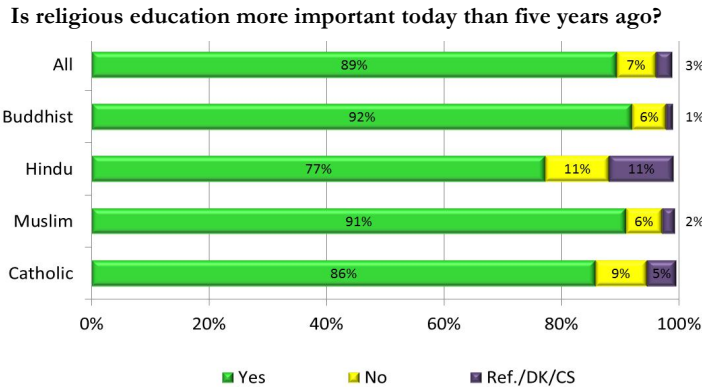
How often do religious leaders participate in development in your GN division?



which say their leaders regularly (12% 'frequently', 5% 'all the time') participate in local development efforts.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Nearly all Sri Lankans believe religious education is increasingly important. Respondents were asked whether or not they feel religious education is more important today than 5 years ago, and virtually all (89%) confirm that religious education is more important now, with only 7 percent indicating it is not more



important. The nationwide perception of religious education as increasingly important is consistent across all religious groups, although slightly fewer Hindus (77%) than the national average believe so.

Most Sri Lankans indicate that they or members of their immediate family are currently attending or have attended a school providing religious education. The perception

among Sri Lankans that religious education is more important today than five years ago is supported by their actual reported rate of attendance in schools providing religious education. Because survey interviews were only conducted with Sri Lankans 18 years old and above, to better capture overall attendance

respondents were asked about both their own current or past attendance as well as their immediate family members' including children.

Are you or members of your immediate family currently attending or have you/they attended a school providing religious education?

	All	Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Catholic
Yes, I attend currently	3%	3%	2%	3%	6%
Yes, I have attended	34%	38%	19%	29%	25%
Yes, members of my family attend	27%	29%	15%	30%	23%
Yes, members of my family have attended	28%	31%	15%	27%	25%
No	21%	13%	52%	26%	27%
Refused	2%	0%	6%	1%	3%

Thirty-seven percent of respondents report that they are currently attending or have attended a school providing religious education, while 55 percent report current/past attendance by immediate family members. Just 21 percent indicate that neither they nor their immediate family members currently attend/previously attended. Across religious groups, attendance is highest among Buddhists, with 41 percent confirming current/past attendance and 60 percent confirming current/past attendance by family members. Attendance is also high among Muslims and Catholics. By a significant margin, Hindus report the lowest rate of attendance with 52 percent saying neither they nor members of their family currently attend/previously attended. It is critical to note that in Sri Lanka religious education is not obtained exclusively through courses delivered by religious schools, it is also obtained through the formal public education system where it has been thoroughly integrated with secular curriculum and daily activities. The survey question regarding attendance at schools providing religious education was asked generally and further questions seeking distinctions on the nature of the school attended (public vs. private, etc.) were not included.

Only a miniscule proportion (2%) of Sri Lankans confirm that they have travelled abroad to pursue religious education. However, the survey also asked respondents to specify which countries they would hypothetically prefer to go to for religious education. Buddhists unanimously point to India (60%), with a sizable minority (22%) indicating that there is no need to go abroad to pursue religious education. India is

also strongly preferred by Hindus (70%). Muslims overwhelmingly point to Saudi Arabia (62%), followed

Which countries would you prefer to go to for religious education?

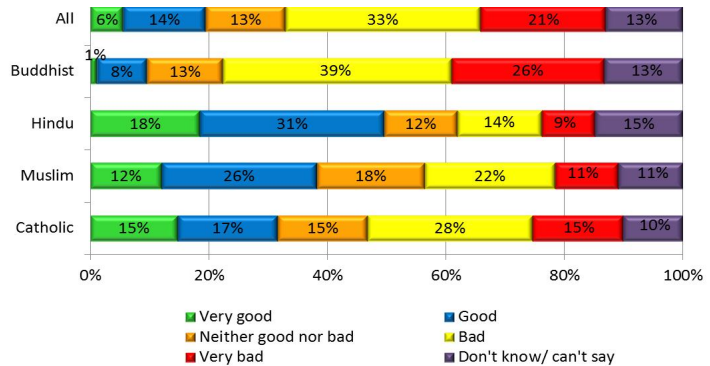
	Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Catholic
India	60%	70%	5%	15%
Saudi Arabia	1%	0%	62%	2%
No Need	22%	4%	11%	23%
Don't know/Can't say	6%	20%	11%	22%
Italy	0%	0%	0%	18%
Egypt	0%	0%	4%	4%
Pakistan	0%	0%	4%	1%
United States	1%	1%	0%	7%
Malaysia	1%	3%	1%	1%
United Kingdom	1%	1%	0%	5%

distantly by India (5%), while Catholics express very mixed opinions on their preferred country for religious studies ranging from Italy (18%) to India (15%) to no need to go abroad (23%).

Across religious groups significant differences emerge in perceptions of foreign influence on religious teachings. Respondents were asked, "Is it a good thing for your religious

teachings to be influenced by other countries of international trends?" Just 9 percent of Buddhists believe foreign influence is a positive force on their religious teachings and a substantial 65 percent who feel it is negative. This compares to a strong majority of Hindus (59%) and a plurality of Muslims (38%) that view foreign influence on their religious teachings positively. Catholics are mixed in their perceptions of foreign influence, with 32 percent viewing it positively, and 43 percent negatively.

Is it a good thing for your religious teachings to be influenced by other countries or international trends?



India, Saudi Arabia, and the United States are viewed as the countries having the greatest influence on religious values and practices in Sri Lanka.

Approximately one-third of Sri Lankans cite India as having the greatest influence on their religious values and practices. A further 17 percent cite the United States, and 11 percent Saudi Arabia. A substantial 41 percent of respondents are uncertain of which countries are of greatest influence. Regarding influence by the United States, given the absence of a commonly shared religion with the vast majority of Sri Lankans, it is likely that respondents considered U.S. influence on their religious values in the context of general cultural influence (movies, television, etc), and perhaps negatively so. Among the four religious groups, variation can be seen in perceptions of influence,

Which countries have the greatest influence on religious values and practices in Sri Lanka?

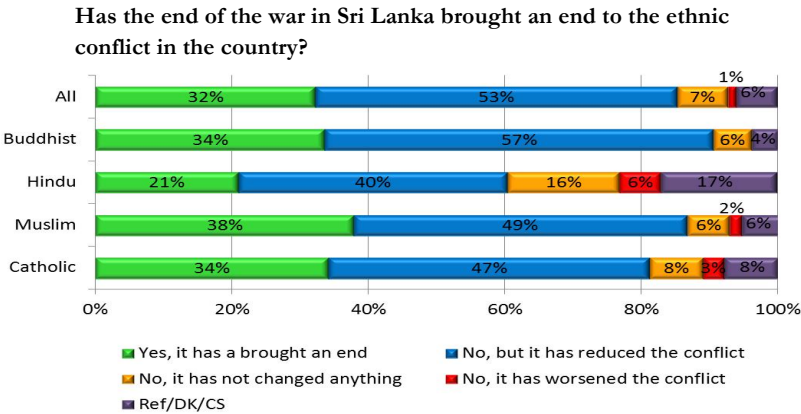
	All	Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Catholic
Don't know/Can't say	41%	44%	29%	34%	54%
India	31%	27%	63%	18%	27%
Saudi Arabia	11%	8%	8%	39%	4%
United States	17%	20%	5%	13%	15%
Pakistan	8%	6%	10%	18%	4%
United Kingdom	7%	8%	4%	4%	9%
Kuwait	2%	2%	4%	8%	1%
Egypt	1%	0%	2%	4%	5%
Malaysia	1%	0%	5%	0%	1%

which is to be expected given that respondents from each group understood the question in terms of their own respective religious values and practices. India is cited by both Buddhists (27%) and Hindus (63%) as having the greatest influence on their religious values and practices, while for Muslims Saudi Arabia (39%) is widely cited. Both Catholics (54%) and Buddhists (44%) also display a high

degree of uncertainty regarding which countries have the greatest influence.

INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS

Most Sri Lankans feel that the end of the war has not brought an end to ethnic conflict in the country but that it has been reduced. Over half of respondents (53%) feel that the conclusion of the war has not ended ethnic conflict in the country but that it has been reduced, while a third (32%) believe that the conclusion of the war has indeed brought an end to ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Just 7 percent believe the end of the war has not changed anything. Views are consistent across ethnic groups with the marked exception of Hindus,

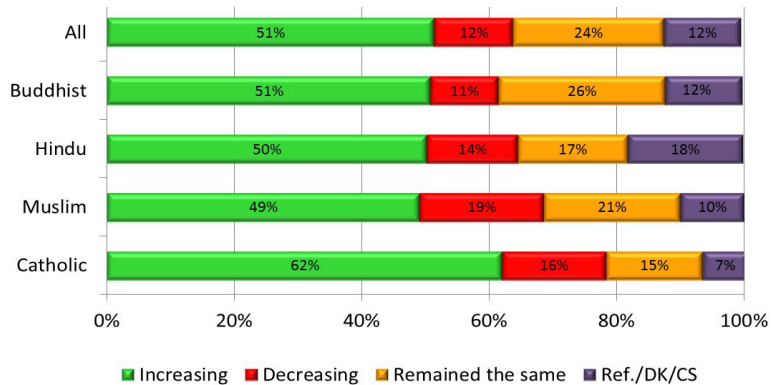


who are least likely to feel the conclusion of the war has brought an end to the conflict (21%) and more likely to believe that nothing has changed (16%).

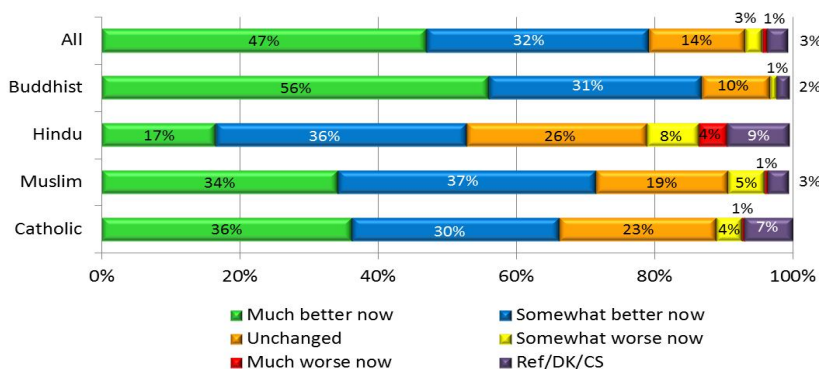
A slight majority of Sri Lankans perceive inter-religious marriages in the country to be increasing compared to 10 years ago. Just over half (51%) of

respondents believe inter-religious marriages are increasing, while only 12 percent believe they are decreasing. A further one-quarter (24%) of respondents believe the number has remained the same over the past ten years. Relatively more Catholics (62%) believe inter-religious marriages are increasing, while more Muslims perceive them to be decreasing (19%).

Is the number of inter-religious marriages in the country increasing or decreasing compared to 10 years ago?



Protection of the rights of your ethnic/religious group now versus 5 years ago? (Buddhists respondents evaluating protection of "minority community" generally)

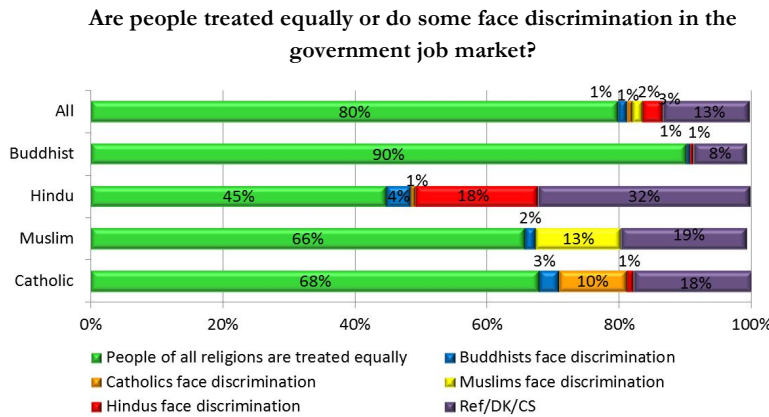


Minorities believe that protection of the rights of their respective groups have improved at least to some degree over the last five years. Buddhists are more likely to believe that improvements in the protection of minority rights have been substantial.

Breaking the results down by religious group, it can clearly

be seen that religious minorities, especially Hindus and Muslims, are markedly less positive than Buddhists in evaluating trends in protection of their rights as minorities. Thirty-four percent of Muslims feel protection of their rights of minorities have become much better compared to 56 percent of Buddhists who feel protection of minorities communities in general are much better. In addition, a notable one in four Muslims feel the protection has not improved or has become worse, compared to just one in ten Buddhists.

A majority of Sri Lankans believe people of all religions are treated equally in the both the government



and private job markets, however a significantly larger proportion of Buddhists feel this way than minorities themselves.

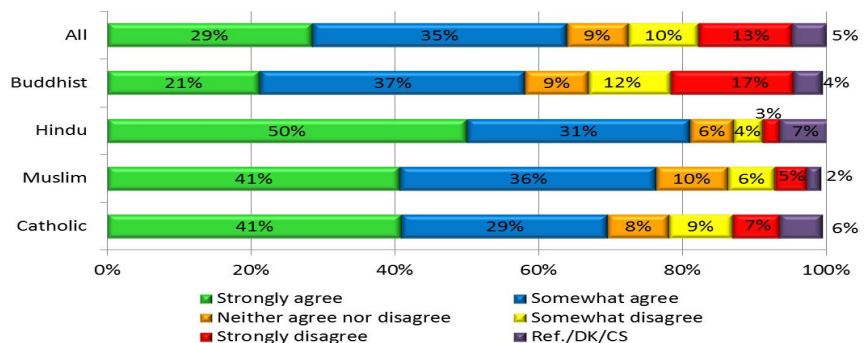
While over two-thirds of Muslims (66%) and Catholics (68%) believe that people of all religions are treated equally in the government job market, this proportion is still markedly below the 90 percent of Buddhist who feel the same. Highlighting the gap in perceived discrimination

between Buddhists and minorities most starkly, only half as many Hindus (45%) as Buddhists (90%) believe people of all religions are treated the same in the government job market, and roughly one in five Hindus believe they face discrimination. Opinions regarding discrimination in the *private* job market very closely match those for government, with 75 percent of Sri Lankans saying people of all religions are treated equally. Again however, similar to the government job market, fewer minorities than Buddhists perceive equality in the private job market, especially Hindus of which nearly one in six say their religion faces discrimination.

Religious minorities feel much more strongly than Buddhists that the government should make extra efforts to protect their land and assets. While overall, a majority from all religious groups, including Buddhists, support special government protections for minorities when it comes to land and assets, the intensity of support varies considerably. Specifically, roughly twice as many Hindus (50%), Muslims (41%), and Catholics (41%) than Buddhists (21%) strongly feel the government should take extra steps to protect the land and assets of minorities.

Furthermore, markedly more Buddhists disagree (29%) that government should provide special protections compared to minorities (Hindus 7%, Muslims 11%, Catholics 16%).

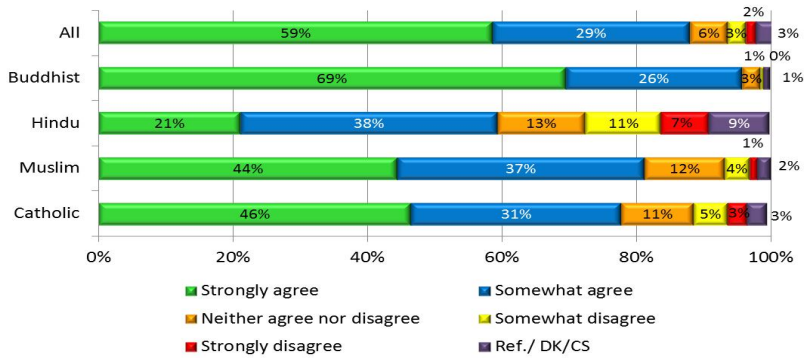
“Government should make extra efforts to protect the land and assets of religious minorities.”



TOLERANCE FOR RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION

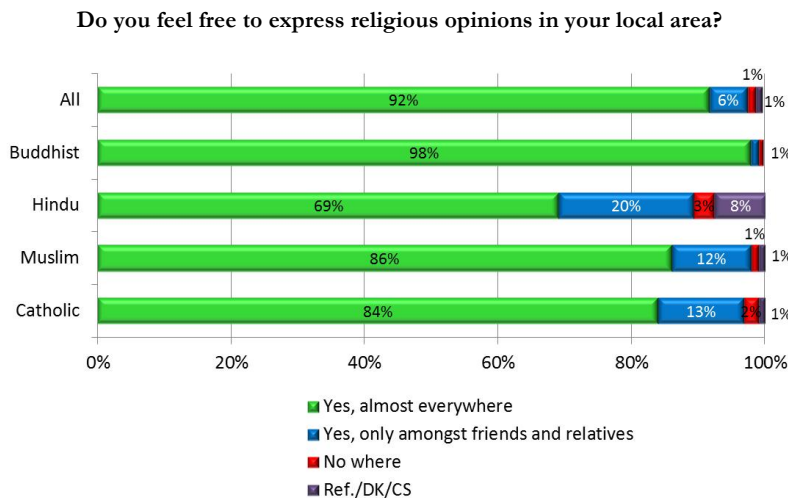
While respondents from all religious backgrounds generally believe that Sri Lanka is a country for all ethnic and religious groups and everybody lives freely, the sentiment comes with notably more reservations among religious minorities than Buddhists. Nationally, approximately nine in ten believe to some degree (59% strongly, 29% somewhat) that Sri Lanka is a country for all ethnic and religious groups and everybody lives freely. While this is a resounding statement from a national level perspective, when the data is broken down by religious groups, nuanced differences can be seen. More specifically, while over two-thirds of Buddhists (69%) say they ‘strongly agree’ with the notion, less than half of respondents from each of the religious minority groups strongly agree and are instead more inclined to say they ‘somewhat agree’ or ‘neither agree nor disagree’.

‘Sri Lanka is a country for all ethnic and religious groups and everybody lives here freely’



A comparison of Buddhists with Hindus illustrates such differences, with more than three times as many Buddhists (69%) than Hindus (21%) strongly agreeing with the notion, and virtually no Buddhists disagreeing with the notion versus one in five Hindus.

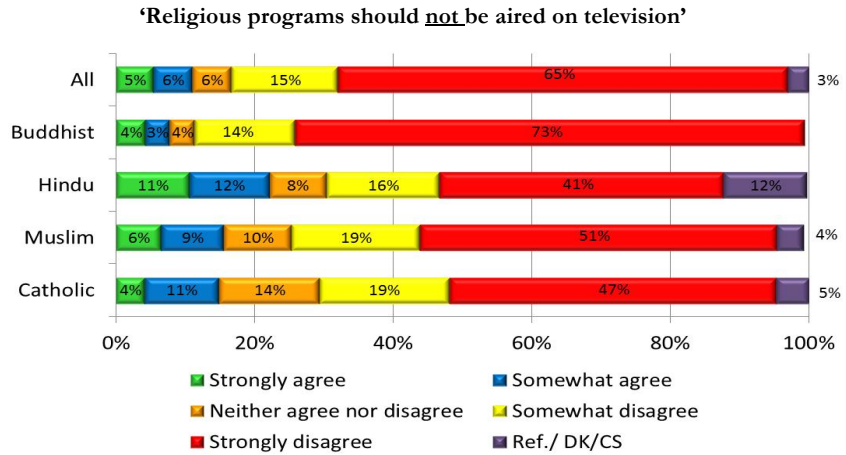
Most Sri Lankans feel free to express religious opinions in public however a notable minority of Hindus, Muslims, and Catholics feel restricted. Overall, the vast



majority of Sri Lankans (91%) say they feel free to express religious opinions almost everywhere in their local area. At the same time, a noteworthy minority of Muslims and Hindus feel restricted. Roughly one in four Hindus (23%) and one in seven Catholics (15%) and Muslims (13%) say they are free to express themselves only amongst friends and relatives or nowhere at all.

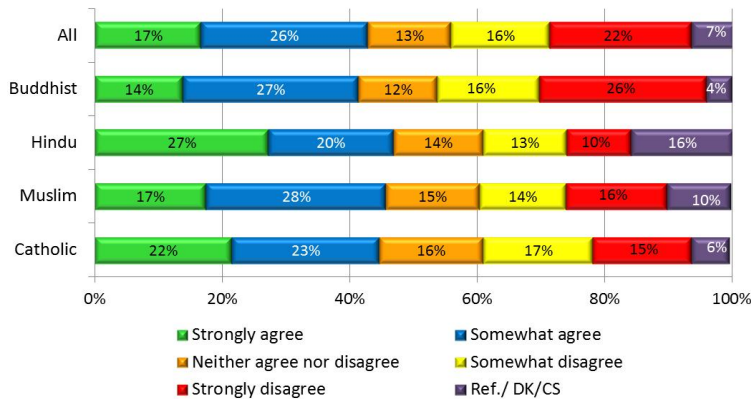
The vast majority of Sri Lankans believe religious programs should be allowed on television. One of the key topics the survey sought to explore is opinion regarding public displays of religion. For one such question, respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement “Religious programs should not be aired on television.” Nationally, a resounding eight in ten respondents disagree with the assertion (65% strongly, 15% somewhat). When broken down by religious group, the data reveal that while

a majority of respondents from all groups disagree that religious programs should be banned from television, this sentiment is much stronger among Buddhists (73% strongly disagree) compared to religious minorities, especially Hindus (41% strongly disagree).



Erecting religious statues or places of worship in public places continues to be divisive within and between all religious groups. An additional survey question posed regarding public displays of religion

'Religious statues and places of worship should not be allowed to come up in public places'



explored the issue of constructing prominent religious symbols or places of worship in public areas, an increasingly common occurrence in multi-religious localities across Sri Lanka, in some cases as a show of exclusivity and strength by religious groups. Respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement "Religious statues and places of worship should not be allowed to come up in public places".

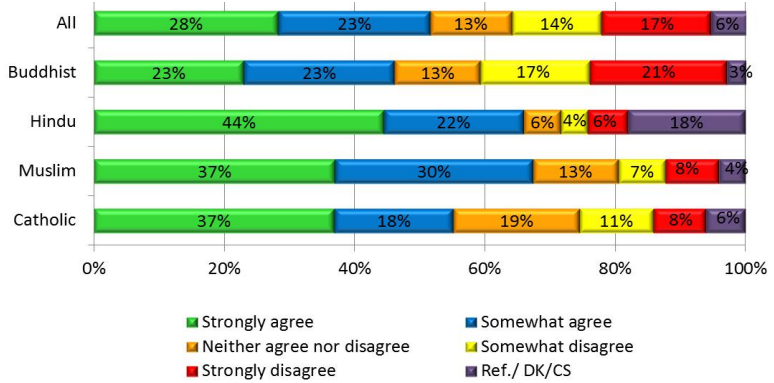
Nationally, the data reveal a near split opinion, with a combined 43 percent agreeing (26% strongly, 17% somewhat) it should not be allowed, versus 38 percent who disagree that it should not be allowed (22% strongly, 16% somewhat).

Interestingly, the data reveal that within each of the four religious groups, a similar lack of consensus on the matter exists. At the same time, a clear trend emerges when cross comparing the four groups—among religious minorities, more respondents are against allowing statues or places of worship in public areas than are for it. In the case of Hindus, 23 percent disagree while 47 percent agree with banning statues or places of worship in public spaces. Conversely, among Buddhists more believe it should be allowed (42%) than not (41%). Additionally, more Buddhists 'strongly disagree' (26%) with banning religious statues and places of worship than minorities, especially Hindus (10%).

Government sponsored displays of religion are also a source disagreement among Sri Lankans.

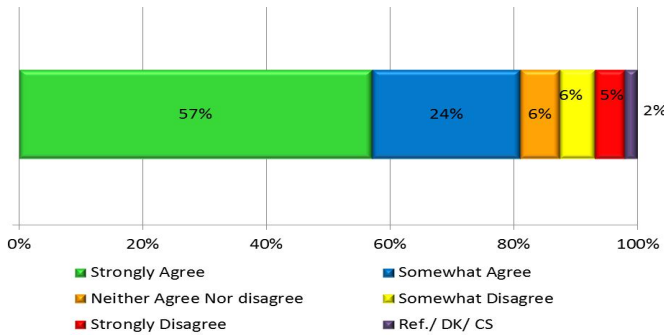
Significantly more minorities than Buddhists believe government organizations should not display religious symbols or signage. Sixty-seven percent of Muslims and 66 percent of Hindus oppose government use of religious symbols and signage compared to 46 percent of Buddhists. Additionally, nearly four times as many Buddhists (38%) as Hindus (10%) believe that government should be allowed to display religious symbols or signage. A similarly large gap exists between Buddhists versus Muslims and Catholics.

‘Government organizations should not display any symbols or signage that is religious in nature’



Buddhists demonstrate considerable assertiveness regarding the desired influence of their religion in media.

What is printed in the media should not be against Buddhist beliefs (Buddhist respondents only)

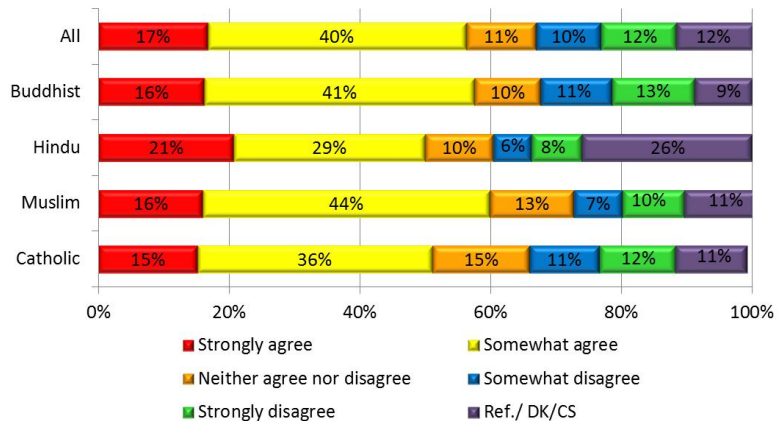


printed in the media should not be against Buddhist beliefs". A combined 81 percent agree with the statement (57 percent strongly, 24 percent somewhat) and just 11 percent disagree (5 percent strongly, 6 percent somewhat).

A majority of Sri Lankans believe that most organizations being set up for religious purposes are becoming involved in politics. Well over half (57%) of respondents agree to some extent

(17% strongly, 40% somewhat) that most organizations being set up for religious purposes are becoming involved in politics. Just 22 percent disagree with the notion, while 11 percent are neutral. These perceptions are relatively consistent across all religious groups. A noteworthy portion of Hindu respondents (26%) are uncertain or refuse to answer.

Currently, most organizations being set up for religious purposes are becoming involved in politics



VIOLENCE AND EXTREMISM

When it comes to violence in the country, while Sri Lankans perceive the majority of it to be related to either criminal activities (59%) or political operations (25%), a notable 15 percent believe that religiously or ethnically inspired violence is taking place in the country. The frequency of reporting these two types of likely interrelated violence is even higher among Muslims and Hindus, totaling roughly a quarter of responses. Broken down, ethnically inspired violence is mentioned by 14 percent of Muslims and 15 percent of Hindus, while religiously inspired violence is cited by 12 percent of Muslims and 10 percent of Hindus. Even among Catholics, a combined 22 percent point to religiously (11%) or ethnically inspired (11%) violence. Notably fewer Buddhists cite these two types of violence (ethnically 7%, religiously 4%).

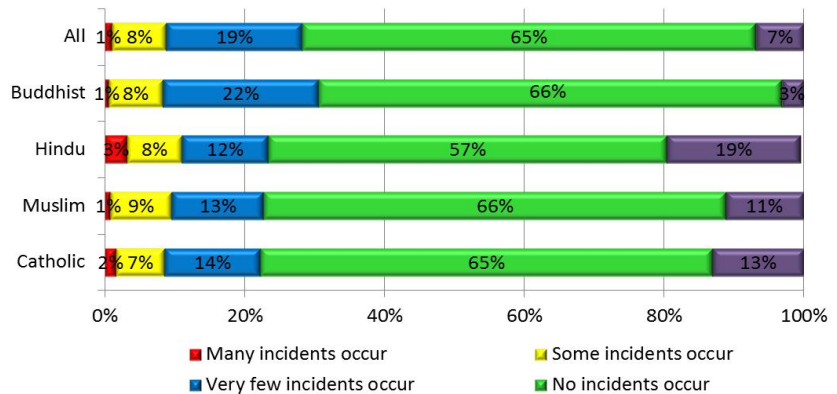
What types of violence are taking place in the country?

	All	Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Catholic
Criminal acts	59%	62%	52%	54%	49%
Political violence	25%	24%	26%	28%	33%
Ethnically inspired violence	9%	7%	15%	14%	11%
Religiously inspired violence	6%	4%	10%	12%	11%
Ref./DK/CS	17%	14%	28%	19%	21%

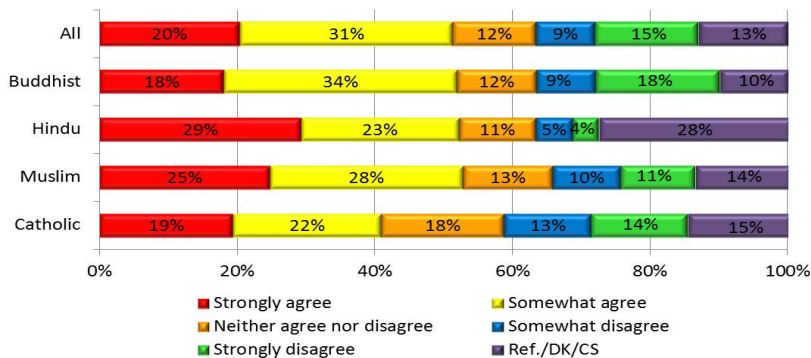
Respondents were asked whether or not violent incidents occur in their local area. More than two-thirds of Sri Lankans say that no violent incidents occur in their area, while a further 19 percent say very few incidents occur. Just 9 percent say violent incidents occur (8% some incidents, 1% many incidents).

Despite noting few incidents of violence in their area and that most acts of violence are either criminal or political in nature, 51 percent of Sri Lankans feel that their country is vulnerable to violence stemming from extremist religious views. A slightly larger proportion of Muslims (25%) and Hindus (29%) strongly agree that the country is vulnerable compared to the national average (20%).

Do violent incidents occur in your area?



'Sri Lanka is vulnerable to extremist religious views and violence'



strongly agree that the country is vulnerable compared to the national average (20%).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The National Values Survey will serve as a nationwide baseline for indicators of religiosity, role and influence of religious leaders, and nature of inter-religious relations. The following are conclusions for the baseline survey:

- Sri Lankans overwhelmingly perceive their society as becoming significantly more religious, and adherence to core religious practices and rituals is high among people of all faiths. In addition, religious education is increasingly important for Sri Lankans of all faiths.
- Most Sri Lankans feel that the end of the war has not resulted in an end to ethnic conflict but rather it has been reduced. A majority from all groups perceive the rights of minorities to have improved at least to some degree compared to five years ago, however Buddhists believe improvement has been more substantial than minorities themselves who are more likely to feel that only minor or no change has taken place. Such sentiment is particularly pronounced among Hindus.
- Intolerance is high for certain forms of religious expression. This is most apparent on the issue of erecting religious statues or places of worship in public places, which continues to be divisive between and within all religious groups. Furthermore, while most Sri Lankans, including religious minorities, say they feel free to express religious opinions in their local area, a marked proportion of Muslims and Hindus feel restricted.
- Religious leaders are highly influential among all religious groups and while the Sri Lankans prefer they stay out of politics there is a strong desire for greater involvement of these leaders in improving local social and economic conditions. The desire for greater involvement is likely driven by the critical but ad hoc role the public has witnessed religious leaders playing in promoting reconciliation and mediating conflicts between ethno-religious communities both during the war and in the current peace-building process. Because religious leaders have been a moderating influence on deep ethno-religious divisions that characterize many localities in the country, going forward it will be important that support be given to them to jointly work with local officials in such critical interventions on a more systematic level. The survey findings can be utilized to inform such efforts to engage with religious and community leaders on issues of national interest, peace, and reconciliation. This is especially the case for geographic locations with mixed populations that are highly segregated on ethno-religious lines, because it is in these areas that ethno-religious communities may feel pressure to assert themselves in public displays of exclusivity and strength, which fuel a cycle of tension and mutual suspicion between communities.

ANNEX: Methodological Report

1.1 Survey Period

The survey questions and structure were developed by The Asia Foundation and administered by Nielsen Lanka Company (Pvt) Ltd between August 2 and September 23, 2011.

1.2 Sampling plan

The sample is comprised of the four major religious groups in Sri Lanka: Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Roman Catholic². The sampling frame is designed primarily to provide an understanding of each of these religious communities at the national level, but also in selected provinces (section 1.5 below).

It is estimated that there are around 19 million people living in the nine provinces and 25 districts. Based on the census data from 1981 and 2001, it is estimated that there are 12.4 million people aged 18 and older. No accurate statistics are available for the Northern Province after the 1981 census. Estimations were used for the purpose of this survey, however those figures are at the overall population level, and the gender, ethnic, religious, and age breakdown were not adjusted. Additionally, demographic population data for the Eastern Province is available to only a limited extent. Therefore, data on population percentage of religious groups in the Northern and Eastern Province are based on census figures from 1981.

Population of religious groups by province (18 years and above, rounded)

	Buddhist	Hindu	Islam	Roman Catholic	Sri Lankans
Western	2,603,000	183,000	282,000	416,000	3,483,000
Central	1,028,000	356,000	155,000	42,000	1,579,000
Southern	1,424,000	23,000	48,000	NA	1,494,000
North Western	1,054,000	30,000	155,000	179,000	1,415,000
North Central	656,000	8,000	59,000	NA	722,000
Uva	614,000	114,000	34,000	NA	760,000
Sabaragamuva	1,011,000	101,000	50,000	NA	1,161,000
Northern Province	20,000	639,000	44,000	116,000	818,000
Eastern	186,000	305,000	362,000	113,000	965,000
All Island	8,592,000	1,755,000	1,185,000	866,000	12,394,000

² Roman Catholics were selected to represent the Christian community as whole because they constitute approximately 90% of the Christian population.

1.3 Target Population

Any Sri Lankan citizen living in households (own/rent, etc) in all the provinces during the survey time, aged between 18-70, and a follower of the four major religions—Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam or Roman Catholicism—were defined as the target population for the survey. All nine provinces were included in this survey, however in the Northern Province, parts of Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu Districts were not included because of accessibility related to security issues. Individual persons were considered as the sampling unit.

1.4 Sample Size and Margins of Error

The total sample size of 5553 includes 2,070 respondents from the Muslim community, 1344 Buddhist respondents, 1356 Hindu respondents, and 783 Roman Catholic respondents. The sampling is designed for analysis at the national level for each of the four religious groups as well as in selected provinces.

As detailed in Table 2, the overall margin of error for the national sample is +/- 1.3% at 95% confidence level. Margins of error for the four religious groups at the national level are: Muslims +/- 2.2%, Buddhists and Hindus +/- 2.7%, and Catholics +/- 3.5%.

Table 2: Sample size and Margin of error by religious group

	Population above 18 years	Percentage	Sample Size	Margin of error %
Buddhist	8,592,000	69%	1344	2.7
Hindu	1,755,000	14%	1356	2.7
Muslim	1,185,000	10%	2070	2.2
Roman Catholic	866,000	7%	783	3.5
Total 4 groups	12,430,000	100%	5553	1.3

1.5 Sample Composition by Province

The sampling plan provides a wide spread across the country covering all 9 provinces for Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus. For Catholics, who constitute a relatively low percentage of the Sri Lankan population, a group of provinces were targeted that contain over 80 percent of the total Catholic population in the country. This was primarily done to avoid sensitivity associated with locating Catholic respondents in provinces in which they are very small in numbers.

Table 3: Sample composition by religion across provinces

Province sample	Buddhist	Hindus	Muslims	Roman Catholic	Total
Western	285	94	446	333	1158
Central	109	191	247	53	600
Southern	151	37	83	0	271
North Western	113	21	268	221	623
North Central	73	31	93	0	197
Uva	68	62	57	0	187
Sabaragamuva	113	62	68	0	243
Northern Province	31	429	403	130	993
Eastern	401	429	405	46	1281
All Island	1344	1356	2070	783	5553

Additionally, to allow for analysis of selected religious groups in certain provinces, oversamples were done as follows: Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists in the Eastern Province; Muslims and Hindus in the Northern Province (Table 4). The survey sought to explore the Northern and Eastern Provinces in-depth as these were the provinces that were most severely affected by the war, and as shown in other nationwide surveys harbor views and concerns unlike the rest of the country.

Table 4: Margins of error for oversampled religious groups in Northern and Eastern Province

	Northern Province	Eastern Province
Buddhists	n/a	4.9%
Hindus	4.7%	4.7%
Muslims	4.9%	4.9%

1.6 Process of selecting sampling points and details of sampling point replacement

A stratified random sampling technique was used to select sampling points. The 5553 sample for each religion was split by province and the province sample was further distributed across all districts. The sample in each district again was split in order to cover the various Divisional Secretariats (DS). In each DS division, *Grama Niladhari* (GN) divisions were selected as clusters using SPSS software random number generation process.

In each GN Division, 10 interviews were targeted for the survey. GN Divisions were categorized based on each religious population as follows:

1. 100-81% population in one religious group
2. 80-61% population in one religious group
3. 60-41% population in one religious group
4. 40-21% population in one religious group
5. less than 20% population in one religious group

The Department of Census and Statistics provides data on religious community populations by DS divisions. This data was used in each province to select the DS divisions where the interviews were to be conducted. The Grama Niladhari (GN) divisions within these DS divisions were then selected based on local knowledge of settlements collected from key actors in the community. For each of the minority religious groups (Muslims, Hindus and Catholics), areas with higher concentrations of their followers were sampled wherever possible. However, if a small number of citizens were randomly selected in a GN in which their religious group was low in population, interviews were still executed. For example, if in a Buddhist majority sample point (GN) a few Muslim households were randomly selected, those interviews were carried out.

For 5553 interviews the total number of sampling points was designated at 556. However, because of challenges that occurred during the fieldwork, problematic GN's were replaced rather than risking further problems and delays. Therefore, in some sampling points less than 10 interviews were conducted, resulting in a necessary increase of sample points. The final total of sampling points was 563.

Sampling point replacement was necessary in a limited number of cases for two main reasons:

- Due to the non-availability/insufficiency of population figures for some areas, the target religious population in a selected GN turns out to be limited.
- Security issues and public disorder associated with the “greased devil”³ situation that took place during the fieldwork period.

Additionally, a small number sampling point replacements were required in Jaffna (Northern Province) due to it being a high security zone.

Table 5: Sample point distribution by province

Province	Total
Central Province	64
Eastern Province	130
North Central Province	22
North Western Province	61

³ The “greased devil” situation refers to a series of mysterious sexual assaults and robberies of women that took place in several villages throughout Sri Lanka in August 2011. The acts were allegedly carried out by masked strangers covered in black paint, hence “greased devils”, and were believed to be coordinated. The bizarre incidents sparked widespread fear and a breakdown of law and order in several communities, marked by violence and clashes between citizens and police over response /lack of to the problem.

Northern Province	86
Sabaragamuwa Province	30
Southern Province	29
Uva Province	21
Western Province	120
Grand Total	563

1.7 Details of starting point selection

In each selected GN, 10 interviews were targeted for the survey and broken into two sets by starting the interviews from two separate starting points to enhance the representativeness of the sample. Five interviews were conducted from each starting point in every GN until 10 interviews were completed. In each GN, easily identifiable landmarks were used as starting points, such as junctions, religious places, schools, etc. Due to security threats associated with the Grease Devil situation, if problems arose in sampling areas the interview was stopped and restarted from another starting point in the same GN or revisited another day.

1.8 Household selection

The following procedure was adopted to select the households in each selected sampling point:

- Household selection for interviews was done using the right hand walk method from a pre-determined starting point. All the households were approached until a successful interview was completed. The religious quota for each GN was pre-defined.
- To ensure a spread in the area where the interviews were conducted, in urban areas every two households were skipped and in a rural areas one household was skipped.
- This process continued until five interviews were completed (10 interviews total from two starting points)
- In a few GNs, depending on the total sample size in the DS Division, less than 10 or more than 10 interviews were completed. For example, in some sample points a small number of additional interviews were conducted as a result of the concentration of minority religious communities.

1.9 Respondent Selection Process

The survey was conducted in households with respondents above the age of 18 years from the specified religious communities. The process of selecting a respondent from a household covered the following aspects:

- Introduction
- Description of similar studies conducted and purpose of this survey
- Identifying suitable members availability in the household
- Selecting one respondent from the household randomly

The Kish grid was used for randomizing the target respondents within households. The interview continued only if the respondent was willing to answer, otherwise the interview was terminated and the next household was approached. Call-back was allowed if the respondent was available to be interviewed later on the same day in the same location.

2.0 GPS readings

GPS handsets were used by field staff to mark the coordinates of the 563 sampling points across the country where the clusters of 10 interviews were conducted. GPS coordinates were not taken for each household due to the likelihood of leading to refusal to participate in the interview. The GPS coordinates of the sampling points serve to provide a reliable reading of the location and an indication of whether certain viewpoints are geographically related.

2.1 Call back or substitution and percentage of refusals and non-contacts

The survey was conducted during weekends, holidays and on days where most household members were available at home. Call back and substitution were not allowed in the case of refusals and non-contacts.

Table 6: Refusals and Non-Contacts

Household refused to answer	11%
Individual selected person refused/ couldn't answer	2%
Language issues	2%
Other reasons	2%

2.2 Quality Control

Overall 22 percent of the interviews were subject to quality control checks and 10 percent were accompanied by supervisors from the field partner organization (Table 7). Interviews were back-checked, via the supervisor or other staff visiting the household after the interview was completed (typically two or three days after) to check if the interviews had been conducted properly. The quality control checks verified whether the random walk method was conducted properly, respondent selection using the Kish grid was done correctly, and that no respondent substitution was made.

Table 7: Accompanied and Back Check

District	Total Sample	AC %	BC %
Gampaha	393	8%	30%
Colombo	557	6%	19%
Ampara	304	20%	37%
Badulla/Monaragala	177	5%	29%
Anuradhapura/Vauniya	152	11%	34%
Kalutara	182	13%	24%
Kurunegala/Puttalam	401	5%	16%
Kegalle	100	25%	39%
Rathnapura	117	4%	26%
Polonnaruwa	119	23%	11%
Matara/Galle	204	13%	44%
Hambantota	49	35%	35%
Matale	85	45%	12%
Kandy	311	15%	19%
Neliya	182	14%	11%
Jaffna	298	7%	8%
Vavuniya/Puttalam/Kilinochi	583	4%	14%
Trinco	285	6%	29%
Batticaloa	371	15%	23%
Ampara	290	9%	24%
Colombo	100	0%	17%
	5260	10%	21%

2.3 Weighting scheme

Two weighting schemes were used for the data:

Weighting scheme 1 was calculated using religion as the focus. The weighting factor was calculated by working out the proportion of the number of people from a certain religious community from a particular province as part of the total population of that same community nationally. For example, there are 2,603,000 Buddhists in the Western province. This forms 30% of the nation Buddhist population which is 8,592,000. The Buddhists from the sample in the Western province are given an appropriate weight to make it of a similar proportion as the population. The data by religious communities, provinces, gender and other segments are weighted by this particular weight scheme.

Weighting scheme 2 was calculated focusing on the population of the country as a whole. All sample numbers achieved for a particular religious community in a province were brought at par with the actual proportion of this religious group from a particular province in the national population. For example, Buddhists in the Western province form about 21% of the national population (18 years and above). The sample of Buddhists from the survey is given an appropriate weight to make it of a similar proportion as the actual population. The national level numbers ('All Island'⁴) have been weighted using weighting scheme 2.

⁴ It should be noted that "all island" includes the 4 major religious groups but not small segments such as other sects of Christianity and minority religious groups that constitute a very low percentage of the population.