

Reporting **Religion**

DILEMMAS OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE

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"Peace-building in Sri Lanka: creating shared space"

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- Sri Lanka is a presidential parliamentary democracy.
- The country is currently governed by the **United People's Freedom Alliance** under the leadership of President Mahinda Rajapakse
- **UNP** is the main opposition party and is considered to have right-leaning, pro-capitalist policies.
- The country also has a number of political parties bearing the identity of a religion.

The **Sinhalese** being the majority race of the country, followed by **Tamils** and **Muslims**.

The majority of the Sinhalese are **Buddhists** while the majority of the Tamils are **Hindus**.

Main Media Players in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's media outlets are generally divided along linguistic, ethnic and religious lines.

Number of Daily Newspapers:12

Number of Nondaily Newspapers:36

Number of Television Stations:21

Number of Radio Stations:72

"Media **ownership** in the country has been concentrated into hands of the allies of **the main political parties** and it is hard to receive unbiased media content from the mainstream media."

"Poor professionalism and media training based on western concepts has seriously challenged the media sector in Sri Lanka."

The media and communication sector can play a pivotal role in post-conflict situation to create a shared space for **peaceful negotiation, public dialog** and **building a common Sri Lankan identity.**

Journalists in Sri Lanka can be inspired by **genuine religious values** to be more effective in communication.

Western communication strategies have failed in many oriental territories.

The ideas of **sharing, mutuality, and listening** are central to the Buddhist and Hindu methods of communication.

Thank you