

2

Identity of Sri Lanka

Any individual in the society has his or her own identity based on the features of his or her body and character. Accordingly, an individual can be separated and identified within a group. Similarly a country too has a specific identity.

The main objective of this chapter is to study the geographical and social identity of Sri Lanka.

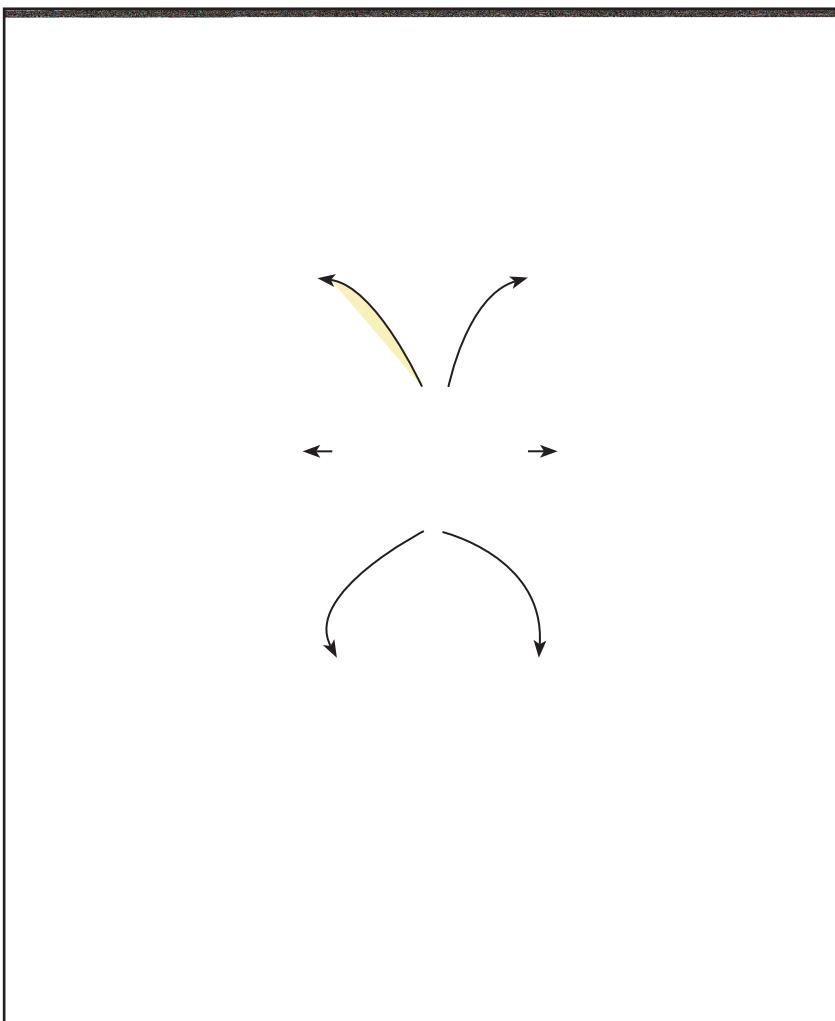


Fig. 2.1 - The Geographical identity of Sri Lanka

The Geographical Identity

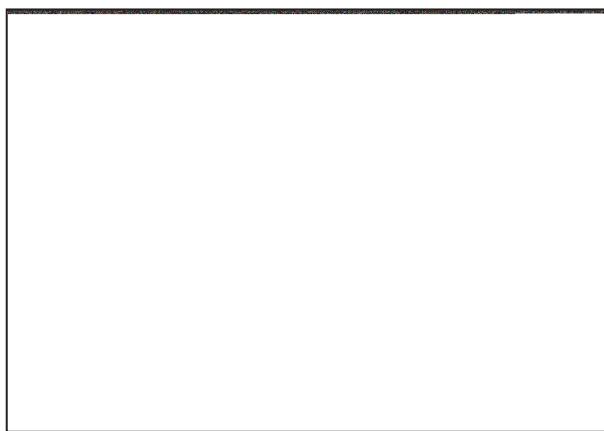
We can clearly understand the geographical identity of Sri Lanka when studying figure 2.1. A. As shown in map 2.1 A, Sri Lanka is located near the equator in the tropical zone, between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. Accordingly, Sri Lanka is located within the east longitudes in the Northern Hemisphere. Sri Lanka is separated from India by a narrow strip of sea known as the Palk Strait.



Map 2.1 A- The location of Sri Lanka

The island of Sri Lanka is located in the Indian Ocean closer to the Indian sub continent. Showing the location of a country based on lands and oceans in its immediate surroundings is called relative location.

Observe the map 2.1 B and



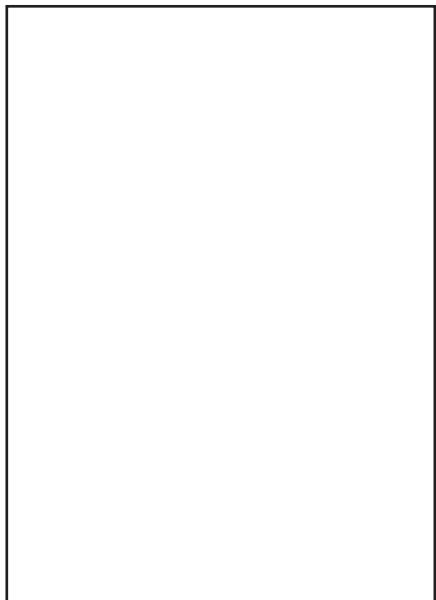
Map 2.1 B - Relative location of Sri Lanka

identify the relative location of Sri Lanka. The other islands located in the Indian Ocean other than Sri Lanka are Maldives, Andaman Islands, Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands.

Activity

Fill in the blanks

1. The location of the continent of is to the North of Sri Lanka, theocean is to the south ,the countries ofto the east and the continent oflies to the west.
2. On a blank map of Sri Lanka, mark and name three islands located to the Northwestern part of Sri Lanka.
3. Write three benefits Sri Lanka gains due to its location in the Indian Ocean.



Showing the location of a country with reference to longitudes and latitudes is called the specific location. Figure 2.1 C indicates the specific location of Sri Lanka. Accordingly, it is clear that Sri Lanka is located between $5^{\circ}55'$ - $9^{\circ}51'$ North Latitudes and $79^{\circ}41'$ - $81^{\circ}53'$ East Longitudes.

Fig. 2.1 C - Specific location of Sri Lanka

Source- global.Britannica.com 20015/03/13

Activity

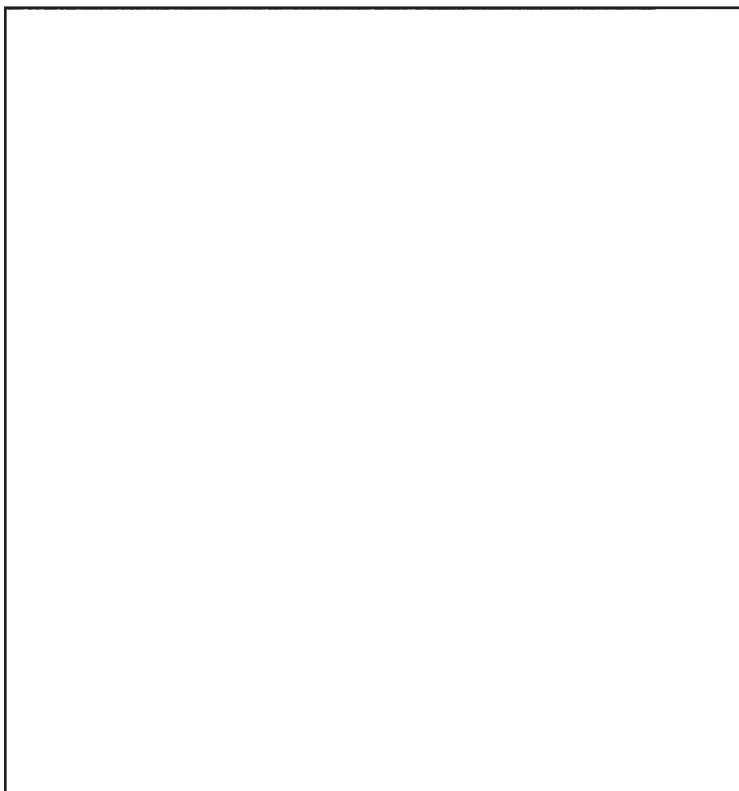
Observe the map 2.1 D indicating the area of Sri Lanka and fill in the blanks.

When considering the area of Sri Lanka, the length from Point Pedro to Dondra head is..... the width fromto Sagamankanda is

The total area of Sri Lanka is 65610km²

Map 2.1D - The area of Sri Lanka

Source [global Britannica.com](http://global.Britannica.com) 2015/03/13



Map 2.1 E - Sea limit zones of Sri Lanka

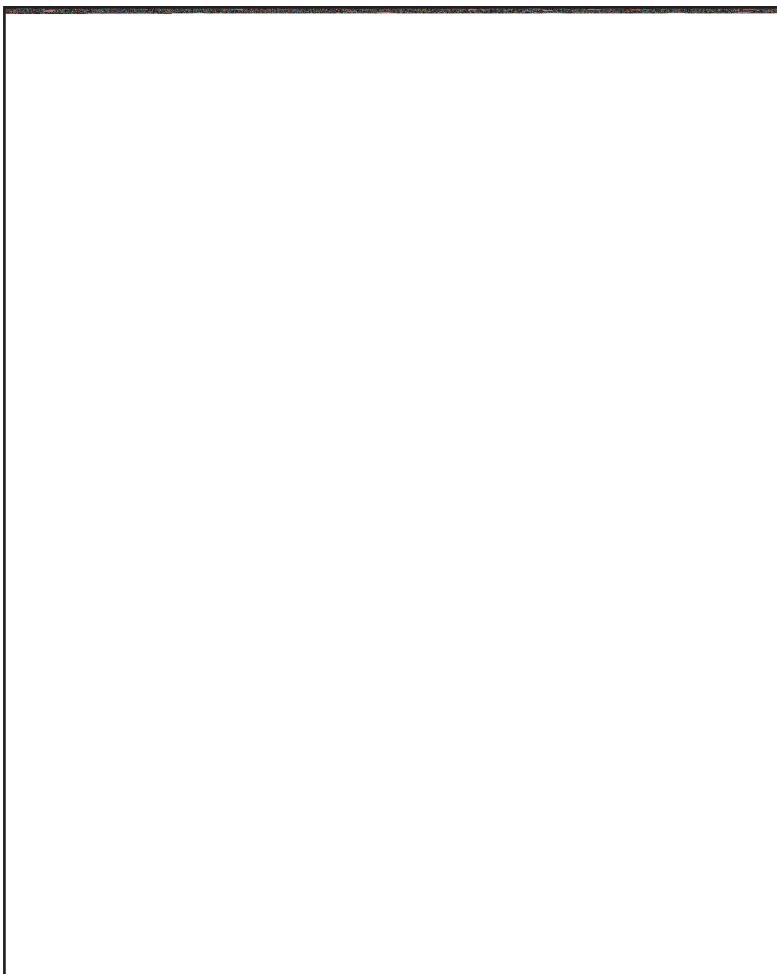
Sri Lanka has an identical boundary and a territorial sea limit. All the coastal states were granted the ownership of a limit of 12 nautical miles from the coast according to the International Convention of the Sea which came into effect from 16th November 1994. This is known as the territorial sea limit. The Exclusive Economic Zone and the adjoining sea area are located beyond the territorial sea limit. This is shown by the map 2.1 E.

Although Sri Lanka is a small island, it has distinct relief features. The three main relief zones in Sri Lanka are the mountainous area located in the centre of the country, the intermediate plains and the coastal plain. These relief zones consist of complex relief features which are different from each other.

Table 2.1 - Topographical Features

| Central hills | Intermediate plain | Coastal plain |
|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Mountain ranges | Plains | Broad plains |
| Plateaus | Ridges | Bays |
| Valleys | Residual hills | Lagoons |
| Waterfalls | | Points |
| Gaps/passes | | Islands |

The geographical identity of Sri Lanka is further emphasized by the scenic beauty and the different relief systems as well as by the favourable climatic conditions. The relief and the diversity of climate attract tourists to this country. The map 2.1 F indicates the main relief zones of Sri Lanka.



Map 2.1 F - Relief zones of Sri Lanka

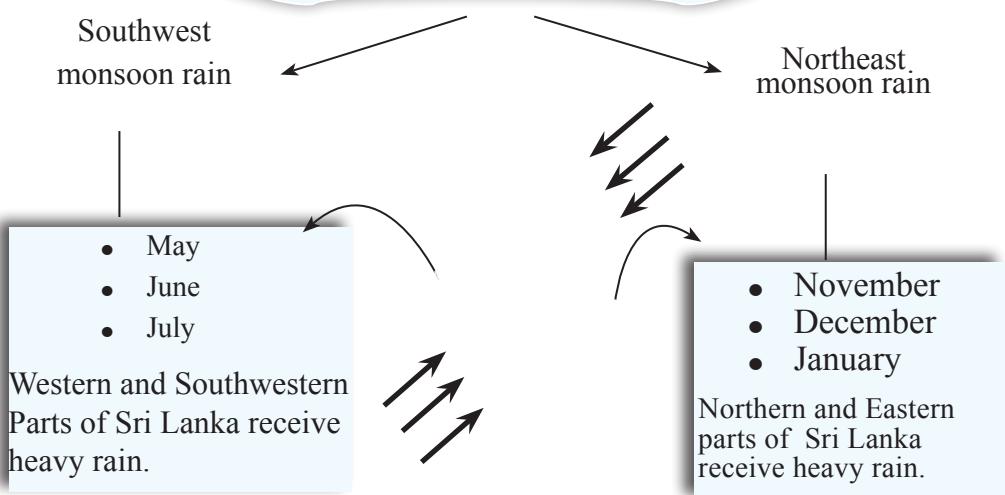
Activities

1. i. Mark and name the three main relief zones of Sri Lanka on an outline map.
ii. Refer to an Atlas and mark and name two main mountain ranges, two plateaus and two waterfalls in the map you have drawn.
iii. Mark and name three residual hills located in the intermediate plain, and also mark Colombo, Point Pedro, Dondra Head, Trincomalee and Batticaloa which are located in the costal plain.
2. Name three relief features that depict the natural beauty of the island.

Sri Lanka is a country located in the tropical zone. Therefore, Sri Lanka has a higher temperature of about $27C^0$ - $30C^0$. It has no winter. Sri Lanka receives a uniform rainfall throughout the year. The rain comes in three ways.

- Monsoon Rain
- Convectional Rain
- Cyclones

The periodical winds blowing into the country from the directions of Southwest and Northeast are called monsoons.



Convectional rain

- March
- April
- September
- October

- Rain with thunder.
- Occurs throughout the year.
- Becomes subdued once monsoon gathers strength.

Cyclones

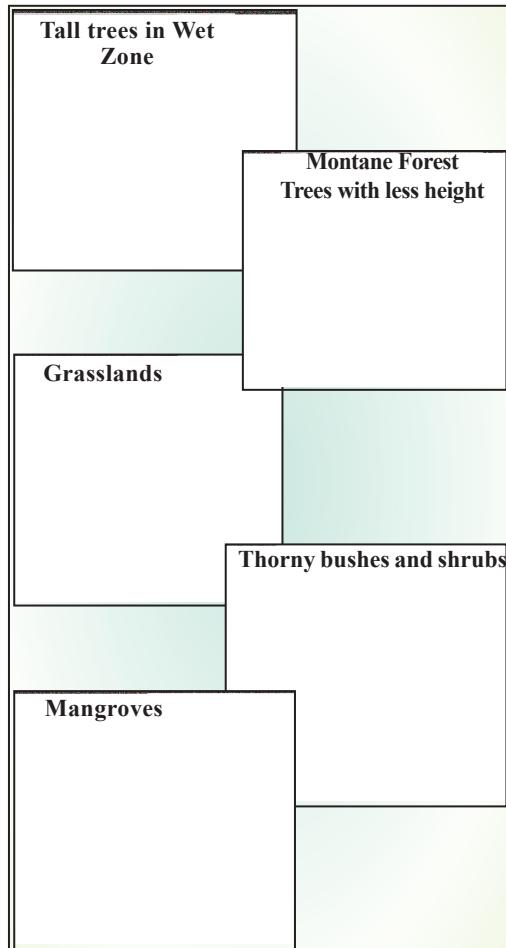
- October
- November
- December

- Rain with strong wind.
- Cyclone occur due to the air disturbances in the Bay of Bengal.

Normally a dry weather condition prevails in Sri Lanka during the months of February and August. Farmers reap their paddy during this period.

Tall trees are grown in the forests which are distributed in wet areas due to the uniform heavy rainfall and the temperature that prevails throughout the year. Grasslands and patanas can be seen close to the plateaus and short trees grow there due to the changes in rainfall, temperature as well as the altitude. Thorny bushes and shrubs grow in the dry and semi-arid areas where a dry climate exists. Mangroves are spread close to coastal lagoons and river mouths.

A tourist traveling to the interior of the country from a coastal area of Sri Lanka can see the variation of relief, climate and the vegetation cover and experience the beauty of this country within a distance of 70km.



2.2 Fig. - Nature of the plants grown in different regions in Sri Lanka

Activity

Fill in the blanks.

Sri Lanka is a country located in the zone. Therefore, it has a higher temperature of about Recieving rain throughout the year through different methods such as and too is a specialty here. Due to changes of rainfall, and there is a variation in plants grown in different areas.

Social Identity



2.3 Fig. - Social Identity in Sri Lanka

Social Community

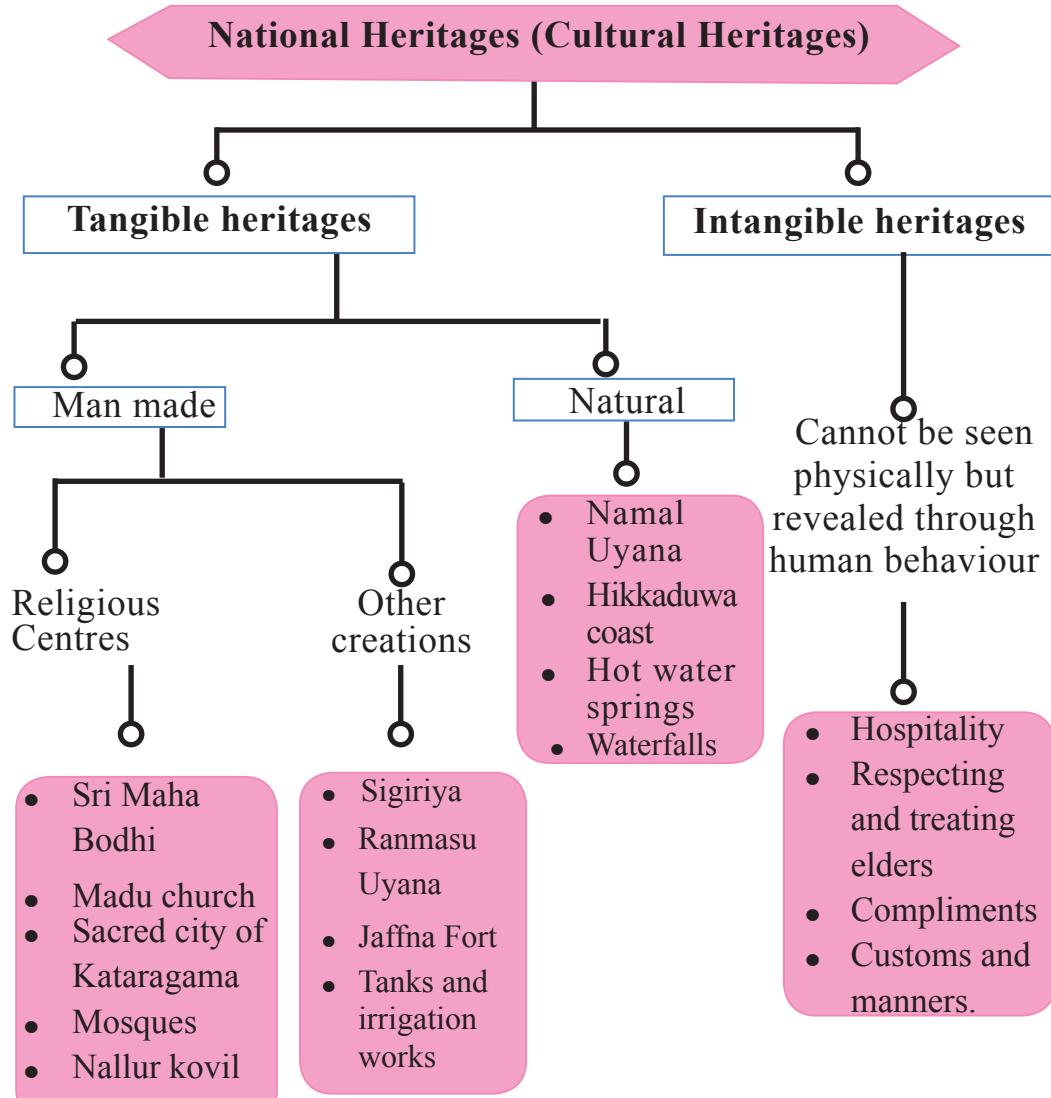
Social community of Sri Lanka consists of different ethnic groups like Sinhalese, Tamils, Moors and Burghers and different people who follow various religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Therefore, Sri Lanka is considered a multi-racial, multi-religious and multi cultural country. The communities have their identity according to their inherited traditions, customs, beliefs, rituals, clothes and languages.

In spite of different ethnic groups and religions that we are divided into, all the people who live in this country are Sri Lankans.

National Heritages (Cultural Heritages)

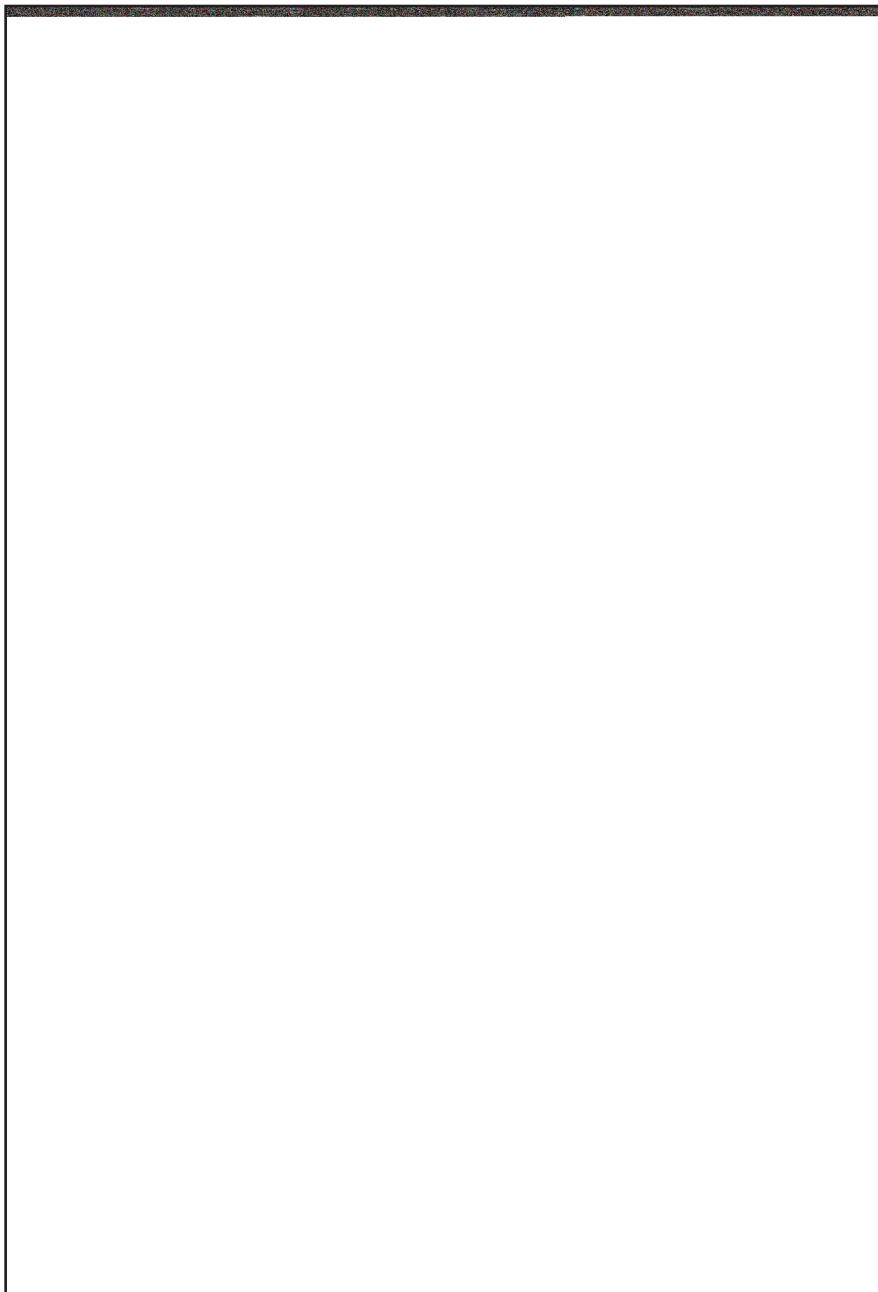
There are various cultural heritages as well as cultural features in Sri Lanka in its multi-ethnic and multi religious society. Cultural features too depict the identity of a country.

Cultural heritages can be categorized in the following manner.



Since ancient times, Sri Lankans have been famous for their hospitality among the other nations in both East and West.

Map 2.2 indicates the various cultural heritages of Sri Lanka



Map2.2 - Cultural (national) heritages of Sri Lanka

World Heritages

Some national heritages in Sri Lanka have been accepted as world heritages due to their uniqueness. Thus Sri Lanka has gained a global identity. Sri Lanka has the attraction of the foreign tourists and has become a tourist hub and a destination among the eastern countries. These world heritages can be categorized as man-made and natural heritages.

Indigenous people

- The indigenous people living in various parts of Sri Lanka are also a special feature when the social identity of Sri Lanka is considered. Those people who live in the areas of Mahiyangana, Dambana and Henannigala spend their lives protecting their inherited language, customs, clothing, cultural features and tools. They earn their livelihood mainly by crop cultivation adapted to the environment, hunting and collecting the forest products.
- Some indigenous people were settled in Hennanigala area under Mahaweli dry zone development programme. At present, they have joined the formal education system and are adapted to the modern society, stepping into the higher educational avenues using modern electronic equipments. However, their contribution towards the protection of the ancient cultural heritages and environment conservation should be admired.

Cultural features and festivals

There is an identity in various festivals and cultural features inherited from different tribal groups, various races and religions in the Sri Lankan society. Several cultural festivals and cultural features with such identity are mentioned below.

- Wesak/Poson festival
- Sinhala and Tamil New Year
- Madu festival
- Deepavali festival
- Ramazan festival
- Dalada Perahera in Kandy
- Christmas

Activity

1. Write five for each of the man-made and natural things among tangible heritages in Sri Lanka.
2. Prepare a picture enclosing internationally accepted world heritage sites located in Sri Lanka and display it in the class room.
3. Prepare a book including various pictures of national and religious festivals.

Social Development

Sri Lanka is a country that belongs to the South Asian region. Sri Lanka is identified as a country with higher social development among the other countries in this region.

Map 2.3 - South Asian Region

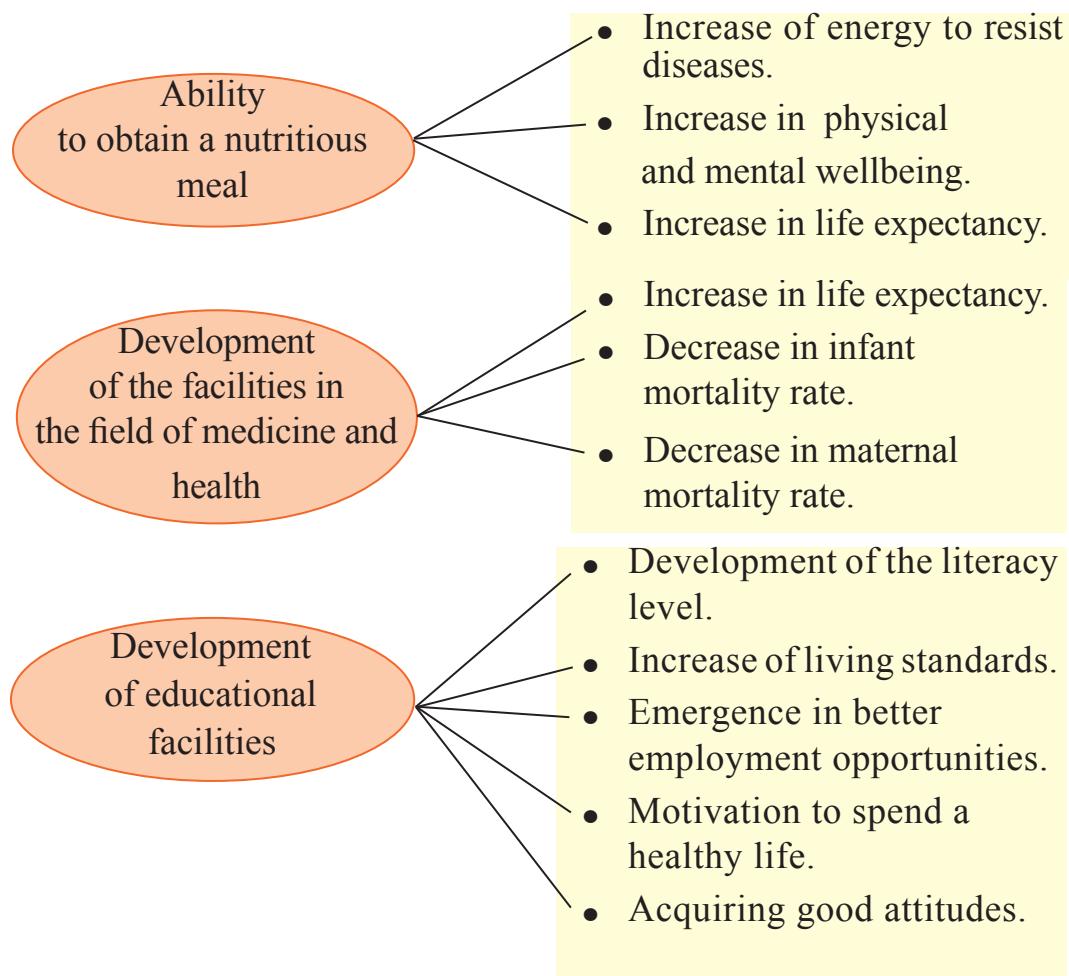
The levels of the social development of countries have been identified using various units of measurement and criteria. Table 2.1 indicates some data which can be used to compare social development in several fields of the countries in the South Asian region.

Table 2.1 Data on social development of the South Asian countries

| country Social development data | India | Pakistan | Bangladesh | Nepal | Sri Lanka | Bhutan | Maldives |
|---|--------------|----------------|------------|-------|-----------|------------------|--------------|
| Life expectancy (years) 2012 | 65.8 | 65.7 | 69.2 | 69.1 | 75.1 | 67.6 | 77. |
| Literacy 15 years and over (2010) | (2006) 63 | (2009) 54.5 | 56.75 | 60.65 | 92 | Not available | (2006) 98 |
| Birth rate To 1000 (2010) | 22.2 | 27.3 | 20.3 | 24.1 | 17.6 | 20.4 | 16'8 |
| Infant mortality rate to 1000 (2010) | 48 | 70 | 38 | 41 | 14 | 44 | 14 |
| Maternal mortality rate for 1000 live births (2010) | 200 | 260 | 240 | 170 | 35 | 180 | 60 |

The literacy rate in Sri Lanka is 92%. It is second only to Maldives among the other South Asian countries.

Although Sri Lanka is a developing country, it has acquired a higher level in the field of social development. Following are some factors contributed towards this achievement.



Not only the above factors, but provision of education and health free of charge and the state welfare policies affect the higher level of social development in Sri Lanka

Activities

1. Cut and divide the countries that belong to the South Asian region from a map with political divisions. Paste those pieces on a paper correctly and shade them in various colours.
2. Refer to that map and write three sentences about the location of Sri Lanka
3. According to the table 2.1, name two countries which have a higher level of literacy rate.
4. Mention three factors affected to the higher level of literacy in Sri Lanka.
5. Write three benefits that can be acquired to a country due to the existence of higher level of literacy.
6. Observe table 2.1 and mention the country which has a higher level of life expectancy. Write two factors that brought about the effect.

Assignment

1. I. With your teacher's instructions, organise an educational trip to cover the main relief zones in Sri Lanka.
II. Write an essay about the relief features, variations of climate and the environment you observed during the trip.
III. Evaluate the natural beauty that affected the geographical identity of Sri Lanka on the basis of the experiences gained.
2. Identify the methods of receiving rain in your area, duration and the specific features. Write five sentences about them.
3. Under your teacher's instructions, collect information and prepare a file about the cultural features and the cultural heritage sites which are specific to your area.
4. Design a brochure to make people aware as to how literacy and life expectancy could be improved. Make arrangements to distribute it.

Glossary

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Identity | - wkkH;dj | - கலைச்சொற்கள் |
| • Geographical identity | - ஒரு பகுதியை அனுபவித்தால் | - தனித்துவம் |
| • Social identity | - சமூகத்தின் அனுபவித்தால் | - பூர்வோன் தனித்துவம் |
| • Ocean Strait | - கடல் நீர்த்தீவிடய் | - நீரினை |
| • Relative location | - சுற்றுப்பு இடத்தை தெரிவித்து விடும் | - சார்பு அமைவிடம் |
| • Specific location | - தீவிரமாக இடத்தை தெரிவித்து விடும் | - தனி அமைவிடம் |
| • Nautical miles | - நாவிக் கீழ்த்திட்டம் | - கடல் மைல் |
| • Exclusive Economic Zone | - அனுபவ அரசிகள் கலாபய | - தனித்துவ பொருளாதார வலயம் |
| • Territorial sea limit | - ராஜ்யீய முனை கீலாவு | - ஆட்புல கடல் எல்லை |
| • Natural beauty | - சீவாஹாவிக் கேள்விகளை நிற்கிறது | - இயற்கை அழகு |
| • Climatic diversity | - மேற்கூரைகள் விவிளத்துடைய வகையை | - மூலநிலைப்பல்வகைமை |
| • Tourist attraction | - சுயாரக ஆகர்ஷணயை | - சுற்றுலாக் கவர்ச்சி |
| • Intermediate plain | - அனுபவ நிலை நிலை நிலை | - உள்ளக சமவெளிகள் |
| • Winter | - கீழ் சுதாவு | - மழைவீழ்ச்சி |
| • Rainfall | - வரிசுபதனாய் | - பருவக்காற்று மழை |
| • Monsoon rain | - மேர்சுமி வரிசுவாவு | - உகைப்புமழை |
| • Convectional rain | - சுயாரக வரிசுவாவு | - வளி |
| • Cyclones | - வாய்மூல வரிசுவாவு | - என்றும் பகுதிகள் |
| • Air disturbances | - வாய்மூல கூரைகளை | - இடவுயரம் |
| • Evergreen forests | - சுதாநிலை வினாக்களை | - வறள்வலயம் |
| • Altitude | - ஏறிலத்துடைய வினாக்களை | - சமூக தனித்துவம் |
| • Arid areas | - ஒடுங்க பூர்வோன் நிலை நிலை | - பல்லினங்கள் |

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| ● Multi-racial | - බහු වාර්ගික | - පල්සමයන්කൾ |
| ● Multi-religious | - බහු ආගමික | - කලාචාර මරුප්‍රියාම |
| ● Cultural heritages | - සංස්කෘතික උරුම | - තොටුණුරුම් මරුප්‍රියාම |
| ● Tangible heritages | - ස්ථානීය උරුම | - තොටුණුරුමුදියාත් මරුප්‍රියාම |
| ● World heritages | - ලෝක උරුම | - සුරුවා මෙයාම් |
| ● Intangible heritages | - අස්ථානීය උරුම | - තිරුප්පිටප |
| ● Tourist hub | - සංචාරක කේන්ද්‍රය | - ආතිවාසි මක්කල් |
| ● Destination | - ගමනාන්තය | - තෙන් ආශිය වලයට |
| ● Indigenous people | - ආදිවාසී ජනතාව | - ආයුණ් න්‍යාරාප්පූ |
| ● South Asian Region | - දකුණු ආසියානු කලාපය | - ගුරුත්තරිවු |
| ● Life expectancy | - ආයු අපේක්ෂාව | - පිශ්ච වීතම් |
| ● Literacy | - සාක්ෂරතාව | - තාය්මාර් මරණ වීතම් |
| ● Birth rate | - උපත් අනුපාතිකය | - පිශ්ච බිජිතම් |
| ● Infant mortality rate | - ලදුරු මරණ අනුපාතිකය | - සිස් මරණ බිජිතම් |
| ● Maternal mortality rate | - මාතා මරණ අනුපාතිකය | - පිරවස මරණ බිජිතම් |
| ● Live births | - සැම්ලී උපත් | - ඉයිර් පිශ්චප්‍රාක්කල් |

References

- Socio Economic Data Of Sri Lanka 2014
- [global.britannica.com/EB checked/topic/561906/Sri-Lanka](http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/561906/Sri-Lanka)
- www.wikipedia.lk