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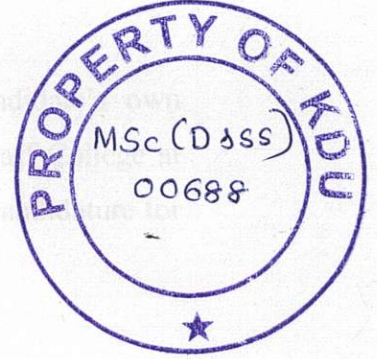
Submitted to the

**DEFENCE SERVICES
COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE**

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
passed staff college

and

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science (Defence and Strategic Studies) of
the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka



**CHINESE INFLUENCE ON SRI LANKA AND ITS
IMPACT ON THE INDO-SRI LANKAN
RELATIONSHIP**

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07 October 2022

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ABSTRACT

The Indo-Pacific is the new ground for geo-political power tussles. Sri Lanka, due to its geographic location holds a prominent role in the Indian Ocean Region. Differences between India and China draw attention on Sri Lanka's approach towards these nations. China has made deep inroads into Sri Lanka especially in the last two decades. There are multiple factors that have led to deeper cooperation between China and Sri Lanka. However, military cooperation during the war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Chinese investments under the Belt and Road initiative were the corner stone of bilateral relationship in the 21st century. The Indo-Sri Lankan relationship in the recent years has been affected by Sri Lanka's domestic turmoil. In addition to the existing bilateral concerns between the two nations they have been subject to factors beyond the scope of the bilateral relationship. The prime factor in the changing stance is alleged to be the Chinese influence on Sri Lanka. China is the largest bilateral creditor of Sri Lanka extending numerous loans and grants for infrastructural projects. The absence of a spirited Chinese assistance during the 2022 Sri Lankan economic crisis has raised many eyebrows questioning the true intentions of the Chinese investments in Sri Lanka. This has been a stark contrast to India's massive financial assistance despite no prior economic commitments signifying India's close cooperation with Sri Lanka despite differences. Addressing mutual concerns and enhancing close cooperation in various spheres would further boost the Indo-Sri Lankan ties.

Key Words: India, Sri Lanka, China, Debt trap, Hambantota, Bilateral cooperation, UNHRC, Tamil, LTTE.