

RESTRICTED

ABSTRACT

1. The objective of this research is to evaluate the current state of the maritime power competition between India and China and in view of identifying probable issues impacting Sri Lanka. The research problem here is “What would be the impact on Sri Lanka by maritime power competition between China and India over the IOR and how SL can address maritime power competition diplomatically.” A qualitative sampling method was employed for the research.

2. In this particular field, the researcher collects both primary and secondary data before formulating the research design, thereby making this an investigational study. Research questions were incorporated to identify the impacts due to maritime power competition between China and India in the IOR, in order to identify the extent of the maritime power competition, the future opportunities and challenges in the IOR, and the effectiveness of the present foreign policy of SL in addressing the maritime issues in the IOR.

3. IO will become the key ocean in the next century. Hence, China is strategically approaching the IO with their ‘String of Pearls strategy’ and ‘BRI strategy,’ and has created a good impression in many small states in the IOR. The USA, Australia, and Japan are also interested in the IOR, but India and China are the two leading powers fighting for the maritime power. Both countries are increasing their naval and military strengths; hence, the IOR is heavily militarised. Sri Lanka, therefore, should be vigilant on the happenings in the surrounding ocean and prepared to face this battle.

4. Sri Lanka should be unbiased with its foreign policy that aims toward developing the country. The country must reap the full benefit from all these powers while balancing the relationships with them. Sri Lanka must have a resilient foreign policy so that no country can interfere in the internal affairs of the state.