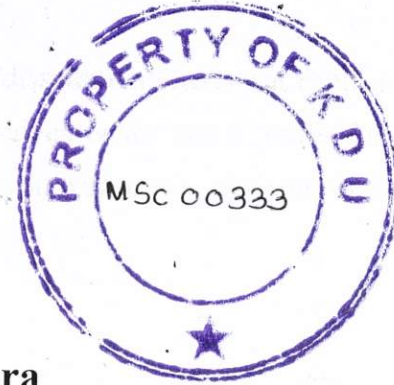


**MARITIME POWER COMPETITION IN INDIAN OCEAN
REGION AND ITS IMPACT ON SRI LANKA**

By

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to evaluate the current state of the maritime power competition in Indian Ocean region and identifying probable issues impacting Sri Lanka. The research problem here is "What would be the impact on SL due to maritime power competition in IOR, and how SL could address maritime power competition diplomatically." A qualitative sampling method was employed for the research.

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 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 Sri Lanka in addressing the maritime issues in the IOR. IO will become the key ocean in the next century. Hence, China, India, USA, Australia, and Japan are also interested in the IOR, but India, USA and China are the three 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. The Indian Ocean is the backyard of various developing economies in contrast to the developed Pacific economies. India, being one of the largest regional countries competing with the rising Chinese maritime power, which is seen as an important fulcrum and stakeholder in the operationalization of the Indo-Pacific from an academic concept to an institutional framework. Therefore, India stands in the epicenter of the region according to its geopolitical position as well as the alliances and threat perceptions existent in the region.

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.