

## **China's Contemporary Relations with Southeast Asia: Problems and Prospects**

DD Samaragunarathna#

*Faculty of Defence and Strategic Studies, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University*

#deshanidewmini@gmail.com

China's economic and strategic rise has been widely regarded as the most significant global phenomenon in the last four decades. Long before the Western dominance in the nineteenth century, China was a dominant force in East Asia. After experiencing a phenomenal growth in recent decades, it is now poised to reclaim its position as a regional hegemony. This research is primarily focused on Southeast Asia, and it provides an understanding of China's contemporary relations with the region. The study will focus on China's contemporary relations, hegemonic intentions, and future trajectory. The researcher intends to explore South China Sea activities, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and China's defence and economic policies in the Southeast China region. It also considers China's tremendous economic, social, and military development, as well as how China can expand its power in Southeast Asia. This research will fall under the category of descriptive research design. The research will be conducted according to a qualitative method and all the information obtained will be secondary data, obtained from resources available.

**Keywords:** *China, ASEAN, South China sea, hegemony, belt and road initiative*