

Chinese Soft Power Strategies Towards Sri Lanka and Its Implications on International Politics

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Abstract

Chinese involvement in South Asia has been perceived as a threat by certain regional and extra regional powers such as India and the U.S.A. whereas China proclaimed it as a peaceful invitation for mutual co-existence with the rest of the world which was embraced by many smaller powers such as Sri Lanka. This attachment between China and Sri Lanka specially during latter's post-conflict period since 2009 had created certain clashes of interests among above mentioned regional and extra regional powers whereas Sri Lanka provided the platform for these controversies which resulted even some negative implications on the conduct of Sri Lankan policies. The main focus of this study is to identify the impact of China's soft power usage and the implication of it on the Sri Lankan external and internal relations. One objective is to identify strategies used by China in terms of trade and investments to influence Sri Lanka by means of soft power and another objective is to determine the implications of it on international politics. Content analysis has been used in order to analyse secondary data collected through data triangulation method available in different data sources such as government publications, books, interviews, historical records, speeches, and web. The content analysis evaluates document texts and test theoretical underpinnings of the particular issue to understand data more comprehensively. Soft power strategy used by China has been significant role in the form of investments, development grant, cultural donations, bilateral trade agreements and consolidation of diplomatic and political relations that has been remarkable feature in post- conflict period of Sri Lanka. During the previous government in Sri Lanka pro Chinese policies were strengthened due to the high interest of Rajapaksha government for bilateral loans, which came with no political strings and repayment period is negotiable and China tries to spread its power through bilateral loans to developing countries. This unexpected strategic presence of the China in Sri Lanka was much disturbing for the implementation of India-Sri Lanka relations and the U.S -Sri Lanka which were under anxiety. Chinese presence has been always seen as a vital threat by the international