



INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO SRI LANKA IN THE POST-CIVIL WAR CONTEXT– (2009-2021)

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Abstract

India and Sri Lanka have kept up a historical link for more than 2,500 years, which has benefited both nations in terms of politics, economy, culture, and worries about national security. Both nations have a comprehensive awareness of, as well as support for, important topics that are of national importance. The Indian government has a great amount of worry about the situation in Sri Lanka. This leads to a conflation of the island nation's capabilities and closeness with larger problems of bilateral cooperation and Sri Lanka's sovereignty rights to pick development and strategic partners. Throughout history, India has been a significant contributor to Sri Lanka's economic growth for a number of reasons. Behind that, this study will identify the primary reasons for the sustainable development partnership between India and Sri Lanka. Geographical and relative priority of two nations, Ethnic conflict Sinhalese – Tamil. The civil war between Sri Lanka forces and LTTE, the China factor, International and regional organizational approach – SAARC, UNO, IMF, World Bank, Defence-related concerns, to maintain regional superpower- India and Religious – Buddhism and Hinduism, these are the factors behind the relationship between India and Sri Lanka. This study will prove which more important factors lead the two countries on one road with relevant evidence. Secondary data and historical and critical research methods were used for this article.

Keywords – Bilateral relationship, foreign policy, Development cooperation, and China factor

Introduction

One of India's main development partners is Sri Lanka, and over the years, this partnership has been a cornerstone of their bilateral ties. Since the reign of Emperor Ashoka, who established historical links with Sri Lanka, India, and Sri Lanka have maintained diplomatic relations, this relationship dates back more than 2,500 years. The maritime boundary between India and Sri Lanka has been cemented through years of linguistic, cultural, and intellectual interchange between the two countries. India is Sri Lanka's only neighbour; the two nations have cooperated to build a cooperative security structure in the Indian Ocean and share a strategic location in South Asia. Both the republics of Sri Lanka and India are members of the Commonwealth of Nations. Relations between the two countries have developed throughout time, including all subjects pertinent to the contemporary world. The two countries' shared cultural and social history, as well as the significant interpersonal connections between its citizens, serve as the foundation for building a complex relationship. Close communication at all levels, increased trade and investment, and collaborative initiatives in the fields of

development, combating COVID 19, resolving the fishermen's issue, education, culture, and tourism have been characteristics of the relationship in recent years. Both nations have also begun to build new trade and development spheres (affairs, 2021). The connection has endured well, expanding and reaching new heights in trade and investment as well as in the transfer of technology, sharing information, and developing skills. The establishment of India and Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement in the year 2000 was an important factor that aided the expansion of bilateral interaction. The economic links between the two nations also include a comprehensive development collaboration that covers a wide range of topics, including infrastructure, connectivity, transportation, housing, health, education, livelihood, rehabilitation, and industrial growth. This research provides evidence that there are valid reasons for India to be interested in and participate in efforts involving development ties with Sri Lanka.

Study Area

“This study area is India, and Sri Lanka, officially the Republic of India within commonwealth countries; India is a country in South Asia. “It is the 7th largest country by land (1,269,219 sq. mi), the second–most population country (1,352,642,280), and the most respected democracy in the world. Located by the Indian Ocean in the south, the Arabian Sea in the southwest, and the Bay of Bengal in the southeast, it shares land borders with Pakistan to the west, China, Nepal, and Bhutan to the north, Bangladesh and Myanmar to the east. In the Indian Ocean, India is near Sri Lanka and the Maldives; its Andaman and Nicobar Islands share a maritime border with Thailand, Myanmar, and Indonesia.” ((<https://www.india.gov.in/india-glance/profile>))

“Sri Lanka, formerly known as Ceylon and officially the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, is an island country in South Asia. “Its land area is 25,330sq mi, and its population is 22,156,00 (74.9% Sinhalese,11.2% Tamils, 9.2% Sri Lankan Muslims, 4.2% Indian Tamils, 0.5% others (including Burghers, Malays, Vedas, Chinese and Indians)) It lies in the Indian Ocean, southwest of the Bay of Bengal, and southeast of the Arabian sea; it is separated from the Indian subcontinent by the Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Strait. Sri Lanka shares a maritime border with India and Maldives.” ((<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-artslaw/ptr/ciforb/resources/Sri-Lanka.pdf>))Colombo is the country's capital, largest city, and financial center.

Map -I



The problem of the study

Contemporary debates on the development of nations and the development partnership activities towards good governance by strengthening government institutions with public participation in this context, development partnership between the countries are significant areas to study. After a civil war in Sri Lanka, India prioritized providing development assistants to Sri Lanka through their development partnership and development cooperation link for several reasons mentioned by both nations, but this study will end light on the actual

primary reason behind it. The problem of the study is why India is prioritizing facilitating development assistance to Sri Lanka in the post-civil war context. This study will identify the significant factors for the development of partnership between both nations, and factors will be analysed and the essential facts with justifications and evidence.

Literature Reviewed

The bilateral relationship between India and Sri Lanka is an essential, significant, and exciting study area that has been chosen to research by many scholars and researchers, but very few people did the research on development assistance to Sri Lanka and the factors for it. India is always prioritizing supplying development assistance to Sri Lanka; it reached a higher level after the civil war in Sri Lanka. At this juncture, this study will be needed to know why India is continually providing development assistance to Sri Lanka and determine its factors. These kinds of studies are doing many researchers at present, but a research gap is identifying the primary factor with justification; this study will fulfill this gap and be an eye-opener to do research in this study area for future researchers.

Brief on India – Sri Lanka relations – ministry of external affairs discussed several current issues, events, and progress between India and Sri Lanka; this statement deals with political relations, commercial relations, development cooperation, projects under links of credit, cultural connections, people to people ties, special prayers across Sri Lanka for the well-being of people of India in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, India-Sri Lanka Foundation, tourism, human resource development, fishermen's issue, and Indian origin up country Community, but this article shortly mentions development cooperation activities and development assistance from India and fail to discuss on why dose India assist Sri Lanka and factors for it. This article is valuable material for understanding the Indo - Lanka relationship.

The article Charting a New Trajectory in India-Sri Lanka Relations by V. Pappani is specifically concerned with how Sri Lanka is drifting toward China in terms of economic ties, growing concerns about the bilateral relationship between India and Sri Lanka, and the Indian government's five-month delay in approving a loan moratorium requested by Colombo. On the other hand, Beijing swiftly authorized the extra \$500 million in loans from its development bank. However, India is a much more important partner than China in the fields of education, health care, and tourism because it can provide its expertise in handling the rights of minorities and different people as Sri Lanka begins the arduous task of drafting a constitution. Discussions of this kind highlighted the significance of China in relation to Indian development aid. This article is helpful and bolsters the rationale for this research topic.

India – Sri Lanka relations – insights as this publication discussed India – Sri Lanka relations on the following headings; history of both nation's relations, strategic importance, development cooperation activities, commercial relations, fishermen's issues, and significant challenges in Indo – Lanka relations. This document clearly and shortly discussed the importance of development cooperation and development assistance in both country relations in the meanwhile mentioned the challenges in front of two countries to lead the historical relations continually.

What is the future for economic cooperation between India and Sri Lanka? This article describes the importance helpline from India to Sri Lanka, China's factor in the relationship between India and Sri Lanka, and the current economic and political crisis in Sri Lanka. Since their independence, both countries have been maintaining mutual understanding, developing partnerships and international approaches, and taking part in international organizations. This kind of bilateral relationship faced many challenges for both nation betterments. This article gives support data and arguments to answer the Indo – Lanka development partnership relations questions.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to analyse the reasons for development cooperation projects and development assistance of India to Sri Lanka amidst the post-civil war. Moreover, this paper tries to provide an accurate picture of the Indian government to provide priority to maintaining development partnership with neighbourhood Sri Lanka in the post-civil war context.

Methodology of the Study

This study is based on secondary data. The information and points are collected from different sources such as research articles, journals, books, internet materials, newspapers, etc. The study is analytical and descriptive in nature. The paper used the different augments, sides, evidence, etc., to prove or answer the research questions.

Findings and Discussions

India and Sri Lanka are republics whining the commonwealth of nations. Both nations have similarities geographically, culturally, politically, economically, etc., but several factors have historically led to both countries' relationship. This paper analyses the factors behind the Indian side for maintaining a political and

economic relationship with Sri Lanka in the post-civil war context. Relative priority, geographical priority, civil war, ethnic conflict – between Tamils and Sinhalese, China factor, Organizational approach – Asian, UN...etc., defence - related concern, regional superpower – India and Buddhism – religion, these are the main reasons behind India to maintains a bilateral relationship with Sri Lanka. But this paper will determine which factors are most important from India's view through the following discussions.

Both India and Sri Lanka hold significant positions in South Asia, share a maritime border, and have worked toward constructing a single security umbrella in the Indian Ocean. India is Sri Lanka's sole neighbour, and the two countries are divided by the Palk Strait. The total straight-line distance between Dhanushkodi of India and Talaimannar of Sri Lanka is 36km (300 meters), So geographically, India and Sri Lanka are very close neighbours. This is why both countries prioritize supporting each other in situations facing regional and international challenges from independence. This geographical location of both nations is one of the factors in maintaining a healthy relationship in the economic, political, and cultural ways for their national betterment.

After the country gained its independence, Sri Lanka descended into a state of ethnic strife and civil war between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamil population. Within these two groups, Sinhalese tend to be Buddhist, while Tamils tend to be Hindu, revealing substantial linguistic and religious distinctions. The Sinhalese population makes up 74.9 percent of Sri Lanka's total population, while the Sri Lankan Tamil community makes up 11.2 percent. "Sri Lanka's ancient settlement history says that the Sinhalese people's arrival in Sri Lanka is somewhat ambiguous; historians believe that the Tamils arrived on the island as invaders and traders from India are the Chola Kingdom." (Nithyani, 2020)) These stories are a significant factor in ethnic conflict raised among the two ethnicities. In the early 1980s, an ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka escalated into a civil war, which lasted for three decades. The Indian perspective on the civil conflict in Sri Lanka is that all wars have been a stain on the history of humanity. They have a negative impact on the economy and are responsible for the death of people. The battle has an effect on the whole of the region it is raging in. The whole predicament provided the impetus for the commission of war crimes in Sri Lanka. The civil war and conflict that has been going on for thirty years have caused political upheaval not just in Sri Lanka but also in India. As a result, India provided assistance to Sri Lankans in the face of political, economic, cultural, and international challenges. This was a response to the feverish state of the island administration.

Buddhism is another factor leading India and Sri Lanka's cultural and religious-based relationship, strengthening both nations' economic relations. Since the Great Indian Emperor Ashoka dispatched his offspring Arhat Mahinda and Theri Sangamitta to propagate the teachings of Lord Buddha at the request of King Devanampiya Tissa of Sri Lanka, Buddhism has served as one of the greatest foundations uniting the two nations and civilizations, "Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during the Virtual Bilateral Summit held between India and Sri Lanka on 26 September 2020, announced a USD 15 million grant assistance for protection and promotion of Buddhist ties between India and Sri Lanka. This is a first-of-its-kind grant announcement by India that may be utilized for the construction/renovation of Buddhist monasteries, education of young monks, strengthening engagement of Buddhist scholars and clergy, development of Buddhist heritage museums, cultural exchanges, archaeological cooperation, and reciprocal exposition of The Buddha's relics." (High Commission of India Colombo, Sri Lanka) so, based on Buddhism and cultural exchanges, both countries have a good relationship; the Buddhist religion has been treated as governing religion by the Sri Lankan government after independence, and Sri Lanka is connecting regions in the governing process, other religions and people are directly and indirectly affected by these approaches by government.

Another factor contributing to India and Sri Lanka's successful economic cooperation is their shared emphasis and focus on the neighbourhood. "It became the first country in India's foreign relations to adopt a neighbourhood strategy in May 2014." Prime Minister Narendra Modi showed his commitment to the concept by inviting the leaders of all neighbouring countries to his inauguration ceremony. He assured neighbouring nations at the outset of his government that "India desires outstanding neighbourly ties via developing partnerships in all sectors, including business, investment, assistance, people-to-people interaction, and seamless connectivity" (Gulbin S). This remark highlights India's important neighborhood strategy with Sri Lanka under Narendra Modi's government. Following that, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's approach toward Sri Lanka and its impact on India-Sri Lanka relations believe there has been a considerable increase in understanding between the Indian and Sri Lankan administrations. However, owing to restricted political and economic interests at home, as well as disparities in the two nations' regional strategic aims, several fundamental problems of concern persist in the bilateral relationship.

Participation in regional and international organizations is another factor that contributes to India and Sri Lanka leading the historical relations between the two countries. The South Asian Association for Regional

Cooperation (SAARC) is a regional development organization that has received the majority of its funding from India. At the same time, the United Nations Organization (UNO) is primarily sponsored by western nations. Nevertheless, India is the representative of South Asian countries at the United Nations. So, India and Sri Lanka lead the regional and international organizational relationship to handle the national, regional, and global crisis. One of the key reasons India maintains economic, political, and cultural ties with Sri Lanka is its defence-related concerns and desire to retain a regional powerhouse in South Asia. Both countries had key geopolitical positions in the area. Therefore, they needed to maintain a positive relationship for the sake of regional security and stability. India's relations with its neighbours, China and Pakistan, are strained, resulting in regional superpower politics between China and India, ethnic violence in Sri Lanka, and terrorist activity in Pakistan. These difficulties compel India to maintain better relations with its smaller neighbours and to preserve its military might for security purposes.

China is the deciding factor for India to continue having substantive ties with Sri Lanka. Although there are ups and downs in both countries' ties, India emphasizes fostering a positive one with Sri Lanka. "China and Sri Lanka developed defence and strategic ties throughout time, and as a result, China provided a wide variety of contemporary weapons to the Sri Lankan armed forces. They also supported one another on the subject of human rights abuses in each other's countries at regional and international fora (Singh, 2021). These actions by China have a negative impact on the relationship between India and Sri Lanka, particularly their joint development programme. There has been a bilateral connection between India and Sri Lanka for more than 2,500 years. It cannot be readily weakened after the people of the two countries share comparable cuisines, languages, cultures, religions, etc. The pro-China policy of Sri Lanka persisted until the beginning of 2022, with the exception of the period between 2015 and 2019 when Maithripala Sirisena and Rani Wigramasinge served as the country's president and prime minister and did their best to balance the nation's relations with both India and China. Due to China's expansionist stance in the Indian Ocean, India has been concerned about this point since things are likely to move once again in China's favour with the 2019 presidential election, causing greater difficulties for India and its regional politics. But with COVID-19 and the beginning of the economic and political crisis, the island shifted its pro-China stance, and India managed the matter of Sri Lanka breaking away from China diplomatically.

Political analysts, economic experts, and intellectuals assert that receiving loans and debts with higher interest rates from China is one of the major causes of Sri Lanka's current political and economic crisis; this opinion has spread among the people, and it also strained relations between China and Sri Lanka. India attempts to fill this gap with their support and conditional loans. "India is not panicked by China's presence, but is worried about its geopolitical repercussions. Principal worry is China's potential exploitation of infrastructure against Indian interests." (Manoharan, 2013). Therefore, this research supports the claim that "India and China have a direct or indirect impact on Sri Lanka's political and economic decision-making process."

Conclusion

The relationship between India and Sri Lanka is unique and crucial to both countries since it is shaped by geography. They are connected by the sea that separates other countries. The external sector of the Sri Lankan economy is now experiencing serious problems. Due to a lack of foreign currency inflows, the nation is severely struggling to pay its foreign debt obligations and purchase essentials like fuel, medicine, and food. The covid-19 pandemic made the situation even worse, primarily because of the significant loss of tourism revenue, and the current president Gotabaya Rajapaksa made some poor decisions. Sri Lanka is now in the worst political and economic crisis as a result. Sri Lanka maintained its pro-China stance until the political and economic situation worsened. "So far, Sri Lanka has placed an undue reliance on China to address its vulnerabilities in the external sector, while its economic relationships with India seem to be at a standstill. Sri Lanka works hard not to enrage India at the same time. In light of this, Sri Lanka is now attempting to avert a catastrophe by juggling its relations with China, India, and local nationalism. It didn't seem easy so far (Umesh, 2021). Sri Lanka cannot repay any loans or development aid from China because of this country's financial situation. India continues to place a high priority on aiding Sri Lanka in overcoming its present economic crisis. The Sri Lankan government and people now recognize the significance of the bilateral relationship with India. India must strike a balance between maintaining regional peace, its strategic interests, long-term stability, and Sri Lanka's growth. Most islanders now have a favourable opinion of Indians because of centuries-old ties between India and Sri Lanka that have since varied and evolved. However, China has become one of the most important elements in the relationship between Sri Lanka and India. Before discussing several factors of Chinese participation in Sri Lanka and their influence on India-Sri Lanka relations, it is crucial to contextualize this intervening component. Over time, several variables have had varying effects on Indo-Lanka ties. The bilateral connection between the

two nations will likely endure for a number of reasons. Even yet, the Sino-Lanka connection is one of the important variables that must be considered. Over the last ten years, debates over China-Sri Lanka ties have dominated both internal and global political discussions. There is a list of variables depending on ties between India and Sri Lanka since independence. However, when it comes to the connection between India and Sri Lanka, the China factor and the defence-related factor are more important than the other aspects. Consider the possibility that Sri Lanka's leading economic partner will be China. In such a situation, India would make an effort to preserve its influence over Sri Lanka's politics and economy while it prepares for conflict with its neighbouring neighbour. Therefore, rather than other factors, the China factor is a design component of the trajectory of the India-Sri Lanka relationship. The article Charting a New Trajectory in India-Sri Lanka Relations by V. Pappani is specifically concerned with how Sri Lanka is drifting toward China in terms of economic ties, growing concerns about the bilateral relationship between India and Sri Lanka, and the Indian government's five-month delay in approving a loan moratorium requested by Colombo. Beijing, on the other hand, swiftly authorized the extra \$500 million in loans from its development bank. However, India is a much more important partner than China in the fields of education, health care, and tourism because it can provide its expertise in handling the rights of minorities and different people as Sri Lanka begins the difficult task of establishing a constitution. Discussions of this kind highlighted the significance of China in relation to Indian development aid. My paper is helpful and bolsters the rationale for this research topic.

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