

The Impact of Sino-Sri Lankan Relationship on the Mass Media Industry in Sri Lanka

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The unique location of Sri Lanka on the ancient Silk Road resulted in strong cultural, religious, and economic relationships between China and Sri Lanka. In 2017, Sri Lanka and China celebrated the 60th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations and at present, the Sino-Sri Lankan relationships have extended to trade, infrastructure development, and Buddhist cultural relations. Most importantly, the Chinese government is currently involved in the expansion of Sri Lankan mass media industry through technological upgrades, research and training, media production, and infrastructure development. This paper therefore explores the impact of Sino-Sri Lankan relations on the mass media industry in Sri Lanka. Following a qualitative research methodology approach, secondary data were gathered from the official websites of Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (SLRC), Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC), Chinese Embassy and online newspaper articles, while online interviews were conducted with 10 selected journalists to gather primary data. As a thematic analysis of the data was conducted, it was discovered that the One Belt and One Road (OBOR) initiative

has played a major role in strengthening Sino-Sri Lankan relations. The annual training programmes offered by the Chinese government have resulted in enhancing skills of media personnel and developing research in the field. Further, Chinese government funding has enabled Sri Lankan journalists to participate in cultural exchange programmes and soft power outreach programmes as well as to develop media infrastructure and technology. This paper concludes by suggesting that journalist training should be quantitatively developed and a systematic programme for this should be implemented at the state level.

Keywords: *China, Sri Lanka, impact, mass media industry, One Belt One Road Initiative*