Implications of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in HRD in Sri Lanka’s maritime logistics sector

The global logistics industry is evolving rapidly, and qualified logistics-related workers are in short supply on all occupational levels, and Sri Lanka is no exemption to this. Therefore, if Sri Lankan wanted to be a maritime logistics hub, the Sri Lankan workforce in the maritime logistics sector needs to be able to adapt, and having the right skills and training is vital. However, there is no research available to understand the current skills gap in Sri Lanka’s maritime logistics sector. Though, this study suggests that China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) supports partner countries’ efforts in infrastructure and human resources development, and Chinese firms engage in substantive skills transfer in partner countries. As Sri Lanka is one of the vital nodes along the BRI, China is investing in Sri Lanka’s infrastructure projects includes the maritime logistics sector. However, this study failed to identify the implications of BRI in HRD in maritime logistics sector, therefore further studies are needed.

Keywords: BRI, China, HRD, Maritime Logistics, Skills, Sri Lanka.

Introduction

China’s interest in the Silk Road visions of land and maritime logistics and communications networks connecting Asia, Europe, and Africa – now dominated by ‘Belt and Road’ slogans. Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is aimed at exploring the unique values and concepts of the ancient road, enriching it with new meaning for the present era, and actively developing economic partnerships with many countries and regions situated along the route. BRI seems to be a potentially huge collective of current, planned, and future infrastructure projects, accompanied by a host of bilateral and regional trade agreements. Ongoing and planned projects will focus on the developments of a wide array of assets, including ports, roads, railways, airports, power plants, oil and gas pipelines, and refineries, and Free Trade Zones, as well as a supporting IT, telecom, and financial infrastructure.

The Indian Ocean plays a major role in BRI as the key Eurasian shipping route, in facilitating China’s overseas trade and the transportation of fuel and raw materials. Therefore, Sri Lanka is seen as one of the vital nodes along the maritime silk route. China is very optimistic about Sri Lanka’s prospects as a strategically located platform economically and militarily therefore Chinese investors are keen on investing in Sri Lanka (Karunarathne, 2018). Therefore, Sri Lanka can harness this opportunity to complete the hard and soft infrastructures which are a serious obstacle to develop Sri Lanka as a maritime logistics hub in the Indian Ocean, fully leveraging its conducive geographic location.
Even though Sri Lanka is in an advantageous position compared with many other South Asian nations when it comes to connectivity, Sri Lanka’s shipping industry remains primarily a trans-shipment-driven industry. In this context, to become a maritime logistics hub, Sri Lanka must position itself as a major global industry player to provide broader services in shipping and logistics. However, Sri Lanka still lacks a number of the region’s other leading hubs, including Hong Kong, Singapore, and Dubai. This indicates a need for Sri Lanka to improve the quality of its logistics services. In addition, Sri Lanka is encountering challenges in access to a sufficient number of qualified professionals and international participants in the logistics field (Chan, 2015). As China has accumulated useful expertise and experience in the maritime logistics sector, China can collaborate with Sri Lanka in human resources development.

However, no previous studies have been done on this topic to determine the implication of China’s BRI in HRD in the maritime logistics sector, therefore, this study was conducted to assess the Sri Lanka maritime logistics sector human resources development in connection with China’s BRI by focusing on below-given research questions.

- Is there any skills gap in Sri Lankan’s maritime logistics sector?
- Can Sri Lanka benefit from BRI in HRD in the maritime logistics sector?

**Literature Review**

*The Belt and Road Initiative*

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a development strategy and framework which consists of two main components, the land component, known as the "Silk Road Economic Belt" and the sea component called the "Maritime Silk Road". It was unveiled by Chinese President Xi Jinping in September and October 2013 in announcements revealing the Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road, respectively. Also, it was thereafter promoted by Premier Li Keqiang during the State visit in Asia and Europe.

The “Belt” includes countries situated on the original Silk Road through Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East, and Europe will consist of six economic corridors connecting China to the far reaches of Eurasia by road and rail. The “Road” (Maritime Silk Road) is a complementary initiative aimed at investing and fostering collaboration in Southeast Asia, Oceania, and North Africa, through several contiguous bodies of water – the South China Sea, the South Pacific Ocean, and the wider Indian Ocean area. The “Road” will involve the development of ports and shipping routes connecting Chinese harbors to Europe and the South Pacific. To date, up to 140 partner countries have signed documents on Belt and Road cooperation with China, the trade between China and BRI partners has exceeded 9.2 trillion US dollars and direct
investment by Chinese companies in countries along the Belt and Road has surpassed 130 billion US dollars (Yi, 2021). BRI is also supported by some newly created financial institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the New Silk Roads Fund (NSRF), the Chinese government’s foreign exchange reserves, and several of its largest state-owned banks (Silk Road Briefing, 2019).

**Sri Lanka – China Relationship**

Sri Lanka has a long-term, multi-dimensional and deep-rooted relationship with China. Sri Lanka-China Relationship is centuries old and has been historically strengthened by shared religious and cultural values in addition to trade and commerce. The opening of relations with China was historically far more significant and Sri Lanka entered into her first trade/payments agreement called as ‘Rubber-Rice pact’ in 1952 since independence (Ukwatta, 2014) which continued to be renewed and expanded into areas of broader cooperation leading to a long and lasting friendship between the two countries.

China's support has laid a remarkable foundation for the development of Sri Lanka. Today, mega projects such as the Colombo South Container Terminal, Norochcholai coal power plant, Colombo-Katunayake expressway, Southern expressway, A9 road, Mattala international airport, Hambantota port, and Nelum Pokuna theatre have become the new landmarks of the China-Sri Lanka relationship (Kelegama, 2014). The rapid increase of Chinese tourists in Sri Lanka has become a new trend of the China-Sri Lanka relationship. Direct flights between Chinese major cities and Colombo have been a new normal. It is also a new tendency for Sri Lankans to do business, travel, and study in China. The exchanges and cooperation in various fields such as education, religion, culture, and science and technology keep expanding.

**Sri Lanka's Maritime Logistics Sector**

Sri Lanka is an island country in the Indian Ocean, strategically located at the crossroads of both east and west sea routes and serves as the point of entry to South Asia, lucrative Middle Eastern markets, and rising African markets, while the growth engine that is India lies just 20 miles away is seen as one of the vital nodes along the maritime Silk Road. Sri Lanka has a distinct locational advantage, which could support Sri Lanka to develop as a key logistics center in the Indian Ocean by catering to South Asian and Bay of Bengal countries. As Sri Lanka is in a good position will have a great advantage in the production of goods and services supported by efficient logistical facilities and less transaction cost. For many centuries, Sri Lanka had been at the center of the historical Silk Road connecting Europe and China.

Even though Sri Lanka is in a good position in order to secure its position as a regional logistics center, Sri Lanka needs huge investment in physical infrastructure and human resources development (HRD). Sri Lanka needs investments in the country’s maritime hard and soft infrastructure, particularly
in the Hambantota Port, the Colombo Port, and the Trincomalee Port to be competitive. And overseas participation in the development of human resources, introduction of advanced technology, and boost business know-how is also essential. The development of high-quality human resources in the maritime logistics sector is essential to support the economic future. The logistics sector is vital to a country’s economy. It is seen to be a critical enabler in improving the competitiveness of the nation and local economies (Department for Transport, 2011).

The global logistics industry is evolving rapidly, and it is the interplay of infrastructure, technology, and new types of service providers to help its customers reduce their logistics costs and provide effective services. And the logistics focus is moving towards reducing cycle times in order to add value to their customers. Consequently, better tools and strategies are being sought by firms in order to enhance their decision-making. There have been dramatic changes in the mode of world trade and cargo transportation, characterized by the prevalence of business-to-business and integrated supply chains. These changes have been embodied in the increasing demand for value-added logistics services and the integration of various transportation modes. The rapid increase in world trade in the past decade has restructured the global maritime industry and has brought about new developments and increased competition. Gudehus & Kotzab (2012) said that “Maritime logistics is quite a new, integrative approach to modern shipping” and the main purpose of maritime logistics is to convey cargo with ships on rivers, channels, and seas at minimal costs, fuel consumption, and emissions. Optimal shipping networks and maritime transport chains are mandatory for this.

Technological systems are considered to be a ‘competitive weapon’ for the logistics sector (Piplani et al, 2004). These systems can be any hardware or software that automates basic operational processes. However, to gain a competitive edge from these technologies, expert knowledge or specialised skills are needed particularly IT skills and analytical skills. Due to technological change, logistics sector consumer demand and environmental factors are also undergoing continual change. Therefore, the workforce in the logistics sector needs to be able to adapt and have the right skills and training to compete.

Even though Sri Lanka is in an advantageous position compared with many other South Asian nations when it comes to connectivity still needs to compete with the likes of Singapore and Dubai. Major shipping lines call over at the Port of Colombo, primarily to transship the volumes of containers to the Indian Sub-Continent (ISC). India, Bangladesh, and East African countries account for approximately 70 percent of the port’s volume, according to ADB (2016). The remaining 30 percent is local traffic, driven by garment, tea, and rubber exports, and consumer products, and industrial and agricultural equipment imports. As Sri Lanka gets most of its business from India, overreliance on Indian transshipment will harm Sri Lanka if India develops its harbors. Currently, the Indian government, through its Sagarmala initiative, is building six new major ports, including Colachel at the southern tip of
Tamilnadu state and Vizhinijam, a short distance north in the state of Kerala, in what appears to be an effort to reduce reliance on Colombo (Sagarmala, n.d.). Indian ports plan to offer Mega container terminal points and specialized facilities to take charge of larger vessels and this will potentially obtain a significant portion from the transshipment handling market of Western India, Pakistan and in Gulf region, this might be a commercial threat to Sri Lanka’s transshipment activities.

Besides global shipping lines tend to prefer working with global terminal operators as they show varying degrees of involvement in the main cargo handling markets around the world and possess some competencies that would bring advantages in the areas of market power, marketing skills, technological expertise, and access to cheaper sources of finance. Likewise, global terminal operators often have central purchasing departments at their headquarters involved in making large contracts to servicing the world’s major commercial gateways. Sri Lanka is not a mega ship owner and lacks the global scale or capital to develop that level of shipping activity. In this context, to become a hub Sri Lanka must position itself as a major global industry player to provide maritime services to Sri Lanka and to the region beyond.

The volume of base cargo could be increased by expanding Sri Lanka’s services in the form of value addition through Sri Lanka by import, add value and then export to other countries. It could be offered by way of developing logistics capabilities to provide the most modern warehousing infrastructure facilities for temporary storage and deliver through "Just-in-time" supply chain management systems to large manufacturing companies in the neighboring Indian Sub-Continent countries. Sri Lanka can attract powerhouses in our region India and China to use Sri Lanka as an exporting center as well, allowing them substantial cost savings in terms of logistics as well as shorter delivery times.

**BRI Cooperation in HRD**

China, after nearly 40-year of reform and opening-up, has accumulated rich experience in industrialization and modernization. The Chinese capital, technology, market, enterprises, talents, rich experience, know-how will have a great chance to benefit if other countries work together for a shared vision. Gu (2015) states that China emphasizes that aid should be used to help recipient countries build up their self-development capacity. Chinese President Xi Jinping (2017), in his keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing, stated that “Mutual learning - The ancient silk routes were not for trade only, they boosted flow of knowledge as well. Through these routes, Chinese silk, porcelain, lacquer work, and ironware were shipped to the West, while pepper, flax, spices, grape, and pomegranate entered China. Through these routes, Buddhism, Islam, and Arab astronomy, calendar and medicine found their way to China, while China’s four great inventions and silkworm breeding spread to other parts of the world. More importantly, the exchange of goods and know-how spurred
new ideas. For example, Buddhism originated in India, blossomed in China, and was enriched in Southeast Asia. Confucianism, which was born in China, gained appreciation from European thinkers such as Leibniz and Voltaire. Herein lies the appeal of mutual learning”.

In 2015, the National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, with State Council authorization (2015) jointly issued the Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, outlining the background, principles, framework, priorities, mechanisms, actions taken by the Chinese government and the country’s regional opening progress. The planning on education exchange in the document is as follows:

- Expanding the scale of student exchange and promoting education cooperation; providing 10,000 government scholarships to countries along the Belt and Road every year.
- Intensifying personnel exchange and cooperation among countries along the Belt and Road.
- Integrating resources already in place to foster cooperation on youth employment, entrepreneurship training, vocational skills development, social security management, public administration and management, and other relevant areas among countries along the Belt and Road.

According to KPMG (2018), BRI markets at the early stage of industrialisation and will have limited pools of skilled or experienced unskilled labour that can be relied upon to support BRI activities. Therefore, companies should ensure that they are prepared enough to respond and adapt to new opportunities along the Belt and Road. This includes ensuring the right capabilities and organizational structures are in place and managing that transition. UNDP (2017) stated that the BRI can generate opportunities for inclusive growth and profoundly improve participating countries’ HRD if investments are well channelled. In terms of HRD, people-to-people bonds in the BRI may be best promoted through the supply of specific skills as most of the BRI participating countries are developing countries with incomplete education systems. BRI counties need capital, technology, specialist skills, especially engineering expertise and experience in undertaking projects.

According to the World Bank report (2018), FDI brings potential benefits to the host country through a variety of channels including linkages with the local private sector. Linkages between foreign firms and local suppliers enable knowledge and technology transfer, including know-how and practices that allow domestic suppliers to upgrade the quality and efficiency of their production. Foreign investment brings a wide range of knowledge, technical know-how, managerial and organizational skills, and access to foreign markets with the potential to bring positive spillovers for the host economy (World Bank, 2018). Spillover effects are indirect effects of inward FDI which brings unintended transmission of knowledge and skills from the FDI enterprise to domestic enterprises via demonstration effects and/or worker mobility.
Therefore, the movement of personnel is widely recognised as a mechanism for distributing tacit knowledge and skills across space and time (Cooper, 2001). As personnel is knowledge carriers (Grant 1996), when they move, they bring their new knowledge that the organisation previously did not have. An organisational knowledge base contains both organisational and personal knowledge which can be used by the organisation as resources to generate competitive advantage. Therefore, when Chinese companies establish joint ventures with local companies for investment and technology transfer, then local companies can make use of their internationally recognized technical and management knowledge. This is the same to the maritime logistics sector as well. China is well-equipped in providing the necessary maritime logistics skills and experiences; therefore, the participating countries should use this opportunity to improve their human resources development.

Methods

The data collection method relies on desktop research which entails a thorough examination of relevant information online from previous studies and documents collected from relevant published sources since BRI launched in 2013 such as World Bank and ADB, publications in relation to the maritime logistics sector and HRD, and other literature about China’s BRI. This includes reports, articles, policies related to the BRI as well as statistical data from Sri Lankan and Chinese government departments. From this search, the authors found related articles that discuss the study on BRI and HRD in all domain areas. This can be done by using the selected database to extract the relevant research articles or reports by searching the title and abstracts with a predetermined search term. From the data selected, the coding paradigm was applied to build the answers to each question.

Findings and Discussion

The sections below present the answers for the research questions.

Demand for Skills in the Sri Lanka Logistics Sector

A country's economy can become more productive with help of high-quality human resources. Human resources are the fundamental source of economic growth. It is a source of both increased productivity and technological advancement. According to Westphalen (1999), human resources is defined as: “the knowledge, skills, competencies and other attributes embodied in individuals or groups of individuals acquired during their life and used to produce goods, services or ideas in market circumstances”. Given the fast-paced growth the global economy is witnessing, experts across the world have stressed that investing in education alone is insufficient and it is essential
to emphasize skills and talent development if any nation is to thrive and sustain itself in the ever-evolving world.

The change in economic growth and structure has increased the demand for Sri Lankan labour as well, and the skills gap also has emerged in the changing Sri Lankan labour market (ADB, 2017). Therefore, Sri Lanka needs to invest in human resources development especially in the maritime logistics sector which is vital for a country’s economic growth and maintaining competitiveness to prepare itself to have a workforce that is capable to support Sri Lanka to become a logistics centre in the Indian Ocean.

According to a recent study, global demand for skilled logisticians is likely to continue to grow rapidly as the level of logistical activity rises and the technical sophistication of the function increases (World Bank, 2017). Further, this study shows that the growth of other sectors will also depend indirectly on the ability of logistics to cope with expanding freight and trade volumes. On the operational, supervisory, and managerial levels, logistical activities are labor-intensive (World Bank, 2017). This makes the logistics performance of companies and countries highly dependent on the quantity and quality of the workforce (Jhawar et al., 2014). Logistics will only be able to do this if it is adequately staffed with skilled employees. Most logistics-related activity is now outsourced to the Third-Party Logistics (3PL) sector. The large 3PL companies with multi-national coverage need to “customize” their workforce to the logistical characteristics of the countries in which they operate, reflecting the freight modal split, the industry and product mix, the level of technology, the structure of the logistics market, and cultural attributes.

In 2017, The World Bank study of Logistics Competencies, Skills, and Training, a global overview “Both the Logistics Performance Index (LPI) survey and the survey carried out for this study show a general perception across the logistics sector that qualified logistics-related labour is in short supply on all occupational levels in both developed and developing countries. Shortages range from a lack of truck drivers to problems in filling senior supply chain management positions. The World Bank (2017) studies in countries such as China, India, the United States, the United Kingdom, Vietnam, and the Republic of Korea have reported that businesses are having difficulty recruiting staff with the required skills in logistics/supply chain management. Respondents in developing countries point to the supervisory level for the most severe perceived skills shortage. In developed countries, skills shortages were perceived at all levels, but at a much lower level. This suggests that this problem is likely to remain the same or worsen over the next five years, therefore, logistics workers need to possess a wide range of skills (Derwik et al., 2016)

As port equipment and operations have also adapted to and incorporated more advanced processes, the sector’s ability to place competent, well-trained staff familiar with the technology has not kept pace (Flint, 2013). Sophisticated operating systems demand that in-house teams possess a wider range of knowledge, however, there are few well-trained executives in the logistics center and a lack of qualified staff at the operational level, (McKinnon et al.,
And not only do logistics employers find it tough to recruit good candidates for positions, but many existing employees are not sufficiently qualified as well, this skills shortage is likely to worsen in the absence of new initiatives. The World Bank (2017) report said that to curb the shortage “there needs to be a substantial increase in the amount of time and resources devoted to logistics training at all levels.” In addition, skilled logistics workers in developed countries should share their skills and knowledge with those in developing countries, it said.

In order for the Sri Lankan industry to evolve beyond this, it is necessary to see the development of broader services in shipping and logistics to truly become a maritime hub. However, Sri Lanka was ranked 92nd out of 167 countries in the World Bank’s 2018 aggregated Logistics Performance Indicator (LPI) combines the four most recent LPI editions. Scores of the six components across 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018 LPI surveys were used to generate a “big picture” to better indicate countries’ logistics performance. Sri Lanka scored 2.64 on logistics competence (competence and quality of logistics services, e.g., transport operations and customs brokers), compared to India’s 3.18, UAE’s 3.83, Hong Kong’s 3.94, and Singapore’s 4.08.

According to Edirisinghe (2013), the firms engaged in logistics activities in Sri Lanka have failed to utilize modern systems and infrastructure facilities adequately and effectively. Improving logistics performance has become an important development policy objective in recent years because logistics have a major impact on the economic activity of Sri Lanka. But unfortunately, the Sri Lankan education system does not cater to the rising needs of the logistics industry and there is limited education available for areas such as supply chain, logistics, and international trade at vocational and tertiary institutes (MoDSIT & EDB, 2018).

The Benefits of BRI in HRD

McKinsey research shows that Chinese firms engage in substantive technology transfer in Africa. Likewise, BRI is bringing the Asian country's infrastructure capital and know-how to developing countries involved in its expansion (Xuequan, 2018). According to Sun et al. (2017), nearly half of Chinese firms in Africa have introduced a new product or service to the local market, and more than one-third have introduced a new technology. For example, a Kenya-based mobile telecommunications operator Safaricom’s mobile payment initiative M-Pesa provides cellphone-based banking services to tens of millions of people in East Africa and beyond. It is recognized as a world-leading African innovation that has used technology to leapfrog traditional financial services models. Safaricom it is relying on Chinese technology specifically the Mobile Money platform developed by China-based Huawei (Sun et al., 2017).

As part of BRI Chinese port operators are also involving in several ports in the Asia–Europe maritime corridor. The Chinese-operated terminals around the Indian Ocean were built or improved by Chinese construction companies such
as COSCO, Shanghai International Port Group, China Shipping Group, Hutchison Port Holdings, China Overseas Port Holdings, China Merchants Holdings (International) Company (Putten & Meijnders, 2015). Furthermore, China also introducing a port-alliances strategy between China’s seaports and other country's port. For example, ten of China’s seaports such as Dalian, Shanghai, Ningbo, Qinzhou, Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Shezhen, Hainan, and Taicang involved port-alliance with six main seaports from Malaysia which include Port Klang, Malacca, Penang, Johor, Kuantan, and Bintulu (Jeevan et al., 2016). This partnership and seaport-alliances with China will develop the human capacity building, execute technology transfer, improving manpower training (Jeevan et al., 2016).

A McKinsey report involving a study of 1,000 Chinese firms in eight African countries stated that the Chinese firms of all sizes and sectors are bringing capital investment, management know-how, and entrepreneurial energy to every corner of the continent and in so doing, they are helping to accelerate the progress of Africa (Sun et al., 2017). Further, this report found that at the more than 1,000 companies, 89 percent of employees were African, adding up to more than 300,000 jobs for African workers and almost two-thirds of the firms provided some form of skills training to their employees.

DFID-ESRC Growth Research Programme in Madagascar also revealed that Hunan Agri (an agricultural firm) had set up an agro-technology demonstration centre to teach local farmers how to produce a new variety of hybrid rice (Calabrese, 2018). Further, the same research revealed that another Chinese company, Tianli Agri, has set up 15 training centres run by Chinese technicians to teach cotton planting and farming techniques to locals in Madagascar. Likewise in Malawi, the China-Africa Cotton Company manages an agricultural technology demonstration centre tasked with showing local farmers how to improve the productivity of their crops, for example through improved field management (Calabrese, 2018). Further in Ethiopia, one of the world-leading women’s shoemakers Huajian Group (Huajian) which opened a factory in Ethiopia in 2011, sends 100 Ethiopian workers every year to China for a 6-month management training (UNDP China, China Development Bank & the School of Economics, University, 2017). China’s Huawei also contributes to training and skills development in Nigeria’s telecom sector via multiple routes: internal employee training activities; training for clients and partners; and training programs in partnership with the Nigerian government (Agbebi, 2019).

A diversified Chinese SOE called AVIC has set up technical and vocational training programs in six African countries to develop the skills needed not only for its own subsidiaries but also for other Chinese companies (Sun et al., 2017). In Gabon, for example, AVIC has set up training programs focused on machinery, electronics, aeronautical maintenance, and other skills for the country’s petroleum and timber industries. According to a McKinsey report, the company also helped launch the Africa Tech Challenge, a competition aimed at building technical skills such as machining and mobile app development. Initially focused on Kenya, the contest now also covers Ghana,
Uganda, and Zambia (Sun et al., 2017). The winners receive cash rewards and an offer for full-time employment with AVIC. Some companies include training and study in China as part of their workforce skills development.

In Kenya, some workers have gained skills at the technical and managerial level via on-the-job training in Chinese firms and managed to leverage those skills to start their own business (Calabrese, 2018). According to Nyantakyi et al. (2019), in Ghana, Chinese and other foreign enterprises contribute positively to local skills development through the provision of both short-term general training and long-term specific training to locally hired workers than local enterprises. And the likelihood of receiving training, especially short-term general training, is higher for local employees working in Chinese enterprises than their peers working in indigenous and other foreign enterprises. If we take Eastern Industrial Zone (EIZ) in Ethiopia as a case study, Chinese companies recruit many more Ethiopians than Chinese expatriates, with a workforce localization rate between 80 and 99 percent, and sixty-one percent of surveyed workers reported having received employer-sponsored training (Fei, 2018).

Conclusion and Implications

Sri Lanka has a distinct locational advantage, which could support Sri Lanka to develop as a key maritime logistics centre in the Indian Ocean. However, the global logistics industry is evolving rapidly, therefore, the Sri Lankan workforce in the logistics sector needs to be able to adapt and have the right skills and training to compete. However, this study indicates that Sri Lanka lacks efficient logistics services and qualified professionals in the logistics field and the education system also does not cater to the rising needs. Though there are no studies done in the maritime logistics sector to identify the exact skills gaps in Sri Lanka’s maritime logistics sector.

Further findings of this study also show that BRI supports bringing new technology and knowledge to the host countries and facilitate HRD. As China has accumulated useful expertise and experience in the maritime logistics sector, China can collaborate with Sri Lanka in HRD. Yet, no studies show the benefits and implications of HRD in Sri Lanka’s maritime logistics sector.

In looking over the results and the questions raised in this study, the authors recommend future work in this area. Hence, we recommend that:

- What are the skills gaps in Sri Lanka’s maritime logistics sector?
- What are the implications of China’s BRI in HRD in the maritime logistics sector?
- What policy level changes are needed to enhance the benefits of BRI in HRD in the maritime logistics sector?
References


