

ABSTRACT

The future endeavours in military in different scenario demands technically proficient, intelligent educated and well balance commanders with managerial qualities. The professionalism of the army to a greater extent depends on the professionalism of the commanders specially the officer force. In this context development of officer cadre is a deep concerned requirement. A personnel development system with sound training and development and higher education, will produce and officer with high calibre to meet future challenges.

In Sri Lanka Army, avenue for officers' personnel development is limited to develop the officers to fullest potential with required knowledge and professional standard. In this background this exploratory research, carried out to investigate the existing personnel development system for middle grade officers in the Army. Many researches have been conducted generally focusing middle grade officers' career development and career planning issues. This research particularly focuses on middle grade officers training and development issues.

Having stated the problem, "*Does personnel development system prevalent in the Sri Lanka Army give enough opportunity to develop the middle grade officers?*" the primary objective of the research is to identify the weaknesses of existing personnel development system for middle grade officers. Provisions of recommendation to remedy the shortcomings are the secondary objective.

For the convenience of the research study the sample was drawn from the total population 2233 numbers of middle grade officers. The stratified sample method was used to select the sample of middle grade officers from the regiments of army assigned for various roles and tasks, mainly designated as infantry, support and service regiments. Survey was carried out using self developed questionnaire to gather data. The sample size is ninety eight middle grade officers. In addition to the questionnaire survey, fifteen officers were interviewed to reinforce with the opinions. The secondary data were gathered from available publications, strength reports and annual reports published by army headquarters. Discussions with foreign officers helped to familiarize with personnel development strategies in foreign armies. The graphical presentations and various types of charts used to present the data. Comparing and contrasting the data obtained from questionnaire, whilst complementing them with the data gathered from the interviews, data analysis was carried out.

Through the literature review training and development related theories, practices and methods identified and its attributes to military officers' personnel development were reviewed. After analyzing the data many shortcomings of middle grade officers' personnel development such as doctrinal limitations, non availability of courses, lack of participation, absence of knowledge assessment system and evaluation system were identified.

In the light of findings this research examines the ways and needs to improve upon existing personnel development system of middle grade officers. On considering the needs of improvement under personal need, organizational need, training and development need, administrative need and welfare need recommendation are furnished with supported development plan and programme models.

As far as middle grade officers' personnel development is concerned, identification of training and development needs of middle grade officers and introduction of personnel development plan, training and development programmes and doctrinal development are identified as the prime requirements. Introduction of new course curriculum keeping in view the war time and peace time employment supported with proper training evaluation systems will help for professional development of the middle grade officers. Introduction of new avenues for academic development opportunities with proper mentoring and guiding system will definitely make a positive impact towards personnel development of the middle grade officers.