

## ABSTRACT

Navy is an organized maritime military force of a nation. Its role is renowned for its paramount and momentous role as “The First Line of Defence”. Naval forces play a major role in maintaining territorial integrity and sovereignty of a country. Sri Lanka Navy is well known as one of the best navies in the world today.

Therefore it is the duty and the responsibility of every naval personnel to generate a productive output to enhance effectiveness as well as operational efficiency to accomplish the mission of the Sri Lanka Navy. To achieve the end result successfully, the man behind the naval machines plays a crucial role.

However, the Navy’s goals, objectives and operations are severely hampered by the persistent desertion. The elevated rate of desertion has been far reaching allegations on Sri Lanka Navy. Statistics are directed alarming increase in desertion in Sri Lanka Navy which is posited as an outcome of growing frustration and exasperating to control this problem of Sailors who are absent without getting leave once or few times in their Naval career.

In the same time it is necessary for paying serious attention by the SL naval authorities to improve the deficient early as possible by addressing the following areas such as retirement, service no longer suitable on disciplinary and medical grounds. It is revealed that the absenteeism has a greater significance over the others. It is one of the most controllable and reclaimable issues, whereas other issues are beyond the control of the organization.

If not for remarkable and remedial measures taken on time, the situation may have deteriorated. In 2008, the Navy marked nearly 7400 cases of recruited sailor were absent, the numerals nearly doubled than that of a decade aforementioned. When they leave early not only has the military lost a valuable asset, but it also has to acquire and train a replacement. As an academic requirement, I selected this topic, not as a student merely, but as a commissioned officer in the Sri Lanka Navy and with the ardent desire of carrying out a research on the matter purely because of the burden faced by the Navy at present.

As to initiate the research “Questionnaire and interviews” were conducted. Two questionnaires were prepared; absentee survey questionnaire and supervisor survey questionnaire. 200 numbers of absent junior rates were selected as the essential sample from Colombo and Trincomalee area which was considered appropriate as the non-probability quota sampling. A sample of 75 number of Senior Sailors were completed the questionnaire in which they provided information about a specific case of absenteeism with which they were familiar, as well as general opinions regarding AWOL and desertion. 10 detainees were interviewed with special permission.

Further attempt is been made to collect data from the Director Naval Personnel and Director Naval Training, Director Naval Legal and Director Naval Administrative departments of the Sri Lanka Navy and from selected printed media.

Collected data has been analyzed and research findings are amassed. Those findings are hypothetically tested with the help of Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Needs Theory, Douglas McGregor’s Theories of X and Y, and the Fredrick Herzberg’s Two Factor Theory as per the conceptual framework and conclusions are drawn.

Deficiencies were found when comparing conceptual model of zero absenteeism against research finding model in terms of needs, could result no job satisfaction or dissatisfaction of job, resulting high in absenteeism. Smoldering issues like uniform and accommodation are some of the basic lapses. Overburdening security duties in Seamen and patrolman branches are remarkably signified in terms of absenteeism and allowing more family contact may have averted them from taking this step. Undue handling of trainees by unqualified instructors was amongst the findings and no proper mechanism to aware the carrier development was surfaced. It is found that most absentees were junior sailors and most of them AWOL during their basic training or on the job training (OJT) period.

To cater the above state of affairs it is recommended to enhance the quality of basic needs in accommodation while taking measurement to ease up overburdened security duties by forming special security pool from volunteer branch and strengthen the divisional system. Promoting to improve the standard of HRM especially in training bases after forming separate instructor branch would be a prompt remedy. Selecting of

physically and mentally sound people who are willing to fulfill the mission of the Navy with better screening whilst increasing the punishment for AWOL may have helped prevent the absenteeism. Allowing more family contact has been significant in most of findings.

Finally it is strongly believed to be retrievable to a great extent, if the Navy is willing to take aforesaid remedies as policy implications that the present absenteeism can be reduced by 10% or more with very short time.