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ABSTRACT

The Sri Lanka Army's Special Forces is its best force in the Sri Lanka Army and is the Army Commander's reserve. As the country's best military force and the reserve force of the Commander of the Sri Lanka Army only the best military personnel serve in the Special Forces. In the past, the Sri Lanka Army has ensured that only the very best serve in the Special Forces through a weeding out process based on the evaluation of Special Forces Officers performance in combat missions. However, the absence of combat missions after May, 2009 has resulted in the lack of an effective mechanism for the weeding out process in the Special Forces. This in turn has limited the ability of the Special Forces to ensure it has the services of the very best officers in the army, and also compromises its position as the best force in the Sri Lanka Army. The main aim of this study was to develop an evaluation criteria which ensures that only the very best officers serve in the Special Forces, whilst the objectives of this study was to explore evaluation criteria used for the appraisal of officers in the Sri Lanka Army Special Forces up to 2009, to explore evaluation criteria used in this regard after 2009, to identify gaps in the current evaluation criteria, and to develop new evaluation criteria for the appraisal of officers in Sri Lanka Army Special Forces. In order to identify key evaluation criteria used up to 2009 and after 2009, detailed interviews were conducted with senior officers in the Special Forces, and a questionnaire survey was conducted with officers in the Special Forces. Findings from data analysis revealed a number of gaps in the current evaluation criteria such as the failure to evaluate the performance of Special Forces officers in secondary missions, no specific weightage given to the different components in the evaluation criteria, etc. In order to address these gaps and establish a strategically important elite force a new appraisal system is introduced in this study. This new appraisal system evaluates Special Forces officers on six key performance criteria, annual confidential report, personal competence and social competence evaluation tests, successful completion of missions, disciplinary record, and awards and commendations received by officer appraised. Further, each performance criteria in this appraisal system is given a specific weightage based on its importance for the development of a strategically important elite force.