

Abstract

Performance appraisal is one of the key elements in the human resource management process in any organization. Performance appraisal is necessary for the organization for a number of important administrative, functional and developmental purposes. Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF), a military organization though, is equally subject to this phenomenon. However, there is an obvious resentment among the Officers in the SLAF regarding the existing policy on this subject. Hence, this study provides an analysis of the present performance assessment system for Officers in the SLAF. The study is based on three main hypotheses: (1) The higher the belief regarding the outcomes of the performance assessment system, the higher the accuracy of the information provided by the appraiser in the assessment form. (2) The higher the information available for the appraisees regarding the performance assessment system, the lower the dissatisfaction regarding the outcomes of the system. (3) The higher the amount of feedback to the appraisee, the better the career planning and quicker the career progression.

The research was conducted along the lines of both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis of data. Relevant primary and secondary data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, policy documents and other literature on the subject with the focus to answer the research question – Has the SLAF failed to achieve optimum utilization of its human resources because of the negative impact of the present performance assessment system on Officers' career planning and progression?

The answers to the research question with the support of the other subjective and objective evidence gathered from credible sources were able to test and prove the hypothesis. This research proves that, (1) The higher the belief regarding the outcomes of the performance assessment system, the higher the accuracy of the information provided by the appraiser in the assessment form. (2) The higher the information available for the appraisees regarding the performance assessment system, the lower the dissatisfaction regarding the outcomes of the system.

The study concludes that the information provided in the performance assessment forms are limited in accuracy. This in turn will lead to incorrect decisions at the headquarters level which will add to the dissatisfaction of the appraisees. There is a low level of satisfaction evident by the findings. This may be due to other reasons, such as not having sufficient feedback and poor utilization of the information. Since satisfaction with the outcomes plays a major role in determining the success of the system, the factors that contribute to the dissatisfaction needs to be identified and rectified.

The findings and recommendations of this study will have a particular appeal to Officers of all levels in the Air Force, especially to those who are at policy making level. This research will also provide impetus for further research in the area of Career Development of Officers in the SLAF.