

ABSTRACT

Infantry battalion is a self-contained unit which consists of its own administrative, logistic and combat support elements to ensure its ability to conduct sustained military operations in different tactical situations. Infantry is the only arm which is designed to fight, whereas all other arms are responsible for providing combat support, administration or logistic backup for infantry. In Sri Lanka Army, there has been a serious issue on combat effectiveness of infantry battalions due to shortage of manpower. At a glance, the issue looks like a simple manpower problem. When thoroughly analyzed, the issue has been an outcome of many other related issues which have not been addressed for a long period. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to analyze the present manpower shortage of infantry battalions in Sri Lanka Army and to propose remedial solutions to improve the combat effectiveness. In the literature review, the concept of combat effectiveness and related concepts are discussed to establish the conceptual understanding on the subject. Sri Lanka's military doctrine has been constantly influenced by British military doctrine starting from colonial era up to date; hence British military doctrine has been in the center of focus in the literature review. Organizational structures of military units are designed to ensure higher-level of combat effectiveness. Therefore, manpower is the key factor among many other factors in achieving combat effectiveness. Mixed methodology consists of qualitative as well as quantitative methods have been used to analyze the data in the research. However, the research is predominantly qualitative, while primary data collected through a questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively. The findings of the research highlight many issues which are well hidden in the system. Mismanagement and wrong employment of infantry force in Sri Lanka Army are well reflected in findings. Findings disclose number of wrong policies and practices including wrong distribution of infantry battalions in to brigades and divisions. The recommendations chapter suggests many recommendations in order to enhance the combat effectiveness in infantry battalions. The recommendations also suggest a new battalion organizational structure for infantry battalions in Sri Lanka Army based on past combat experiences, doctrinal demands and universal trends of modern armies. Some of suggestions can be implemented within infantry battalions, while some suggestions are to be implemented at brigade, divisions and Army level. The conclusion provides an overview of the entire study and highlights the importance of implementing measures to restructure infantry battalions in Sri Lanka Army.