

RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

MIHINTALE

**THE HIGH RATE OF DESERTION IN THE ARMED FORCES
AND
ITS IMPACT ON THE SIR LANKAN SOCIETY**

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Abstract

The high rate of desertion in the Sri Lanka Army has far reaching implications on Sri Lankan Society. Psychological, Sociological, Economical, Cultural and Political impacts are few to be named. Of these implications, the psychological impact is of significant importance. The phenomenon of desertion is viewed by society, most often, with fear, reluctance and rejection. This is because more desertion in the Army means possibility of more crimes in the society. Statistics indicate an alarming increase in crimes perpetrated by army deserters. Often Deserters have been found to be involved in various criminal activities and underworld debauchery.

It is the general belief that a loyal and patriotic civilian youth becomes a soldier. He joins the services in order to serve the motherland. Why then, does this very same youth become a deserter and a criminal in relatively short span of time. There is no doubt a paradoxical situation and is therefore a matter that has to be given a very logical sequenced and well directed thought.

Desertion is a reaction which is seen in an individual with low motivation. There are so many factors affecting motivation. Personnel reasons, management failures, leadership weakness, social problems and economic factors are few factors which could affect motivation. A lack of motivation causes a drop in morale. This in turn creates a lapse in standard of discipline that finally causes desertion.

Elements that have been identified as major factors that can control this situation are leadership, management and training. Management failures, weakness in leadership, economical chaos, social problems and personal upheavals form parts of the complex network that causes desertion. In spite of ongoing peace process the rate of desertion in the Sri Lanka Army is unacceptable to any of the armies around the world. Therefore it needs the serious attention of the government authorities, army authorities and society alike. If no remedial measures, some of which are suggested in this research are taken, the situation is bound to deteriorate further and may go beyond the level where never to regain the accepted levels.

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