

A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF ARMY DESERTERS (CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES) IN SRI LANKA

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Recruitment and desertion are frequent circumstances in any organization of army from its inception even in war or peace; with modern techniques or past weapons; on desert or snow; and past or present. For instance to American civil war, the American- Mexico war, World War 11 and the Afghan civil war can be pointed out.

The inauguration of Sri Lankan army dates back to 1947, as a formal body to protect the motherland, Sri Lanka, from external threats and to maintain territorial integrity. Therefore it was designed with special rules and regulations as other armies in the world. Its procedures are tough and tight to the workers and they help them achieve targets successfully. However desertion has become a common practice from the past even during the war or peace.

Desertion became critical with the heat of the war against LTTE. The number of deserters was very high due to the drastic situation which occurred in northern and eastern parts of the country. The war situation was ended in May 2009 and Sri Lankan army focused on developmental projects carried out island-wide, especially the Uthuru Wasanthaya and Urban development projects. Although the toughness was consoled, the matter of desertion continues even after the cease of war. According to the statistics of Personal Record Unit, 2614 soldiers have deserted the army during the following six months of war and figures were 2148 in 2010 and 1697 in 2011.

Therefore this research was conducted to find out Sociological impact of Army deserters, analyse the courses and consequences for deserting the Army after ethnic crises and to make suggestions to reduce the high rate of desertion in Sri Lanka Army based on the facts collected through interviewing deserters, deserter's families, Officer In Charges of Police, returnees, deserted prisoners and ordinary citizens and questioning deserters and reputed respectable ordinaries along with the newspaper articles, findings from books, journals and military records.

The aggregate effect on the whole society is quite considerable. They are increase of social stress, increase of social problems, increase of unemployment and under-employment. Based on the information from newspaper articles, police reports and electronic media reports, the deserters make criminal commitments at the most with the advantage of weapon training and other escaping methods.

Based on the conclusions which are obvious from this research, suggestions could be presented which will support to minimize desertions, to rehabilitate army deserters and for the mitigation of ill effects on social institutes.