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MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDER OF THE ARMY

It is with great pride that I extend my warmest congratulations on the launch of the 7th consecutive edition of the SLMA Journal. The publication coincides with the landmark occasion of the 100th Commissioning Ceremony of the Sri Lanka Military Academy and stands as a shining testament to the SLMA's enduring legacy of excellence and dedicated service in moulding future military leaders not only in Sri Lanka but also a number of foreign armies.

In an era shaped by technological innovations, complex security challenges and the relentless flow of information, research in defence and security has emerged indispensable. The SLMA Journal complements this mission, operating as a beacon of knowledge and reflection, featuring thought-provoking research papers and discussions on national security, military history, international relations, human resource management and sociology. These scholarly pursuits pave the way for fresh perspectives, critical thinking, informed dialogue and meaningful outcomes for the betterment of the organisation.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the Commandant and the dedicated staff of the Sri Lanka Military Academy for facilitating this enduring mission to educate and inspire professional excellence. I likewise acknowledge the authors, reviewers and the editorial board of the SLMA Journal for their valuable contributions to this publication.

LASANTHA RODRIGO RSP ctf-ndu psc IG
Lieutenant General
Commander of the Army



MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE SRI LANKA MILITARY ACADEMY

It is with utmost pride and pleasure that I convey my warmest congratulations on the release of the 7th volume of the **SLMA Journal**, which gracefully coincides with the jubilant 100th Commissioning Ceremony of the Sri Lanka Military Academy. Reaching this milestone marks not only a celebration of producing exemplary military leaders to the nation, but also a reflection of our enduring commitment to academic and professional excellence of the Sri Lanka Army. In this path, the **SLMA Journal** stands as a beacon of knowledge integrating the military and academic spheres where scholars, officers, and intellectuals are facilitated to exchange their ideas, share research, and inspire innovations.

I strongly perceive that in the modern era, the Sri Lanka Army has adopted a forward-thinking approach and dearly embraced periodic transformation to push its boundaries beyond traditional frameworks. Today, it firmly inclines with the keen focus on shaping a future-ready force, prioritising the professional growth and advancement of its members. Fathoming this evolution, the Army has been gradually adopting innovative methods and nurturing a culture of continuous learning and improvement. In this expedition, military research and scholarly publications always emerge as guiding lights that illuminate the path to confront the future challenges and obstacles.

In today's vibrant academic landscape, research expands across diverse fields and inspires exploration of new knowledge, theories, and directions. This interdisciplinary approach plays a dynamic role in identifying innovative avenues for future developments. Also, research works stand as a powerful measure of intellectual vitality among higher educational institutions, continually aiding to elevate their academic profoundness and standards. Acknowledging this perfection, the **SLMA Journal** gathers together all scholarly work in a broad spectrum of military and related discipline. This endeavour shows the academic strength and scholarly spirit of our military personnel and enhancement of intellectual collaboration with national universities and higher educational institutions. Hence, the **SLMA Journal** serves as a catalyst for expanding the intellectual horizons of officers, inspiring them to regularly engage with analytical inquiry, research, and innovation. Through which, the Journal immensely contributes to foster a culture of professionalism.

In conclusion, I must extend my heartiest gratitude to the Editorial Board for their steadfast dedication and teamwork in bringing the 2025 edition of the **SLMA Journal** to life, proudly coinciding with the historic 100th Commissioning Ceremony of the Sri Lanka Military Academy. In the Board's tireless coordination, military and civilian authors were able to get their highest scholarly research papers published in the journal. Conveying my best wishes to all these scholars and supporters, I look forward to their collaboration and shared dedication in the years ahead, as together we navigate the **SLMA Journal** toward even greater heights of academic and professional distinction.

MJRS MEDAGODA RSP USP ndc psc IG
Major General
Commandant - SLMA

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Volume 7

2025 December

INCLUSION

1. **Study on Organised Crimes by Ex-Military Cadres in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka**
Maj D V A Danushka pp 1-24
2. **Empowering Women Entrepreneurs: Key Success Drivers in Sri Lanka's SME Landscape**
Ms Shashikala Dissanayake, Mrs Oshadhie Silva, Snr Prof Sampath Amaratunge pp 25-42
3. **Determinant of Early Retirement Among Sri Lanka Navy Officers and Way Forward**
Commander (E) D D P Chamara pp 43-62
4. **Emerging Risks of Virtual Currencies in Developing Economies and their Implications for National Security**
Maj Gen (Dr) W W H R R V M N D K B Niyangoda (Retd) pp 63-77
5. **Psychometric Testing in Military Recruitment: Evolution, Effectiveness, and Development of the Resilience Inventory for Military (RIM)**
Dr Kanthi Hettigoda pp 78-87
6. **Investigating the Factors Contributing to Increased Absenteeism: Special Reference to Officers in the Sri Lanka Army**
Maj C Y B Senarathna, Dr Tamara Jayasundera pp 88-118
7. **Implications of Youth Unemployment on National Security; A Case Study of Ampara and Batticaloa Districts**
Maj LMRNP Cabraal pp 119-136
8. **Military Capabilities and National Security: With Special Reference to "Aragalaya"**
Maj K D S Silva pp 137-161
9. පැරණි ශ්‍රී ලාංකේය හමුදා ආහාර සැපයුම් ක්‍රියාවලිය
Mr Isuru Herath pp 162-168
10. **A Critical Analysis of Structural and Operational Lessons for Sri Lanka from the United Kingdom's Intelligence Framework**
Mr Kavindu Peiris pp 169-180



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STUDY ON ORGANISED CRIMES BY EX-MILITARY CADRES IN THE SOUTHERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

This research studies the organised crimes by ex-military cadres in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka, a region grappling the most at present. The study emphasises the importance of addressing the link between organised crimes and ex-military cadres for security and stability in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka through research, policymaking and deriving recommendations to prevent such activities by ex-military cadres to safeguard the reputation of the Tri-forces. Using a qualitative research approach, the study employs in-depth interviews with ex-military cadres, community members and law enforcement officials to gather varied perspectives. Thematic analysis of the data reveals several interconnected themes, including the transition from soldiering to crimes, criminal motivation and ethics and morality of ex-military cadres. The findings indicate that many ex-military cadres struggle with reintegration into civilian life after retirement or desertion, often resorting to organised crime as a means of economic survival. Themes of marginalisation and lack of access to legitimate employment opportunities emerge as critical factors contributing to

this cycle of criminality. Additionally, the study highlights how the living standard of military and ex-military cadres seems below the expectation that merits diverging towards potential income sources. Ultimately, this thesis contributes to the analysis of how the nation's security architecture is reshaped by vulnerable groups is becoming more important because organised crime poses a far greater threat than traditional challenges and the national leadership must consider both mitigating its effects and establishing a comprehensive strategy. Pertinent recommendations were derived to prevent ex-military cadres' involvement with organised crimes.

KEYWORDS: *Organised Crimes, Ex-military Cadres, Southern Province of Sri Lanka, Soldiering to Crimes, Criminal Motivation, Ethics and Morality of Ex-military Cadres.*

INTRODUCTION

The Southern Province (SP) of Sri Lanka (SL) has become a hub for criminal activities, posing threats to local safety and

law enforcement. The complex relationship between ex-military cadres and organised crimes complicates the issue highlighting the need for improved law enforcement and threatening more to the local citizens' lives.

Presently, the Sri Lanka Police (SLP) with the Special Task Force (STF) is controlling the situation. In December 2023, SLP and STF commenced 'Operation Justice' to eradicate drugs and the underworld. Though the operation took place, it was reported the progress of increasing the organised crimes in the SP of SL and indicating the situation is going beyond the control of the Police and STF. Further, this research aims to derive pertinent solutions to prevent ex-military cadres' involvement in the underworld activities.

Illegal activities by organised groups are violent, to facilitate money-generating criminal and illegal activities and exploit the dominance in the underworld, organised groups are exerting control and influence. A few such activities are **Drug Trafficking** (The manufacturing, sale and distribution of illicit drugs like cocaine, heroin, ice and cannabis), **Arms Trafficking** (Illegal distribution and trading of explosives, ammunition and other weaponry), **Human Trafficking** (The unlawful trafficking of people for commercial sexual exploitation, forced labour or sexual slavery), **Extortion** (The act of gaining anything by coercion or threats, particularly money), **Money Laundering** (The act of hiding illicit gains to give them the appearance of legitimacy), **Racketeering** (The use of coercion or intimidation to run illicit enterprises or activities), **Counterfeiting** (The creation and dissemination of counterfeit or illegal items, money or documentation) and **Organised Violence** (Violent crimes are committed by criminal groups for a variety of reasons, such as revenge, intimidation or the enforcement of their activities).

The Southern Province of SL is identified as the most affected province from the underworld activities which seriously triggered the law and order of SL. According to Walpola (2023), in a television discussion on 6 September 2023, Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Waruna Jayasundara, the Commandant of the STF, revealed that the Western and Southern Provinces experienced higher crime incidences. Despite all route causes as mentioned by Warakapitiya (2024) in Sunday Times, the involvement of military and ex-military cadres was at a high level for the execution of many of those activities.

Hiring trained soldiers for organised crimes is an effective means which ensures the accomplishment of any desired task. Further, there is no requirement to train them separately since they have been amply trained and experienced without fear. Moreover, military and ex-military cadres possess confident, robust, mission-oriented, mission-command practised, experienced in weapons handling, brave and tactful. Further, the endurance and survivability of military and ex-military cadres during such situations are at a high level to overcome hardships and escape from law enforcement agencies due to their understanding of duty patterns, physical fitness and training.

The present economic status of SL has significantly increased the cost of living of people. Many of the government and other employees have time to spare for other means of money generating whereas soldiers have only seven to ten days of leave per month. At present, there is a tendency for soldiers to be involved in money-generating projects during their leave period. Moreover, taking part in illegal activities is the easiest way to generate money instantly to overcome their economic status within the received leave period.

The Armed Forces of SL has demonstrated its credibility by providing outstanding, selfless service and making significant sacrifices to protect and uphold the nation's sovereignty and peace, with the ultimate goal of guaranteeing national security. Moreover, the involvement of military and ex-military cadres in underworld activities has negatively affected the reputation of the Armed Forces despite the victory which has been gained by eradicating Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) terrorism from the motherland and the world.

Police and the STF are presently encountering the underworld activities. To end drug trafficking, organised crime and other connected activities in SL, an island-wide operation was started in December 2023 and was named 'Operation Justice'. Though the operation took place, the reported number of underworld activities was increasingly high. Moreover, the gun culture of organised crimes in the SP has become a spillover effect to other provinces of SL. Shooters, riders and other related personnel for organised crimes are being hired to the other provinces of SL.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Organised crimes in the SP pose a threat to law and order in SL. Despite law enforcement efforts, the situation worsened and reported the involvement of ex-military cadres at a high level. Further, the unavailability of research and solutions to encounter organised crimes has dragged this situation into insecurity for local citizens as well. Moreover, the involvement of ex-military in the criminal underworld, challenges law and order questioning the credibility of state organisations. The effectiveness of current security measures in maintaining public safety and engagement of ex-military cadres in organised crimes has affected negatively the good reputation of the Tri-forces.

CORE ARGUMENT

The study reveals that the SP of SL faces increased organised crime and the involvement of ex-military cadres in underworld activities is at a high level. The study emphasises the importance of addressing the link between organised crimes and ex-military cadres for security and stability in the SP through research, policymaking and deriving recommendations to prevent such activities by ex-military cadres to safeguard the reputation of the Tri-forces.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To analyse the nature and scope of organised crimes prevalent in the SP of SL.
- To identify the pattern of involvement of ex-military cadres in organised crimes.
- To identify why ex-militants are involved with organised crimes.
- To derive recommendations to prevent involvement of ex-military cadres in organised crimes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organised crimes by militants and ex-militants posed a serious threat to public safety and a difficulty for law enforcement in the SP of SL. In retaliation, on 25 August 2023, the Government launched an operation in conjunction with the SLP and STF covering all provinces of SL (Rupasinghe, 2023). Ekanayake (2017) argued that there is a long history of strife and bloodshed in the SP of SL, dating back to the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna struggle in the South and earlier the long-running civil war between the Government and the LTTE. According to Weerasinghe (2023), barbaric

terrorism has been driven out from SL and global territory, demonstrating the legitimacy and credibility of the Armed Forces. The involvement of ex-military cadres in organised crimes has degraded the reputation of the Armed Forces.

ORGANISED CRIMES

The (United Nations, 2010) defines the 'Organised Crime Convention', transnational organised crime as any serious transnational offence undertaken by three or more people with the aim of material gain. Thus, going by this definition, international drug cartels, arms smuggling groups and maritime piracy networks can be classified as some of the major organised crime networks. The term 'organised crime' is often used to describe "a group of people who act together on a long-term basis to commit crimes for gain" (Levi, 1998). Contemporary transnational or organised crimes take advantage of globalisation, trade liberalisation and exploring new technologies to perpetrate diverse crimes and to move money, goods, services and people instantaneously for purposes of perpetrating violence for political ends.

Organised crimes cover a vast area of illegal activities. Organised crime networks usually flourish and succeed in 'weak' or 'failed' states mostly underdeveloped and developing countries, which are characterised by ineffective government control with poor law and order, weak regulatory framework for controlling business activities and a corrupt judiciary (Srikanth, 2014).

Sri Lanka has become an important trans-shipment hub because of its geo-strategic location in the centre of the Indian Ocean. According to Tamara Kunanayakam (2010), a Sri Lankan diplomat and former Permanent Representative of SL to the United Nations Office, "The unique geographic position of SL

makes it a natural aircraft carrier. Moreover, the island is accessible at every point along its 1,340 km long coastline. This has made SL an obvious target for transnational and organised crimes."

THE PHENOMENON OF ORGANISED CRIME

As Cockayne (2013) cited Lawrence Friedman, strategy is "the art of creating power." An actor's power comes from his relationships and the choices he makes to use them and both must be understood to comprehend the actor's strategy. Most people view war as the ultimate exercise of organised violence in the service of power and as the epitome of strategy. In contrast, organised crime is frequently associated with the pursuit of the economy in devious ways, given that war is fundamentally just politics carried out through many channels. Therefore, it is required to think carefully about what it means to refer to organised criminal groups as strategic players. Moreover, Hoffman (2013) defined 'political organisation' as one that uses the threat and actual use of physical force to maintain the existence and legitimacy of its regulatory system inside a specific region or people, as German sociologist Max Weber stated a century ago. Since insurgent groups are undoubtedly political organisations, they may act strategically. In military strategy, however, it is generally accepted that criminal groups do not fit this description because "their objective is profit, not power" (Allum and Siebert, 2003)

Moreover Gray (2006) argued that organised violence aims to achieve non-political objectives. It's not war, even though it might be a necessary kind of robbery, crime or sport in the area. Current experiences with crime and war point to the necessity are reevaluating this presumption. Similar to lawful enterprises, several illicit groups seem to want to have a lasting impact on the way the government creates and implements regulations within the industries they operate. Once more, regulatory

capture might be the primary means by which criminal organisations increase their revenues, similar to certain legitimate businesses. To ensure that the new rules of the game optimise the market control and criminal rents enjoyed by criminal actors, conflict exit and recovery present a crucial chance to integrate criminal power into a political settlement. Illicit organisations themselves can take control of these illicit markets, as criminologists have long understood. They can then utilise this power in the underworld to impact and mould politics in the upper world.

ORGANISED CRIMES AS A NATIONAL SECURITY THREAT

Groups that involve organised crimes have been defined by McMullin (2009) as a non-ideological group that brings together a great deal of individuals with close ties to use both legal and illicit means for gaining riches and power. Roles in the structure and roles requiring particular talents might be assigned based on the skills. Members take on the role of continuing members when they take action to uphold the organisation's values and goals. It seeks to monopolise specific activities in a given field or field of activity while avoiding competition. Willingness is employed to employ bribery, force to accomplish goals and maintain power. Non-members are welcome to engage as needed, although membership has its limitations.

Conflict literature adopts the 'vulture' that conflict actors are driven by profit rather than politics, despite recent analyses of the greed thesis softening the assumption that organised crime is primarily motivated by profit and profit motivations are a cause of conflict. Nonetheless, the presumption is prevalent when discussing conflict players who rely on drug trafficking, primary production and the arms trade (McMullin, 2009). According to the report published by Sri Lanka Police (2023)

to the Parliament, a comparative study of total serious crimes shows an increase of 14% compared to 31098 crimes reported in 2020 and 35412 crimes reported in 2021. 2022 could see a further increase of 5% to 37152 incidents. By 2022, the total percentage of serious crime reports is 76%.

As derived by Jinadasa (2015), similar findings of other social organisations also pointed to a deficiency in psychosocial practice knowledge, which serves as a reasonable justification for the lack of psychosocial expertise of soldiers. Furthermore, managing armed troops after the war may be more successful because of the scientific understanding of how criminal behaviour impacts the human mind and the close ties to post-war society. Moreover, members of military forces are also more likely to commit crimes due to their extensive training in military strategy and exposure to combat.

Warakapitiya (2024) reported on the recently occurred incident of the gun shootout and the main suspect in the killing of a butcher shop owner at Alapitivala junction of general area Mahabage on 21 February 2024, is a corporal who was serving at Chenkaladi Camp, Batticaloa. Three suspects were involved in the shooting. It is reported that the second suspect, Sadees Kumara, who was arrested in the Hakmana, has been a deserter from the army since 2009. He was later discharged formally. Reports revealed that the main suspect, the army corporal, had left the camp when the military intelligence officers arrived but was arrested after an extensive search in the Ampara area. He was handed over to the STF. The third suspect riding the motorcycle was killed in a shootout with STF who raided the hideout near Suriyawewa Adigama Lake. His name is Gabbalage Nuwan Lakshita (45) and he was a former army corporal.

Jinadasa (2015) evaluate that without personality training or defensive lines during

a war, many troops who experienced great violence and brutality on the battlefield were able to use their talents and defensive skills to accomplish what they wanted after the war. His study conjectures, based on the data analysed, that troops and certain military personnel suffered from pre-existing public and private issues because of their incapacity to adapt to the post-war social transformation.

Warakapitiya (2024) has reported that due to military and ex-military cadres' proficiency with weapon handling mastering and combat training, organised criminal gangs hire military and ex-military cadres and even paramilitary groups as hitmen. According to police, gangs employ a variety of strategies to draw in individuals with a military background. According to the police spokesperson and in charge of the Criminal Investigation Division, gangs have historically employed both fugitives and members of the armed forces. The underworld has always used deserters and members of the armed forces, even though more incidents have recently come to light. "First of all, gangs utilise the financial difficulties endured by deserters by offering them a great deal of money to perform assigned tasks." Gangs use threats to coerce someone into agreeing to murder by revealing their illicit activity to the police or the military. They even make threats to hurt those who are close to them. Many organised crime groups arm their assailants with weapons. Ballistic studies have shown that firearms have been used in several criminal incidents. Only a small number of cases included suspects with military ties using army-issued weapons.

Ranaweera et al. (2021) have given due consideration that controlling the environment for crime prevention and control is one of the most important, yet underutilised and underdeveloped methods of crime prevention. Cities are expanding and developing so rapidly that there is a correlation between the size and

density of urban areas and increased crime and violence. Poor management of the urban environment and poor development of the city have put residents and their property at risk. The distribution and composition of municipalities affect the location of victims and the freedom of criminals.

Moreover, as reported by Warakapitiya (2024), the SL Army media spokesperson, stated that programmes have been initiated to inform soldiers and their Commanding Officers about the consequences of indiscipline. This pertains to the military personnel who were involved in these fatal accidents. Internal investigations are also carried out by the military police. "Depending on how serious the matter is, an army member's immediate commander may take action if they are suspected of committing a crime." He said that a soldier may lose his rank and be dismissed if he commits a serious crime. He stated that the troops' physical health is evaluated annually and that the division's immediate command keeps an eye on any behavioural changes in the members and provides counselling if needed. In 2022, almost 7,000 members of the Army will get counselling. Moreover, the Army spokesperson has emphasised that the SL Army is aware that organised crime groups are attempting to draw in military people by exploiting the current economic climate.

When necessary, natural or artificial methods can be used to make observations. In many areas and open-door buildings and these crimes are everyday occurrences. For these reasons, the community needs to do everything within its power to ensure continuous law enforcement for its protection. For this reason, locals should continue to police their neighbourhood daily. In addition to buildings, natural monitoring also involves community activities. It ought to be conversely, CCTV and other similar devices are part of device-based surveillance (Ranaweera et al., 2021).

To combat criminal threats, Gomes (2012) argued that, democratic states must be able to deploy military action; yet, it is crucial to understand when and how is it permitted. To achieve this, one needs to comprehend how militant armed groups which formerly opposed governments based on their ideologies have evolved to become entities that pursue monetary or personal advantage. These organisations, which are said to support extreme left and right-wing political ideologies, have formed nefarious coalitions that cut over national and regional lines (United States Government Publishing Office, 2003).

This shift jeopardises state security and imperils democratic states' institutional frameworks. Military forces must adjust to this new reality to successfully counter the consolidation of terrorist organisations and criminal gangs. The ideas and philosophies that governed the interstate battlefield in the 19th and 20th centuries, when opposing forces could identify one another and engage in guerrilla warfare in remote locations away from populated regions, were insufficient to handle the threat posed by the criminal terrorists. Instead, to effectively use military forces in these new types of warfare, new theories and approaches must be created (Smith, 2007). In a similar vein, military personnel combating these criminal/terrorist organisations should educate themselves on the laws that are in effect. This right derives from International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law, also referred to as the 'law of war' and the 'law of peace' in classical international law. Figuring out when each procedure poses fresh difficulties for armies that have historically concentrated on International Armed Conflict Law.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopts a qualitative research design, characterised by its emphasis on exploring and understanding the complexities of human behaviour and social phenomena through in-depth analysis. Qualitative research is well suited for examining the complex dynamics of organised crime committed by ex-military cadres in the SP of SL. Additionally, incidents involving ex-military personnel in the SP of SL will be considered from the year 2022 to 2024.

RESEARCH APPROACH

The research approach was chosen to provide qualitative insights with a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The use of qualitative methodology enables in-depth interviews and focus groups with key informants, including ex-military cadres who have been involved with those activities, law enforcement officers and experts such as senior officers from SLP and STF. Thematical analysis is used to analyse qualitative data, will be carried out to identify patterns, themes and links that shed further light on the research questions. By enabling data triangulation, this method enhances the validity and reliability of the study's findings. Qualitative insights will contribute to a deeper understanding of the psychological and socio-cultural aspects of organised crimes as they relate to militants in the SP of SL.

DATA COLLECTION

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews are chosen as the primary method of data collection due to their flexibility and ability to capture rich,

detailed insights from participants. Ex-military cadres involved in organised crimes, Senior Deputy Inspector General of Police (SDIG) of SP and Senior Officers from the STF will be purposively sampled and interviewed. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allows for a balance between exploring predefined research questions and eliciting spontaneous narratives from participants. Moreover, the identity of the participants for the interview except the officials will not be exposed.

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

In addition to interviews, a comprehensive review of relevant documents is conducted to provide contextual background and supplement the interview data. Documents such as official reports, policy documents, media sources and archival records were analysed to gain insights into the historical, political and socio-economic factors influencing organised crime dynamics in the SP.

SAMPLING STRATEGY

EX-MILITARY CADRES

Ex-military cadres who were involved in organised crimes within the SP were purposively sampled based on their level of involvement, roles within the criminal networks and willingness to participate to the study. Efforts made to ensure their privacy without disclosing.

OFFICERS FROM STF AND SLP

Officials from SLP and STF were interviewed to draw their overview and how they oversee the organised crimes by the military and ex-military cadres whilst taking their possible recommendations as they see for the prevention of organised crimes. This diversity in sampling aims to provide comprehensive

recommendations to prevent organised crimes. Moreover, 15 participants were interviewed including ex-military cadres who were involved with organised crimes, expertise from the field including SLP, STF and Prison Department and community members who were affected by organised crimes.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis follows an iterative process informed by the principles of thematic analysis. Interview transcripts and document excerpts were systematically coded to identify patterns, themes and categories relevant to the research objectives. Through constant comparison and interpretation, emergent themes were refined and organised into a coherent framework that elucidates the complexities of organised crime networks and counterstrategies in the SP.

APPROACH TO THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis is adopted as the means for examining the qualitative data obtained from the interviews conducted with officials and ex-militants who were involved in crime-related activities. Thematic analysis is a versatile and well-acknowledged approach utilised to analyse and report patterns referred to as themes using qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This methodology follows the research objectives, as it facilitates understanding the causes of involvement in crime-related activities by ex-military cadres.

CODES IDENTIFIED FOR DATA

The following codes were developed for the data analysis:

Table 1: Identified Codes

Ser	Codes	Description
1.	Code 1	Training
2.	Code 2	Experience
3.	Code 3	Hardships and mental orientation
4.	Code 4	Drug addiction
5.	Code 5	Family issues
6.	Code 6	Employment opportunities
7.	Code 7	Economic desperation
8.	Code 8	Social recognition
9.	Code 9	Social relations
10.	Code 10	Misconduct and discipline
11.	Code 11	Morality

Source: Developed by Researcher

IDENTIFICATION OF THEMES

The primary themes have arisen from the thematic analysis of the data grabbed from interviewees, experts and victims in society. The aforementioned themes have been methodically found and carefully categorised, signifying the results of a thorough and precise process of analysing and interpreting data.

Further, the identified themes and codes supported in achieving the research objectives to analyse the nature and scope of organised crimes prevalent in the said area, identify the pattern of involvement of ex-military cadres in organised crimes, identify the why ex-militants were involved with organised crimes and to derive recommendations to prevent the involvement of ex-military cadres in organised crimes. The selection of themes is as follows:

Table 2: Selection of Themes

Ser	Theme Number	Theme Description	Codes Included
1.	Theme 1	The transition from soldiering to crimes	Training, experiences, hardships, mental orientation and drug addiction
2.	Theme 2	Criminal motivation	Employment opportunities, social recognition, economic desperation, social relations and family issues
3.	Theme 3	Ethics and morality of ex-military cadres	Misconduct, morality and discipline

Source: Developed by Researcher

THEMATIC MAP

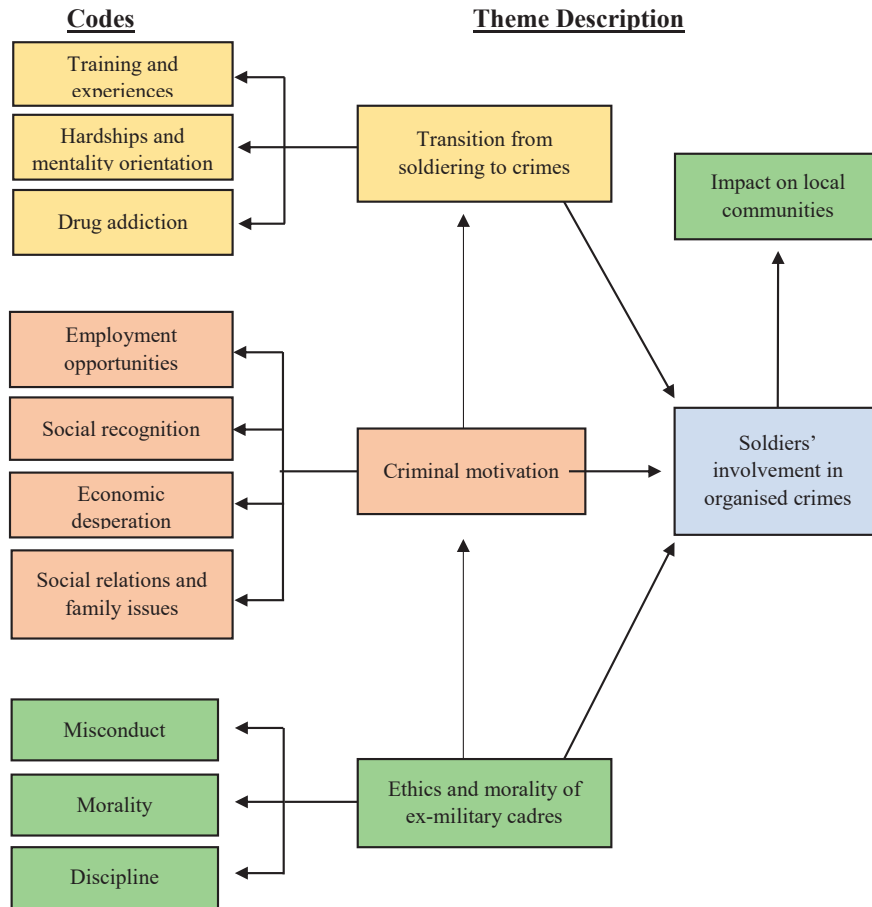


Figure 1: Thematic Map
Source: Developed by Researcher

ANALYSIS

OVERVIEWING THE PARTICIPANTS

The study was carried out by in-depth interviewing of 15 participants and analysing data which has been gained through competent authorities. The participants included ex-military cadres who are the individuals who transitioned from soldiering to crimes. Participants from law enforcement officers and government officials were selected as Higher-ranking officers from the SLP and

STF. Moreover, representing the local citizens, residents who have been affected by the organised crimes have been interviewed. The interviews were conducted over a month with each session lasting approximately from 30 minutes to 2 hours. Participants were selected based on their knowledge of organised crimes, their direct and indirect involvement with organised crimes and being affected by the organised crimes.

ORGANISED CRIMES IN SRI LANKA

Organised crimes or transnational crimes have a relatively long history in Asia. According to (World Drug Report, 2013) estimates, the discussion includes estimates of the revenues generated in selected illicit markets in East Asia and the Pacific, which, taken together, have a combined annual income of nearly US\$ 90 billion. Several Southeast Asian countries are reported major producers of narcotics and serve as transit for illicit drugs exported to North America, Europe and Asia. The Golden Triangle, which incorporates Northern Thailand, Eastern Myanmar and Western Laos, is one of the leading regions of narcotics in the world (Emmer and Ralf, 2003). Figure 4.1 shows the generalised crime routes of Southeast and East Asia.



Figure 2: Generalised Flows of Criminal Trade in Southeast and East Asia

Source: United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime Report (2013)

In the recent past, SL has been a significant hub, though globally minor, for transnational crimes, in the form of drug, arms and human smuggling. It is been both a source and a transit point, at varying levels over the period due to internal and external factors (Sutton et al., 2016). The actors involved have also changed throughout the period. The rise of the worldwide underground apparatus of the LTTE made the biggest contribution to the shift of crimes in SL (Silva, 2011).

During the civil war years from 1983 to 2009, the influence of internal and external factors in the country, helped to create a conducive environment for drug trafficking in SL (Sutton et al., 2016). The internal instability caused by the Tamil insurrection and the nearby traditional drug routes to Europe undermined local and national economies, human security and the well-being of the public. Presently, transnational crimes appear a huge ongoing challenge for SL due to its strategic maritime location, being a transit point for narcotics, remains a source for human trafficking and arms smuggling.

It is identified that both the Golden Crescent (Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan) and the Golden Triangle (Vietnam, Myanmar and Laos) are the major drug sources in the Sri Lankan drugs market. Southeast Asian products reach Karachchi, Kerala or Andra Pradesh by inland transport and are transshipped to Sri Lankan coastal areas identifiably Negombo, Kalpitiya, Mannar and Mullaitivu. Figure 4.2 shows the quantities of drugs seized by different agencies in 2018-2022.

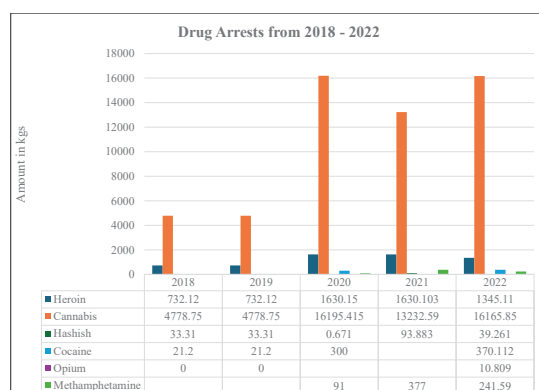


Figure 3: Drug Smuggling, Seizures and Arrests

Source: SLP, Information Technology Division

Presently, organised crimes taking a toll on innocents, endangering public safety. According to the SDIG of SP, most shootings happen in the Western and Southern

Provinces, where organised crime groups are active (Warakapitiya, 2024). The regions of Ambalangoda, Kosgoda, Pitigala and Balapitiya were the source of the majority of instances in SP. The majority of occurrences happen in the Western and Southern provinces because most organised crime groups are based and active in these regions according to the police media spokesman.

Presently, a large number of small arms have been circulating illegally all over the country and it is obvious that criminal and underworld gangs hold those weapons (Wickramasekara, 2017). More gang-related activities occurred in the SP were reported from Ambalangoda, Kosgoda, Pitigala and Balapitiya areas. The following figure shows the number of shootings that occurred in SL:

Table 3: Shooting and Murder Cases from January-March 2024

Ser	District	Killed	Injured	Only Shooting
1.	Mullaitivu	1	-	-
2.	Puttalam	1	2	-
3.	Colombo	4	4	3
4.	Hambantota	7	1	1
5.	Galle	6	2	1
6.	Monaragala	-	1	-
7.	Batticaloa	1	-	-
8.	Gampaha	5	-	-

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The above table shows that the highest number of killings has been recorded in SP (13) and Western Province (9). According to the Retired SDIG Priyantha Jayakodi (Warakapitiya, 2024), firearms abandoned by LTTE terrorists, lost during the war or stolen from military armouries are used in gang-related shootings. On some occasions, it was

found that a group of Security Forces personnel took firearms from the armoury for criminal activity and then returned.

TRANSITION FROM SOLDIERING TO CRIMES

The theme, transition from soldiering to crimes describes how ex-military cadres are being transformed from their role as soldiers into participants in organised crimes. Moreover, this transformation is analysed through the identification of economic background, social background and professional background. Further, this segment focuses on how ex-military cadres, who struggle with preventing and limiting opportunities for rehabilitation, turn to organised crime as a means of survival, enabling and emphasising the key factors that drive this significant change in their professional life and personal lives.

Further, the following graph shows the distribution of varying types of crime-related activities committed by military and ex-military cadres:

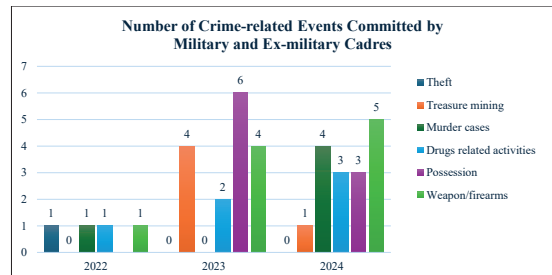


Figure 4: Crime-related Events Committed by Military and Ex-military Cadres from July 2022 to July 2024.

Source: Survey Data (2024).

The above figure remains the testimony to the viewpoint of participants A and B, showing the higher tendency of ex-military cadres to be involved in drug-related activities and arms

smuggling. However, involvement in murder/killing also comparatively provides valuable insight into the usage of such personnel.

The only people in SL who have experience handling weapons are those who have served in the country's Prisons Department, Tri-forces, STF and Police. Among them, members of the Prison Department, SLP and STF are well-known for their legal backgrounds and their propensity to be involved in organised crime is not reported. Furthermore, based on the statistics, personnel from the Army and Navy tended to be involved in organised crime from 2022 to 2024. According to the DIG (Narcotic Bureau):

"After retirement or leaving active service, soldiers are integrated into civil society with lots of pieces of training, experiences, hardships and connections. Once they were integrated, they happily experienced civil life with freedom out of being restricted to discipline. Also while on service they practiced managing their salary at a bare minimum, even remains a risk of converting himself to potential gaining."

The above statements suggest that both military and ex-military cadres are possessed with the confidence than civilians due to the acquired training and gained experiences through the hardships. The actions and routines of ex-military cadres are easily identifiable because of the pattern of working. This retirement at the age of approximately 40 years facilitates them with good health conditions and physical fitness to conduct any preferred job.

Further, it is highlighted the living standard of working and retired soldiers seems below the expectation that merits diverging towards potential income sources. Ex-military

cadres who retired from active service after completing 22 years are getting their pension which is barely enough to live with the least required standard. Therefore, involvement in organised crimes appeared to be a by-product which can not be negated once involved.

In addition, Participant D (Director-Intelligence, STF) highlighted that:

"There is a tendency for members of the armed forces to become addicted to drugs."

CRIMINAL MOTIVATION

This theme explores the reasons ex-military personnel transition from their formal roles to organised crime. The study focused on gathering the standpoints of victims, an expert in the field and Senior Officials from SLP. According to the Retired SDIG Priyantha Jayakodi (Warakapitiya, 2024), getting firearms and hiring gunmen have become easier in post-war SL. As DIG Priyantha Jayakodi:

"Military retirees, deserters and even a few on active duty do become hitmen for money."

This signifies the potential issue of ex-military individuals engaging in illegal activities and using their training and skills for criminal purposes. This statement appeared as a key theme of the research on ex-military cadres' involvement in organised crimes and causes. It could indicate that factors such as financial difficulties, lack of support or reintegration programs for military personnel after leaving service or personal motivations may push individuals towards criminal activities. The study also explores the reasons why ex-military individuals may choose to engage in organised crime and the potential consequences of their involvement. Moreover, the statement raises questions about the responsibilities of Military and society as a whole in supporting

and preventing ex-military individuals from turning to criminal activities.

According to Participant A (An Ex-military Cadre):

"After leaving the military, I found it hard to find stable employment. The connections I had from my service made it easier to get involved in the illicit trade."

Participant E (An Expert) highlighted that:

"Many ex-military individuals turn to organised crime due to economic desperation and the lack of viable employment opportunities."

The quotes provided highlight the underlying reasons behind ex-military personnel transitioning into organised crime in the SP. Participant A's statement reflects the economic challenges faced by ex-military individuals upon leaving the service. Without stable employment opportunities and the financial support they once had, individuals like Participant A may turn to illicit activities as a means of survival. The connections and networks established during their military service provide them with access to the criminal underworld, making it easier to enter into organised crimes.

Participant D, an expert in the field, emphasises the role of economic desperation and limited job prospects as significant factors driving ex-military personnel towards organised crime. The lack of viable employment options pushes these individuals towards illegal activities, where they see a potential for financial gain and stability that may be otherwise unattainable.

In the context of the SP, where economic conditions and opportunities may be restricted,

ex-military cadres may view organised crime as a way to sustain themselves and their families. The transition from military life to a civilian one can be challenging and the allure of quick money and power in criminal activities may seem like an attractive option for individuals who feel marginalised or overlooked in mainstream society.

However, the interview carried out with the DIG (Narcotic Bureau) highlighted that retired and in-service military personnel engaging in organised crimes is a serious concern. He said:

"There are several reasons cited for this troubling trend, including family issues, gambling, economic problems, social media interactions with unknown parties, womanism, poor supervision at working places or camps and lack of knowledge."

'Family Issues' is an undeclared reason by any respondent which can play a significant role in pushing ex-military cadres towards organised crime. The stress and trauma experienced during active duty can lead to strained relationships with family members. This lack of emotional support can drive individuals towards negative coping mechanisms. 'Gambling' addiction is a widespread problem. For some military personnel, gambling may start as a harmless pastime but can quickly spiral out of control, leading them to engage in organised crime to fund their addiction or losses. The transition from military service to civilian life can be challenging, especially for those who struggle to find stable employment. Financial insecurity can leave individuals feeling desperate and willing to turn to criminal activities to make ends meet. Such personnel are hunted by criminal gangs offering unbelievable financial backing.

The proliferation of social media has made it easier for individuals to connect

with strangers and form relationships with unknown parties. Military personnel, who are accustomed to forming tight bonds with their comrades, may turn to online groups for a sense of community. However, these connections can sometimes lead to involvement in criminal networks that operate online.

One of the critical factors is 'poor supervision' at working places can create an environment where individuals feel emboldened to engage in criminal activities without fear of being caught. Lack of oversight can result in a culture of misconduct that enables military personnel to participate in organised crime with little consequence. Womanism also can be a motivating factor for some military personnel to engage in criminal activities.

In conclusion, the reasons cited by the SDIG for military and ex-military cadres engaging in organised crime are multifaceted and complex. This qualitative study provides insight into the underlying factors that contribute to this troubling trend and underscores the need for comprehensive support and intervention for military personnel at risk of engaging in organised crime. Overall, these motivations for transition to crime shed light on the complex interplay of socio-economic factors that contribute to ex-military personnel engaging in organised crime in the SP. Understanding these underlying reasons is essential for developing effective interventions and strategies to prevent the involvement of ex-military cadres in criminal activities.

The research paper could delve into the different factors at play in this issue and propose potential solutions or interventions to address the root causes of ex-military involvement in organised crime.

ETHICS AND MORALITY OF EX-MILITARY CADRES

This theme explores the ethical and moral standards of ex-militants concerning the cause. The study focused on gathering the standpoints of a victim, an expert in the field and Senior Officials from SLP. The following transcription provides a glimpse into the mindset of a soldier who walked away from their duty after five years of service, with a focus on financial gain through illicit means:

According to Participant A:

"I got absent from the Army after 5 years of service due to misconduct. I was thinking about my financial reach, no matter how it was earned."

The confession of military desertion due to misconduct reveals a breach of the moral code and duty that soldiers are expected to uphold. Soldiers are trained to protect and serve their country, to follow orders and to demonstrate loyalty and integrity in their actions. Desertion is considered a serious offence in the military, as it undermines the trust and discipline within the ranks. The decision to abandon one's post reflects a lack of commitment to the values and responsibilities that come with being a soldier, indicating a disregard for the repercussions of such actions on one's comrades and the overall mission.

In the transcription, the individual expresses a focus on financial gain as the driving force behind their decision to desert. This highlights the importance of addressing the economic struggles faced by soldiers, especially those who may have difficulty transitioning back into civilian life. The allure of easy money through organised crimes can be tempting for individuals who find themselves in critical financial circumstances, leading them to compromise their morals and ethics in pursuit of financial stability.

The ethics and morality in the context of deserted soldiers raise questions about the underlying motivations and justifications for engaging in criminal activities. It forces us to consider the societal factors that contribute to the vulnerability of soldiers who may feel abandoned or unsupported upon leaving the military. The lack of adequate support systems and resources for transitioning soldiers could push them towards criminal behaviour as a means of survival, creating a cycle of ethical compromise and moral decay.

The individual's admission of thinking about their financial situation regardless of how the earnings are obtained sheds light on the internal struggles and conflicting priorities that ex-militants may face. It underscores the moral ambiguity and ethical dilemmas that arise when individuals prioritise personal gain over their duty and obligations to society. The pursuit of financial security through illegal means can have far-reaching consequences not only for the individual but also for their families, communities and the reputation of the military institution.

In conclusion to the context, the thematic analysis of the transcription on the ethics and morality of ex-military cadres reveals a complex interplay of personal motivations, societal pressures and moral compromises. It calls attention to the need for greater support and resources for transitioning soldiers to prevent them from falling into criminal activities. It also underscores the importance of upholding ethical standards and moral values in the face of adversity and temptation. Ultimately, the discussion of soldiers involved in organised crimes serves as a reminder of the ongoing challenges and responsibilities that come with military service and the enduring impact of ethical decision-making on individuals and society as a whole.

TYPES OF ORGANISED CRIMES

This theme categorises the types of criminal activities predominantly engaged in by ex-military cadres. It was identified during the study that certain key activities require proficiency in similar fields.

It is observed that most desertions were the results of soldier's discipline, mental deficiency and mental weakness. The largest cause of desertion includes drink or drugs, other offences such as disrespect and disobedience, solely military offences, offences with violence involved, dishonesty, offences by sentries or guards, offences against decency and miscellaneous offences. This deficiency has already paved the way to exploit criminal groups' potential by absorbing them into the network.

According to the Participant E:

"We've observed a rise in drug trafficking and arms smuggling involving ex-military cadres. Their military training makes them adept at these activities."

According to Participant B (An Ex-military Cadre):

"Besides, we are too much arrogant. The Army also made the morale to match it."

According to Participant E:

"Extortion and protection rackets are also common. It's clear that their military experience is being repurposed for criminal enterprises."

The analysis of the interview data from Participant C, a local authority and Participant G, a community member, provides valuable insights into the types of crimes committed by

ex-military cadres in the SP. Both participants shed light on the re-utilisation of military training and experience by ex-military personnel for engaging in drug trafficking and acting as shooters and riders.

Participant C's observation of a rise in drug trafficking and arms smuggling involving ex-military groups highlights the dangerous and illicit activities that these individuals are involved in. The participant emphasises that the military training received by these ex-militants equips them with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively carry out such criminal activities. This sheds light on the adaptability of ex-military individuals in utilising their training for illegal purposes, indicating a concerning trend in the region.

Participant D further adds to this narrative by highlighting the prevalence of extortion and protection rackets among ex-military personnel. The community member's assertion that their military experience is being repurposed for criminal enterprises underscores the strategic and tactical advantages that these individuals possess due to their military background. This suggests that retired military officers are leveraging their training and expertise to engage in criminal activities that exploit and harm the local community.

The analysis of these interviews reveals a common theme of ex-military personnel utilising their military training and experience for nefarious purposes in the SP. The data indicates a shift from serving the nation to undermining public safety and security through involvement in drug trafficking, arms smuggling, extortion and protection rackets. This poses a significant threat not only to the community but also to the reputation and integrity of the Tri-forces.

The findings from Participant C and Participant D's interviews highlight the need

for targeted interventions and preventative measures to address the root causes of ex-military cadres engaging in organised crime. It is crucial for authorities to address the factors that drive these individuals towards criminal activities and to provide alternative livelihood opportunities that deter them from engaging in illicit behaviour.

Overall, the interview data underscores the complex relationship between military training, criminal behaviour and community safety. It emphasises the importance of understanding the motivations and tactics employed by ex-military cadres in committing crimes and the urgency of implementing effective strategies to combat organised crime in the SP.

IMPACT ON LOCAL COMMUNITIES

This theme examines the effects of organised crime on local communities in the SP. According to Participant F (Community Member):

"The violence and intimidation from these groups have made life unbearable. Many businesses have shut down due to the extortion demands."

As derived by Participant G (Community Member):

"The local community feels trapped between the criminal elements and inadequate law enforcement."

Participant F's statement highlights the significant negative impact of organised crimes by ex-military cadres on the local community in the SP. The mention of violence and intimidation suggests that residents are living in a state of fear and insecurity. Additionally, the fact that many businesses have been affected due to extortion

demands indicates a detrimental effect on the local economy and livelihoods of individuals. This underscores the pervasive nature of organised crime activities and their destructive consequences on the community's well-being.

Participant F's statement as a local citizen paints a picture of helplessness and frustration within the community. The mention of feeling trapped between criminal elements and inadequate law enforcement suggests a lack of trust in the ability of authorities to effectively address the issue of organised crime. This lack of confidence in law enforcement can further exacerbate the sense of vulnerability and fear among residents, as they perceive themselves to be at the mercy of criminal elements without adequate protection or recourse. The statement underscores the urgent need for improved law enforcement strategies and community engagement to combat organised crime and restore a sense of safety and security in the local area.

As per the statement made by Participant G, the social conditions of the SP are influenced by tourism. Thus, having superiority over other competitors requires more attention and power. Moreover, extortion seemed necessary to keep up those actions. Therefore, dominance over rivals demands greater focus and strength. The secret to extortion is the influence of illicit activity. Moreover, organised crime is a direct result of drug trafficking in the SP.

ANALYSIS OF PATTERNS AND RELATIONSHIPS

The involvement of ex-military cadres in aforementioned organised crimes points out a complex pattern that originated from various factors such as economic desperation, lack of viable employment opportunities, family issues and social media interactions with unknown parties. As per the viewpoints highlighted under the theme of 'transition from soldiering

to crimes', this trend is further exacerbated by the training and skills acquired during their military service, making them well-equipped for criminal activities such as drug trafficking, arms smuggling, extortion and protection rackets.

The connections and networks established during military service also play a significant role in facilitating their entry into organised crime. For many ex-military individuals, the transition to civilian life can be challenging and engaging in illicit activities may provide a source of income and stability. Additionally, the lack of supervision at working places or camps, as highlighted by the SDIG of SP, may create opportunities for ex-military cadres to veer towards criminal behaviour.

The impact of ex-military involvement in organised crime is felt acutely by local communities, particularly in the SP where businesses are forced to shut down due to extortion demands and violence. The local authorities and community members are caught in a dilemma, feeling trapped between criminal elements and inadequate law enforcement. This poses a serious challenge to public safety and security in the region, as the expertise and experience of ex-military cadres are exploited for illicit purposes.

In conclusion to the context above, the involvement of ex-military personnel in organised crime is a complex issue driven by a combination of economic, personal and social factors. Their transition from military life to civilian life can be fraught with challenges, leading some individuals to turn to illicit activities as a means of survival. The specialised skills and training acquired during military service also make them attractive candidates for criminal organisations, further perpetuating their involvement in organised crime. The repercussions of this trend are felt acutely in local communities, where the presence of ex-

military cadres engaged in criminal activities leads to violence, intimidation and economic consequences. Efforts to address this issue must take into account the underlying factors driving ex-military involvement in organised crime and work towards providing alternative pathways for reintegration and support for these individuals.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings reveal that the transition from military service to organised crime is driven by a combination of economic needs and the strategic advantages provided by military experience. The impact on local communities underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions to address both the symptoms and root causes of this issue.

The presence of ex-military cadres engaged in criminal activities creates a climate of fear and uncertainty, undermining the social fabric of the community. Participant G highlights the sense of helplessness felt by residents caught between criminal elements and law enforcement, further exacerbating the challenges faced by the community.

However, the involvement of ex-military individuals in organised crime is a complex issue that requires a multi-dimensional approach. Addressing the root causes such as economic hardships, lack of employment opportunities and social factors is crucial in preventing ex-military cadres from transitioning. Efforts to provide reintegration support, job training and mental health services for veterans are essential in mitigating the risks of involvement in organised crime. Additionally, strengthening law enforcement measures and community partnerships can help combat criminal networks and ensure the safety and well-being of local communities. The transcriptions provided shed light on the patterns and relationships that contribute to this trend.

TRANSITION FROM SOLDIERING TO CRIMES

The transition from soldiering to crimes is a complex phenomenon that involves a variety of influencing factors. Through a comprehensive research study, this paper aims to analyse the three main codes, training and experience, hardships and mental orientation and drug addiction that contribute to this transition.

TRAINING AND EXPERIENCES

Training and experience play a crucial role in the transition from soldiering to crimes. Military training instils discipline, obedience and a sense of duty in soldiers, which can have both positive and negative effects. While training equips soldiers with valuable skills and knowledge, it can also desensitise them to violence and conflict resolution. Research has shown that soldiers who have combat experience are more likely to exhibit aggressive behaviour and engage in criminal activities upon returning to civilian life.

The impact of ex-military involvement in organised crime on local communities is profound and far-reaching. Participants describe the violence and the specialised training and skills acquired during military service also make ex-military individuals attractive candidates for organised crime groups. Participants highlight the proficiency of ex-military personnel in activities noting their military training gives them an advantage in these illicit endeavours. Also, it is pointed out their experience is being repurposed for criminal enterprises, indicating their skill set is being exploited by criminal organisations for benefit.

Hardships and Mental Orientation

Furthermore, the transition from the structured and regimented military environment to civilian life can be challenging for many soldiers. The hardships they face, such as unemployment, financial difficulties and relationship problems, can exacerbate their mental health issues. Studies have found that soldiers who have experienced trauma during their service are at a higher risk of developing mental health disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. These mental health issues can lead to substance abuse and other maladaptive coping mechanisms, increasing the likelihood of engaging in criminal behaviour.

DRUG ADDICTION

Another important factor that influences the shift from soldiering to criminal activity is drug addiction. Soldiers who are exposed to drugs while serving in the military may acquire substance use problems as a result of the high-stress atmosphere and traumatic situations they encounter. According to research, drug addiction is widespread among service members, who frequently use drugs as a coping mechanism for their emotional distress and trauma. Additionally, drugs and alcohol can impair judgment and decision-making, leading to impulsive and reckless behaviour. This can increase the likelihood of engaging in criminal activities, such as drug trafficking, theft and violent crimes. Studies have also shown a correlation between drug addiction and an increased risk of recidivism among military veterans who have been involved in the criminal justice system.

In conclusion to the section, the transition from soldiering to crimes is a complex process influenced by a variety of factors, including training, experience, hardships, mental orientation and drug addiction. Military

training can instil valuable skills and discipline in soldiers, but it can also desensitise them to violence and conflict resolution. The hardships faced by soldiers upon returning to civilian life, combined with mental health issues and substance abuse, can increase the likelihood of engaging in criminal behaviour. Therefore, policymakers and mental health providers need to address these variables and provide support and resources to help veterans successfully reintegrate into society and prevent them from turning to crime.

CRIMINAL MOTIVATION

Criminal motivation is a complex sensation that involves a variety of influencing factors. Through a comprehensive research study, this section aims to analyse the three main sub-themes, Employment Opportunities, Social Recognition, Social Relations and Family Issues that contribute to said transition.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

One of the most significant factors driving ex-military cadres to engage in organised crime is economic desperation. Participant A highlights the difficulty many face in finding stable employment after leaving the military, leading them to turn to illicit activities as a means of making a living. Participant B corroborates this, emphasising the lack of viable job opportunities as a contributing factor. This economic motive is further underscored by the SDIG, which notes that financial problems are one of the reasons cited for military personnel entering into criminal activities. Studies have shown that economic depression can be a significant factor in driving individuals to commit criminal acts. When individuals are faced with financial hardship and limited employment opportunities, they may turn to crime as a means of survival.

SOCIAL RECOGNITION

Research has found that individuals may be motivated to commit criminal acts to gain social recognition or esteem from their peers. This can be seen in cases where individuals engage in criminal behaviour to prove themselves to others or to gain a sense of power and status within their social group. In addition to economic factors, other personal issues and vulnerabilities may also play a role in ex-military cadres becoming involved in organised crime. The SDIG mentions family problems, gambling and lack of supervision at work as potential contributing factors. This suggests that the transition from military life to civilian life can be challenging for some individuals, leaving them susceptible to the attraction of criminal activities as a means of coping with their difficulties.

SOCIAL RELATIONS AND FAMILY ISSUES

Research has also found that social relationships and family issues can play a crucial role in influencing criminal behaviour. Individuals who come from dysfunctional families or lack strong social support networks may be more likely to engage in criminal activities as a way of coping with their struggles or seeking out alternative forms of support and validation.

ETHICS AND MORALITY OF EX-MILITARY CADRES

The findings of this qualitative research on the ethics and morality of ex-military cadres involved in organised crimes revealed a complex interplay of factors related to misconduct, morality and discipline. These findings shed light on the challenges and implications associated with ex-military cadres in criminal activities and highlight the need for ethical reflection and action in addressing this national security issue.

MISCONDUCT

The research findings revealed misconduct as a major theme, with participants expressing concerns about the likelihood of unethical activity among retired and abandoned soldiers. The information showed a trend of these people's involvement in illicit activities such as the smuggling of weapons, drugs and people. Participants gave accounts of how some deserting troops had integrated themselves into criminal networks and were involved in acts that went against the morals and ethics of military service. Many respondents mentioned that some troops had abandoned their moral obligations and engaged in immoral actions due to the allure of money and power.

MORALITY

The research findings also underscored the moral dilemmas faced by ex-military cadres who found themselves drawn into criminal activities. Many participants expressed feelings of guilt, shame and regret over their involvement in illegal operations as their personal feelings, recognising the harm they were causing to society and the reputation of the military. Some participants described how they had been pressured or coerced into committing illegal acts, while others confessed to succumbing to the temptations of easy money and illicit gains. Despite their moral qualms, these individuals acknowledged their responsibility for their actions and the need to atone for their transgressions.

DISCIPLINE

Another prominent issue in the research findings was discipline, with participants emphasising the value of 'supervision at the workplace' and the necessity of establishing in military people a feeling of responsibility, honour and integrity. Many respondents

emphasised the need for stricter enforcement of regulations and codes of conduct to prevent desertion and misconduct among soldiers. Participants expressed concerns about the lack of oversight and accountability in the military, noting that some commanders turned a blind eye to the misdeeds of their subordinates. Several participants called for stronger disciplinary measures, including harsher penalties for desertion and criminal behaviour, to deter soldiers from engaging in unlawful activities.

The study also highlighted the psychological and social elements that play a role in ex-military cadres' participation in organised crime. Many participants emphasised how their need to survive had driven them to engage in criminal activity because of the stigma associated with desertion and the challenges of reintegrating into civilian life. A few participants revealed their tales of social exclusion and abandonment, which compelled them to look for safety and acceptance within criminal organisations. Others emphasised the moral disorientation and psychological trauma they had suffered by serving in the military, which had left them open to manipulation and abuse.

Additionally, the results of this theme draw attention to the complicated moral and ethical issues surrounding the involvement of ex-military cadres in organised crimes. The study emphasises the necessity of a comprehensive and moral approach that combines punitive, rehabilitative and preventive measures to solve this national security issue. Policymakers and military officials can prevent and address desertions from soldiers by proactively addressing the causes that contribute to immorality, morality and discipline among them. This will ensure the armed forces' reputation and integrity while preserving the concept of national security.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Formulation of a workshop for every retiring soldier will help to understand these criminal behaviours and it will help them in demarcating their endeavours in their civil life. The workshop must be made compulsory and the workshop can be held once every three months to ensure that every retiring soldier is facilitated in attending. This workshop can be formulated at a particular headquarters level and lecture assistance for the course can be obtained through Community Officers and SLP. They ought to be taught how to stop committing crimes of that nature, how to do away with them and how to retire and live out the remainder of their lives with their loved ones.

After retirement, if ex-military cadres engage in such criminal activities, the law should be made so that they appear before the police station in the resided area on the last Saturday or Sunday of every month after the first case is reported to the police.

The Grama Niladari should follow up with absentees every eight weeks. Furthermore, ex-military cadres who are involved in crimes, appear before the police on the last Sunday of each month in their relevant police station.

There must be a strict enlistment drive and enrollment must take place following a thorough background inquiry and a review of his records.

Continuous interviews by immediate field commanders to identify soldiers' such behaviours and take relevant actions to prevent them.

Ensure that the Sri Lankan Prison Department takes the appropriate steps to stop prison radicalisation.

Field commanders can ensure that soldiers who are under-commanded, acquire loans within the perimeter of their payments.

CONCLUSION

One may observe that the outbreak of violence is more unpredictable and the enhanced mobility and expanding activities of individuals enable their impacts to spread and proliferate far more quickly in the contemporary world. As such, SL also finds it increasingly complicated to tackle these new-age non-traditional threats. Therefore, it is required to take the necessary participation from all stakeholders especially the Tri-forces to play a vital role by changing its traditional role to deal with these new threats. There are moments when we can move forward or moments where we may slip back into cycles of perpetual violence where we must act with caution and wisdom. The SL's way forward for reconciliation and sustaining peace has not been easy to tread and is faced with many challenges.

A reasonable conclusion to draw from this research would be that there is evidence pointing to the possibility of organised criminal involvement among ex-military cadres in SP. To obtain a more thorough knowledge of the scope and character of this involvement, as well as possible contributing variables, more researches are required. The resolution of this matter might necessitate focused interventions that tackle the distinct obstacles encountered by ex-military cadres while adjusting to civilian life, as well as cooperation between law enforcement authorities and community.

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EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: KEY SUCCESS DRIVERS IN SRI LANKA'S SME LANDSCAPE

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ABSTRACT

The economically inactive female population represents more than half of the total economically inactive population in Sri Lanka. Hence, encouraging them to be entrepreneurs would not only lead to job creation but also, the entire economic development of the country. In most instances, entrepreneurship primarily starts as a micro or SME. Although many women have successfully started their businesses as SMEs, they often struggle to achieve success. However, prior scholarly works lack context-specific insights and experiences, particularly regarding the success of SMEs throughout the entire business cycle. Hence, it is crucial to identify the factors that affect the success of women entrepreneurs in different stages of their business including start-up, growth, and maturity. This study was conducted using qualitative research and the primary data was gathered from seven women entrepreneurs via in-depth interviews. The sample for the study was selected based on a non-probability purposive sampling technique. Data gathered from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings

revealed that family support and women's human capital are needed to succeed in the start-up stage while adopting a structured business plan and networking are crucial for success in the growth stage. Furthermore, to succeed in the maturity stage, consideration of innovation through research and development, as well as adherence to fair trade practices and social impact initiatives, is needed. The study's findings will be beneficial for academics and policymakers in both public and private sectors and women who desire to pursue their careers as women entrepreneurs in the future.

KEYWORDS: *Growth, Maturity, SMEs, Start-up, Success, Women Entrepreneurs.*

INTRODUCTION

Women's entrepreneurship is an essential component of economic growth and women empowerment in the Sri Lankan context since women's labor force participation has significantly declined compared to men's. According to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (2023), male participation in employment

(68.6%) is always higher than that of females (31.3%). The Sri Lankan government has implemented several policies to stimulate female labor force participation by encouraging women entrepreneurship in the country.

Entrepreneurship is a form of self-employment that could be distinguished as the capability and enthusiasm to start, organize, and manage a venture, including all its risks, to earn profit (Thilakarathne et al., 2022). Meenu Maheshwari & Priya Sodani (2015), viewed women entrepreneurs as highly confident, innovative, and creative individuals capable of achieving economic independence by themselves or in collaboration with others.

In most instances locally as well as globally, entrepreneurship primarily starts as a micro or SME, and with the advancement of its operations, it expands further. SMEs are considered a significant strategic sector in Sri Lanka, and they are the driver for the changing of economic growth, increase in employment rate, development in regional areas, and reduction of poverty (Qadri Yan, 2023 ; Al Sahaf & Al Tahoo, 2021). As per the Asian Development Bank (2022), SMEs are the backbone of Sri Lanka's economy, representing 75% of the total number of enterprises active in the country, employing 45% of the workforce, and contributing 52% to the GDP of the country. Nevertheless, there exists a notable gender gap in SME participation in Sri Lanka. The Department of Census and Statistics reveals that 84% of SMEs active in the year 2022 were headed by male entrepreneurs, while only 16% were headed by female entrepreneurs.

It can also be identified that nearly 20% of female-headed SMEs have been closed due to various reasons including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (Department of Census and Statistics, 2022). During this period, women entrepreneurs had to face different challenges in obtaining funds and credit, which hindered

their ability to sustain and grow their businesses (Naguib, 2024). Another reason is a significant number of women tend to give priority to their household duties, which leads to reduced levels of participation in the workforce following marriage and childbirth (Silva et al., 2021).

When women are attempting to become successful entrepreneurs by starting an SME often encounter numerous barriers and challenges during the entire business cycle (Ahmad Tass & Ahmad Hakim, 2022). These include restricted access to financial resources for women entrepreneurs, limited business acumen among women entrepreneurs, insufficiencies in policy and regulatory frameworks, and a lack of comprehensive data and evidence concerning women entrepreneurs to inform policies and practices. Even if most women have started their businesses and succeeded in the start-up stage, most of them have been unable to meet with success during their growth and maturity stages (Dharmaratne, 2013). At present, women entrepreneurs encounter obstacles of diverse sizes and scopes that hinder their growth and sustainability (Wijeyeratnam & Perera, 2013). This can be attributed to various constraints that arise due to different circumstances such as networking barriers, lack of role models and mentors, and insufficient education, and resources. Thus, the primary obstacle lies in the lack of awareness among women regarding the factors that influence every stage of the business life cycle, ultimately impacting the success of women's entrepreneurship. Therefore, aspiring and current entrepreneurs must possess a thorough understanding of the factors that influence the success of their ventures before starting their entrepreneurial journey. Moreover, the majority of the previous research conducted in this area has primarily concentrated on general financial and non-financial factors that influence women entrepreneurs in the country. These studies often lack context-specific insights and experiences, especially concerning the success of SMEs

during the entire business cycle. Hence, to fill this gap, it is worthwhile to investigate factors affecting on success of women entrepreneurs by giving special reference to SMEs in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to explore the factors affecting on success of women entrepreneurs in SMEs in Sri Lanka, while accommodating the sub-objectives of exploring the factors that influence the success of their businesses in the start-up, growth, and maturity stages.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the concept of “Creative Destruction” by J.A. Schumpeter, entrepreneurs play a crucial role in the economic system by introducing innovations, new products, and new production methods (Śledzik, 2013). Richard Cantillon is credited with the discovery of the economic theory of entrepreneurship and first to fully consider the critical role and features of entrepreneurship in the economy. The theory of entrepreneurship is that entrepreneur’s function by bearing risk under uncertainty, and they buy goods at constant prices in the present to sell at unknown prices in the future (Brown & Thornton et al., 2013).

Organizational Life Cycle (OLC) Theory

The organizational life cycle is a spontaneously attractive construct that proposes that organizations or businesses progress through a series of stages throughout their life that are comparable to the models proposed in the biological sciences (Lester et al., 2008). Five main stages can be seen in the organizational life cycle which are birth, growth, maturity, revival, and decline (Miller & Friesen, 1984); (Lester et al., 2003). Similarly, Sirmon et al., (2011), expressed that Start-up, growth, maturity, and decline are the main stages of the organizational life cycle by explaining the synthesis of existing life cycle research. As per Tam & Gray (2016), birth or inception, growth,

and maturity are key stages of the organizational life cycle. Hence, it can be concluded that start-up, growth, maturity, and decline are the main stages of the organizational life cycle.

Start-up stage

Tam & Gray (2016), viewed this stage as the beginning stage of the organizational life cycle. Businesses at this stage are young, small, unstructured, flexible, and informal in managing the business. During this stage, the main focus is on feasibility, or simply identifying a certain number of customers to support the existence and survival of the organization and delivering the product or service for their targeted customer (Churchill & Lewis, 1983; Lester et al., 2003). At this stage, there are no strict responsibilities assigned to the employees of the businesses. Further, business only responds to the opportunities provided by the external environment which cannot be predicted. In most instances, most businesses operate through trial and error at this stage (Gurianova et al., 2014).

Growth Stage

In this stage, the business or the organization has demonstrated that it is a kind of workable entity, and it has enough customers and satisfies them sufficiently with its products or services to keep within them (Churchill & Lewis, 1983). The primary goal at this stage is to gain market share and improve the quality of activities that they are providing. At this stage, the founders are performing the role of line managers, not entrepreneurs, conducting systematic planning, coordination, management, and monitoring (Gurianova et al., 2014). Moreover, Miller & Friesen (1984) highlighted that during this stage most firms are characterized by high sales growth with early diversification, and products are offered to the market and to new customers to increase market differentiations.

Maturity Stage

According to Hanks (1990), this maturity stage arrives when the business or the organization is well characterized by a formal organizational structure, supported by established office systems, regulations, procedures, and work documentation that led to norms and routines of practices in its workplace. The main features of the organization at the stage of maturity are the availability of official duties, job descriptions, organizational structure, structured planning, developed plans, and result orientation (Gurianova et al., 2014). The decision facing owners at this stage is whether to grab the business's accomplishment and expand or keep the business stable and profitable, providing a base for alternative owner activities of the business (Churchill & Lewis, 1983). The notable signs of this stage are maturity expansion and sound diversification. Moreover, structural units are formed as the results of which activity are measured by the profit (Gurianova et al., 2014).

Empirical Background

Assessing the success of an entrepreneurial venture

Entrepreneurial success can be assessed through various criteria, encompassing individual owner characteristics, organizational values, and performance measures (Simpson et al., 2004). While traditional measures of success emphasize financial metrics such as sales growth, profitability, cash flows, productivity, and return on investments, non-financial indicators like work-family balance, personal achievement, and independence are also significant Cabrera & Mauricio (2017; Walker, 2001). Walker & Brown (2004) noted that success can be measured using both financial and non-financial yardsticks. The interdisciplinary model by (Frese et al., 2000) suggests that entrepreneurial success is influenced by the

entrepreneur's personality, human capital, goals, strategies, procedures, and business environment. Despite the emphasis on financial viability, many entrepreneurs prioritize non-financial success criteria such as autonomy, job satisfaction, and the ability to balance work and family responsibilities (Kuratko et al., 1997). These non-financial measures are subjective and harder to quantify than financial metrics.

Factors Affecting for Success of Women Entrepreneurs in SMEs

Women's childhood experiences may provide some of the precursors of success in their entrepreneurial ventures (White Cox & Cooper et al., 1997). There is a higher probability of firstborn or only children being successful women entrepreneurs. In most instances, firstborn children do not initially share their parents and relatives with their siblings. As a result, they receive more attention and care that should provide a secure environment in which to stimulate independent exploration. In addition, they explained that the first-born child of the family is given responsibility for their younger siblings at an early age, and it may force them to test their abilities and skills while still quite young or a teenager. Thus, they can gain mastery experience, feelings of competence, and self-confidence. Contradicting an in-depth analysis of successful women entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka suggests that the impact of birth order has a lower level of significance for the success of women entrepreneurs (White Cox & Cooper et al., 1997; Ranasinghe et al., 2008). The extent of responsibility and independence developed during their childhood facilitated by their families cause the success of their ventures, regardless of whether this foundation was laid as the eldest or the youngest child of a particular family.

Moreover, women entrepreneurs who have a high level of self-confidence, always take any uncertain issue very smoothly and without

feeling, any stress or depression (Khan et al., 2021). Hence, it enables them to improve and develop their business performance and success in the long term.

Apart from the physiological characteristics, entrepreneurial characteristics such as determination, self-motivation, tenacity, honesty, hard work, self-motivation, and dedication to the task also affect the success of women's ventures (Roomi et al., 2009; Ranasinghe et al., 2008; Sandberg, 2003). Internal motivation and internal emotional drivers contribute significantly to the success of women entrepreneurs in their businesses (Hasan et al., 2016; Mohammad & Alumubark, 2016).

It may also sharpen innate abilities and skills through investing in the human capital of particular individuals which will drive to develop successful entrepreneurs. Additionally, there is a strong positive correlation between the success of the venture and the human capital of women entrepreneurs (Dharmaratne, 2013; Dhu & Kpn, 2019). Education level, education area, previous occupation, previous entrepreneurial experience, experience in the industry, and business skills are considered the main human capital components that are essential for successful women entrepreneurs in SMEs (Dharmaratne, 2013). However, some literature argued that the education level of women is not significantly affected by the success of their venture, and most women entrepreneurs develop and continue their business by common sense rather than supporting it with scientific principles (Khan et al., 2021; Hasan et al., 2016).

The majority of successful women had pursued higher-level professional courses relating to their business apart from their school education (Ranasinghe et al., 2008). Professional training in entrepreneurship is one of the key factors that influence the success of women entrepreneurs to a great extent and

informal learning is another important form of learning for the women entrepreneurs who are engaging in creative-oriented ventures. However, Mwanja & Nairobi (2015) argued that many women entrepreneurs did not join professional organizations, institutions, or other networks because often found it complex to access information.

Most scholars found that support from family members or the impact of family background is a crucial factor that affects the success of their venture (Alam et al., 2011; Tra, 2018; Mustapha, 2016; Krishnamoorthy & Balasubramani, 2014). Even if they are motivated to start up and continue their venture by themselves, they still need full family support to become successful in their venture because women play an important role on both sides, working in their workplace and at home. Especially, women entrepreneurs who come from larger families which means have higher family members and family support as significant factors leading to the success of their ventures (Tiwari & Goel, 2020).

Besides family, successful women entrepreneurs should have a sound network with outside parties such as different business-related institutions, government, and non-government organizations, associations, etc. (Rathirane, 2019; Dharmaratne, 2013). The presence of various networks such as access or membership in associations has a higher level of impact on the success of women's ventures (Dharmaratne, 2013).

For the development of new entrepreneurial ventures, supporting bodies such as the government, NGOs, and various financial institutions have facilitated promotional schemes for the success of women entrepreneurs (Agarwal & Lenka, 2016). Government support is considered one of the influential factors in thriving entrepreneurship development in any country, especially in

developing ones. Easy access to government authorities and lower levels of bureaucratic hurdles are helping them achieve their business goals successfully (Gupta & Mirchandani, 2018). However, sometimes financial institutions discourage women entrepreneurs on the belief that they can be able to leave their businesses at any instance and become housewives again. As a result, most of them are forced to rely on their savings, and loans from relatives and family friends (Al-Kwif et al., 2020; Siddiqui, 2012).

A higher level of availability of access to financial resources and capital strength is one of the key determinants that can highly influence the success of women's entrepreneurship (Rathirane, 2019; Silva et al., 2021; Shujan, 2020). Access to finance is essential especially for women a new start-up, expanding its operations, and investing in new opportunities (Aliyu et al., 2019). At the initial stage, women entrepreneurs do not have enough funds to start up a large-scale business. Hence, most probably they start with minimum money as a small-scale venture

METHODOLOGY

The study adheres to the qualitative research approach to explore the factors affecting the success of women's entrepreneurship. The responses have been collected through in-depth interviews with successful women entrepreneurs who are currently engaging in SMEs in Sri Lanka. All the interviews were conducted as in-person virtual interviews that lasted between half an hour to one hour. These in-person interviews were allowed to gather rich, detailed, and in-depth information; and participants feel more comfortable expressing themselves in person which leads to deeper understanding and insights into their thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

The targeted population of this study is successful women entrepreneurs who are currently engaging in SMEs in Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka, SMEs are defined differently by using a variety of parameters including the number of persons employed, the amount of capital invested, the amount of turnover, etc (Perera et al., 2018). The study used the definition of the Export Development Board and Ministry of Industries in Sri Lanka, where the category of SMEs is made up of an enterprise that employs less than 300 employees and has an annual turnover not exceeding 750 million LKR.

Success is quite a subjective term that is different from one person to another, one context to another. As mentioned, (Cabrera & Mauricio, 2017) entrepreneurial success is a construct that includes both a quantitative and a qualitative dimension, in terms of both the entrepreneur and the business perspectives. Quantitative dimensions include organizational, economic, or financial result indicators and a qualitative dimension includes work-family balance and achievement of independence surrounded by others, etc. In this research success of women entrepreneurs was determined through the qualitative dimensions.

The researcher kept the sample at a minimum level to provide rich qualitative discussion rather than generalizing the findings. Hence, seven successful women entrepreneurs currently engaged in SMEs and won awards for their outstanding achievements from the Women's Chamber of Industry and Commerce (WCIC) in Sri Lanka were selected as the sample of this study. In this research, the researcher uses the purposive sampling technique which is considered a non-probability sampling technique. This technique helped to ensure the representativeness of the sample by their characteristics and backgrounds. The Table 1 explains the background and characteristics of the selected women entrepreneurs.

Table 1: Background and Characteristics of Successful Women Entrepreneurs

No	Name/ Identity	Marital Status	No. of children that she has	Started year of the business	Related Industry	Business Location
1	WE_1	Married	Two	2018	Tissue planting	Kurunegala
2	WE_2	Married	Three	2000	Garment	Galle
3	WE_3	Married	Two	2007	Spices	Rathnapura
4	WE_4	Married	Two	2018	Toy	Colombo
5	WE_5	Married	Three	2020	Food	Monaragala
6	WE_6	Married	One	2016	Skincare	Colombo
7	WE_7	Married	Two	2006	Herbal	Galle

Source: Compiled by the author

The six steps of Thematic Analysis suggested by (Braun & Clarke, 2006) are used to analyze the data. The study used the member-checking technique to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings. (Y. S. Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Initially, one hundred and twenty (120) codes were identified, considering all three stages, and two main themes were generated for each stage, which are startup, growth, and maturity. These themes are generated by the following sub-themes identified through the identified codes. The following (Table 2) shows the developed sub-themes and themes by the researcher.

Table 2 Developed themes and sub-themes

Stage	Sub Theme	Theme
Start-up stage	1. Shared Responsibilities with family members	Family as a resource hub
	2. Access to utilizing Family Resources	
	1. Educational background of the entrepreneur	Need of 'human capital' for a start-up
Growth stage	2. Prior working experience	
	3. Training Programs provided by the different organizations	
Maturity Stage	1. Government and NGO partnerships	Network power in growth
	2. Financial partnerships with financial institutions	
	1. Formalized financial planning	Adaptation to a formal business plan
Business expansion through R & D	2. Production planning to ensure the quality of the product/ service	
	1. Product Development Strategies	Sustain with ethics and values
	2. Innovative Culture within the business	
Social Impact Initiatives	1. Fair Trade Practices	Sustain with ethics and values
	2. Social Impact Initiatives	

Source: Compiled by the author

Start-up Stage

Theme 01 - Family as a Resource Hub

Most women entrepreneurs strive to start their ventures with the minimum amount of capital, yet they have a strong support system in their families that may not be replaced with money. This support may be derived in different forms, such as emotional and practical. For instance, emotional support possibly comes as encouragement, appreciation, or opinions (Welsh et al., 2021).

Also, women receive practical support from their families, which helps reduce work-family conflict. In some instances, this support could sometimes be financial and assist in funding the business (Tiwari & Goel, 2020). The respondents highlighted that they had a collaborative involvement of family members in business activities at the start-up stage. Most women entrepreneurs spilled out their personal and work responsibilities within their families to ease the entrepreneurial burden as well as to manage their work-life balance. The way of shared responsibilities with their family members is explained by one respondent this way:

“When I started this business there were no hired employees. I handled multiple tasks in my business such as taking customer orders, package designing, marketing, etc. My husband and other relatives helped me to handle those tasks at the initial stage.

I think all women entrepreneurs must have a strong internal support system that will help them to balance both their personal and work lives. So, it was not a difficult task for me because I had a lot of support from my family, my husband, my parents, and my in-laws.” (WE_4)

To succeed in the start-up stage, they often need to dedicate themselves fully to their work, as they are responsible for managing almost all aspects of their ventures. For instance, spouses and family members helped to assist with tasks cooking, cleaning, and caring for children, freeing up time for entrepreneurs to focus on their businesses. Sharing responsibilities is a key to achieving a better balance between running a successful business and attending to home responsibilities effectively (Silva et al., 2021).

“I had to get support from my family members and other relatives, and they helped me a lot to complete orders during the initial stage. But my husband is the one who made a lot of sacrifices because of my business. He [husband] always told me that, I’m with you, you can do it. When I was handling the operation and production side of the business, my husband helped me with the sales and marketing aspects. My husband gave up his job to contribute to my business.” (WE_2)

Consistent with Welsh et al., (2021) emotional support or psychological support is essential, particularly for women entrepreneurs. It helps motivate them to keep pushing forward towards their goals. A woman running a business often relies on her spouse for emotional support during both the highs and lows of her business. Mainly, the spousal backing creates a positive and encouraging environment that provides confidence in them to face challenges successfully (Nikina et al., 2015).

In addition, it was revealed that most of them have managed their resource requirements with the support of their family members at the start-up stage. Most of them were utilized in family-owned properties and assets because they did not have sufficient assets or collateral to invest in the business. Also, most of them are not willing to invest significant amounts of money at the start-up stage due to the riskiness of the business.

“I wanted to develop indigenous medical culture which I learned from my grandfather. After my marriage, I came to my husband’s house located in Galle. First, I identified the resources that I had before starting my business. With time I felt that this was the place to start my business since it is a calm and quiet place favorable for that kind of business. So, first I initiated my business by almost utilizing family resources such as my husband’s land, his building, etc. I did not seek many resources and infrastructure at the beginning stage.” (WE_7)

“Initially, I only had one sewing machine. So, couldn’t finish all the orders through it. Therefore, I brought my mother’s sewing machine to my house and completed the orders. Also, I started this business in one room of my house which did not have either proper a door or a window.” (WE_2)

Family-owned assets are incredibly valuable to women entrepreneurs when they are starting their businesses. By using these resources, they are able to establish a strong foundation for their business without taking significant risks. However, the extent to which they can take advantage of these resources depends on the nature of their families and the perspectives of their family members. In essence, the theme ‘Family as a resource hub’ involves sharing responsibilities with family members and having access to family resources. This may be an essential factor contributing to the success of women entrepreneurs at the start-up stage of their business.

Theme 02 – Need of ‘human capital’ for a start-up

Skills and knowledge gained through education, training, and different experiences may regard as human capital (Unger et al., 2011). For entrepreneurs who need to grab opportunities and start up a venture in the business world, investing in human

capital offers significant advantages. This stimulates a creative and intelligent mindset for entrepreneurs that enable them to identify and capitalize on business opportunities in the business environment (Qamariah & Chairunisa Muchtar, 2021). Although they possible to hire the necessary employees when the business reaches the growth stage, women entrepreneur needs to have at least a general education level to identify business opportunities and develop a business up to the growth stage. Highlighting the necessity of education in the start-up stage a respondent stated:

“When I started that business, I didn’t have sufficient money to start up this business. The only thing that I had was my education. I think education is a key foundation to be a successful entrepreneur. The bachelor’s degree and MBA helped me to be an entrepreneur. I applied all the relevant things that I learned during my university life. So, I think education is the strength for an entrepreneur.” (WE_1)

“I did my Advanced-Level Examination in the commerce stream. So, I had little understanding of business accounting knowledge. So, I was able to keep my financial records by myself at the start-up stage.” (WE_2)

There is an ongoing debate on whether a woman's educational level plays a significant role in the success of her start-up (Khan et al., 2021; Hasan et al., 2016). While some argue that female entrepreneurs often rely on intuition rather than scientific principles to build their businesses, this study suggests that having some level of education is important for women who want to become successful entrepreneurs. However, this can depend on the venture that the woman entrepreneur is going to start. Some ventures can be initiated based on intuition or common sense, but others require proper knowledge about the industry.

Additionally, having prior experience makes it easier for women entrepreneurs to make decisions and understand the industry, customer requirements, and how to continue a business in the start-up stage effectively (Silva et al., 2021). In addition, prior working experience guides how to grab business opportunities in the relevant field for a unique and competitive start-up (Gabrielsson & Politis, 2012). The following statements given by the respondent illustrate this point accurately.

"After my bachelor's degree, I worked as manager of a Plant Tissue Laboratory at Ceylon Tobacco Company. I worked with 25 employees of that company and most of them came from rural areas. When I was working with them, I felt like they [employees] were not treated favorably by the employers. As a manager, I was able to develop that section compared to previous years. During that period, I did various projects with different countries by inventing new products through the knowledge I gained from my university. The experience I gained through my first job was highly helpful for this initiation and it gave me confidence." (WE_1)

"As a part-time job, I worked as a preschool teacher, and it [part time job] also helped me to conceptualize new designs by identifying child requirements. Also, preschool educational toys, learning materials, and resources inspired me to conceptualize new designs for the production." (WE_4)

(Roomi & Parrott, 2008) emphasized that previous experience in managerial occupations and industry-specific experience significantly affect women entrepreneurs' success in the startup stage of their ventures. Furthermore, it was discovered that past employment helps women entrepreneurs build networks with industry-related parties, which aided in the establishment of these networks, especially in the business's early stages. These relationships help them make strategic connections, find

mentorship, and acquire the resources that they need for their startup. Also, their prior relationships with industry-specific parties help build more trustworthiness within the industry in the initial stage (Preisendörfer, 1998). While confirming this fact a respondent claimed that:

"At my first job, I worked as a marketing consultant for a company. We [company] were provided different loan facilities for them through the company that I worked with. When I was working in that field, I was able to connect with different farmers in different sectors directly. My first job helped me to gain an understanding of that industry and create a network with the farmers at the initial stage." (WE_5)

Participating in training programs offered by various institutions was highly important for them in the startup stage. These programs can be either formal or informal and prove highly beneficial, especially for women with lower levels of education (Mustapha, 2016; Roomi et al., 2009). Highlighting this point one respondent stated:

"Before starting the business, I followed a course that provides knowledge on educational toys, learning materials, and resources that are needed for children who need special attention."

Also, I participated in different training sessions related to my business that were conducted by different government and non-government organizations. During these sessions, I was able to get more knowledge and understanding related to my business activities as well as to get a thorough understanding of new opportunities and threats in the business environment." (WE_4)

In line with the theory of human capital theory, it can be identified that educational background, prior working experience, or employment and training are essential for

women entrepreneurs to succeed in the start-up stage.

Growth Stage

Theme 01 - Network power in growth

As a business undergoes growth, women need to build up a strong networking system for their businesses beyond their families and peer groups. The establishment of these networks is not an instant process, rather it takes a certain period. Networking provides women entrepreneurs with a wide array of valuable resources for their businesses (Mushtaq Ahmad & Naimat, 2011). The following narrative also explains that external support from government and non-government institutions significantly affects the success of women entrepreneurs in the growth phase of their businesses.

"I closely worked with different government and non-government organizations such as EDB, and IDB, and different associations such as the South Asian Women Entrepreneurs Association (WEConnect), Sri Lanka Women's Chamber of Commerce, etc. These connections helped me expand my business to a further level as well as create a strong network with different stakeholders." (WE_2)

In line with the above finding (Ranasinghe et al., 2008) also demonstrate that institutions such as government or non-government have played an important role in the success of women entrepreneurs. These government and non-government organizations provide networking opportunities and skills training programs for equipping women entrepreneurs with the required entrepreneurial routes, knowledge, and efficiency in growing their businesses (Binti Abdul, 2015). Besides, most women entrepreneurs have memberships in various associations related to and beneficial for their businesses. According to them, this has not

only helped create networks for their businesses but also established recognition among others. (Dharmaratne, 2013) acknowledged that being a member of women entrepreneurs' associations enables collaboration and knowledge-sharing among like-minded women entrepreneurs, both locally and internationally.

Furthermore, it highlighted the significance of financial institutions' role in supporting women entrepreneurs who face different financial challenges during the growth phase. Hence women have to maintain a strong network and reputation with financial institutions. By highlighting this one respondent claimed that:

"With time I wanted to expand my business for the export market. But I didn't have sufficient money for that. I heard that the banks offered loans for women entrepreneurs called "Saubhagya" with a lower level of interest rate. I was able to get that loan from the bank since I closely did my transactions with that bank." (WE_1)

With the growth of the business, women entrepreneurs are able to develop their networks with the financial institutions smoothly. Thus, women entrepreneurs should have sound liaison skills to partner up and create networks with relevant parties to fulfill the needs of their businesses. In essence, the theme 'Network power in growth' involves building up partnerships with government and non-government organizations to create networks. This can be a significant factor contributing to the success of women entrepreneurs at the growth stage of their business.

Theme 02- Adaptation to a formal business plan

Goals become highly achievable when women entrepreneurs plan their business

activities effectively, staying motivated and independent (Hee Hoe et al., 2016, Machado et al., 2016). Even though women can continue their businesses without a structured business plan in the start-up stage, having a clear and organized plan is essential if they expect to run their businesses for the long term. Highlighting the need of a business plan in the growth phase a respondent stated:

"I decided to develop a business plan for my business with a vision and mission in 2015. According to that business plan, my goal was to build a new production plant in 2020. Since I really adhered to my business plan and worked accordingly, I was able to execute my goal in 2019." (WE_2)

These strategic plans should be developed as workable plans with low associated risk, especially considering that the impact of strategic mistakes could be particularly burdensome for SMEs. When inquired about their approach to adapting a formal business plan, it was revealed that many women entrepreneurs prioritize financial and production planning for their businesses as it determines the financial stability and operational efficiency of the business. One respondent claimed that:

"With the expansion of the business, I invested money for my business. However, all the financial investments and other stuff were done according to the financial plan that I made before starting the year. I kept all the financial transaction records in an ordered manner. In the initial phase of the business, all the transactions were recorded by me in a book. With the expansion of my business, I recruited an employee for that [to keep the financial transactions]." (WE_3)

Although women entrepreneurs may initially conduct their financial transactions without a formal or structured approach, it becomes necessary to formalize these processes as the business reaches the growth phase. This

is because making financial and investment decisions can become challenging if carried out improperly. In addition to the financial planning, the respondents highlighted the importance of production planning that needs to keep their products at a higher level of quality. Two women entrepreneurs claimed that:

"Since my products are offered to children, I highly focus on the quality of the products when planning the production. I am highly concerned about the quality and safety of the user. I think it [quality of the products] is one of the most important factors that should be highly focused on sustaining in the competitive business environment."

"Actually, I do not want to compete with giant companies like Hayleys, and Microflora. I always try to give the best quality products to the customers. I first plan the quality of the product before thinking about the price of the product. I spent a significant amount of money to get the best quality of my product and I want to satisfy the customers maximumly."

Based on the above narratives, it can be identified that most women entrepreneurs strive to maintain the quality of their products while adhering to a well-structured production plan. They believe that providing quality products to customers is a hidden factor that can significantly impact their success and growth, rather than solely focusing on cost minimization and profit orientation (Hasan et al., 2016). In line with previous scholarly discussions, it can be proved that adaptation to a formal business plan is essential for women entrepreneurs to succeed in the growth stage.

Maturity Stage

Theme 01 - Business expansion through Research and Development

As a women entrepreneur to reach the maturity stage, finding paths to keep growing and stay competitive in the market is essential. Innovation through research and development is one of the key paths to compete in the market with novel innovations. In the context of women entrepreneurs in SMEs, although they may start their ventures with a limited variety of products, they often pursue innovation as they mature in their industries. This study noted that all the respondents were highly considering innovations when they reached the maturity phase. One respondent claimed:

"I always try to stick to the core values of my business based on Ayurvedic principles while being open to new ideas. This means regularly checking if our practices align with the holistic skincare industry and keeping our commitment to personalized, natural skincare. Currently, I'm working with experienced herbalists, use different research and development processes, and follow sustainable practices to create new Ayurvedic skincare products." (WE_6)

According to this narrative, it can be identified that women are actively seeking novel strategies to remain competitive in the business market and capitalize on new opportunities in the business environment. These strategies may vary in different aspects. Highlighting this point, (Chávez-Rivera et al., 2023) explained that women's inner characteristics and behavior are significantly influenced when selecting strategies for innovations. Another respondent stated that:

"With the growth of this business, I started a hotel chain in Unawatuna which includes eco-lodges that facilitate services with indigenous

medicine. I mainly targeted tourists who come to Sri Lanka. Also, I started an organic plantation business since it also relates to my industry. I think business diversification is needed for an entrepreneur because we can't predict the business environment exactly. So, we should invest in different branches to mitigate that risk." (WE_7)

It can be identified that, while one woman expands her business through research and development (R&D) to achieve product differentiation, focusing on creating unique products within her market, another woman may choose to innovate through product diversification which is entering new markets with unrelated products or services. The way of implementing innovative culture within the business is explained by one respondent this way:

"I give opportunities to my employees to suggest their new design ideas. Sometimes, I select designs through those design ideas. After I select the best design and produce sample products according to that design. I established an incentive system for the employees who give new design ideas. So, they [employees] are motivated to do new designs while doing their responsible tasks." (WE_2)

In line with this, (Lai et al., 2010) explained that innovation is crucial for success in a business venture. To integrate innovation into business practices, business owners need to cultivate the right attitude, conviction, and mindset among their employees to stimulate an innovative culture within the business.

Theme 02 - Sustain with ethics and values

As a women entrepreneur's business enters its maturity phase, navigating the business market with socially acceptable ethics and values becomes essential for ensuring

sustainability. The process of this necessity can vary among women entrepreneurs. While some women entrepreneurs believe in contributing back to their society as they reach this stage, others prioritize maintaining trustworthiness with their stakeholders in an ethical manner. A respondent stated that:

“As the demand for my products grew, I needed to get important certifications like GMP, SLS, and IPI. These certifications are necessary for selling in the export market and dealing with buyers. I also wanted to show my customers, suppliers, and others that my business follows fair practices. From the start, I’ve run my business with good values, so it was easy to get these certifications from the authorities.” (WE_7)

Most women entrepreneurs believe that adhering to fair business practices is essential for sustaining their businesses in the long run. This study revealed that the practices implemented by women entrepreneurs vary based on the nature of the entrepreneur and their industry. Often, cultural and traditional aspects also play a role in influencing these practices. Besides fair practices, it was revealed that the majority of them are focused on social impact initiatives when they reach their maturity period. They believe that these participations directly impact their businesses’ growth in the future. While explaining the importance of social impact initiatives to succeed in the maturity stage, one respondent stated:

“I did some CSR activities during the COVID-19 pandemic period. During this period, I saw a Facebook post posted by the Ministry of Health of the Mathara District requesting mask donations. I thought that was a good chance to help society. So, I decided to contribute to that donation on behalf of my society. So, I donated 7000 masks to Mathara Hospital. Due to this support, I was able to get orders from the hospitals too. Also, the hospital staff helps to get orders from the World Health Organization. It

was also a good opportunity for me to go to the export market.” (WE_2)

Most women entrepreneurs-owned SMEs strived to hold their business in a socially responsible manner, respond to social and community needs, and engage in different social-related activities that take into consideration key stakeholder interests towards their businesses (A. Lincoln, 2017). Furthermore, it was revealed that the majority of respondents were highly concerned about community care and customer care initiatives. Thus, it can be concluded that adhering to fair and favorable business practices with socially accepted ethics and values and being concerned about social impact initiatives or corporate social responsibilities are some factors that can affect the success of women entrepreneurs in their maturity phase. Considering these aspects, the theme 'Sustain with ethics and values' is generated.

CONCLUSION

To succeed in the startup stage, women entrepreneurs should have strong family support to initiate and continue their businesses. Access to utilizing family resources and shared responsibilities with family members are essential factors that were identified through this study as crucial components of family support. In addition to family support, women entrepreneurs need to have access to human capital within themselves at the start-up stage. This includes educational knowledge acquired through school or high school education, prior working experience, or knowledge gained from industry-related training. To succeed in the growth stage, women entrepreneurs must have a strong network to navigate the competitive business environment. It was revealed that most successful women entrepreneurs have strong partnerships with both government and non-government organizations. Additionally, having a formal or structured business plan

with attainable goals and objectives for their businesses is crucial. As the business grows, women entrepreneurs should consider business expansion through research and development. In this regard, they should contemplate product or service development strategies by stimulating an innovative culture within their business. To sustain in the market successfully, women entrepreneurs should adhere to fair business practices by initiating social impact services for society.

Limitations and the areas of future research

The lack of quantifiable and secondary data on this topic is one of the major issues faced when doing analysis and interpreting the findings of this research. Also, more results could have been obtained if the sample was larger. Future researchers can conduct research focusing on women-owned large-scale enterprises in Sri Lanka. Moreover, future researchers can analyze the factors that can be affected by the success of women entrepreneurs by selecting a specific industry or sector in Sri Lanka.

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DETERMINANT OF EARLY RETIREMENT AMONG SRI LANKA NAVY OFFICERS AND WAY FORWARD

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the factors influencing early retirement among officers in the Sri Lanka Navy, particularly in the context of the 2022 economic crisis. Key motivators are highlighted, such as restricted professional progression options, financial restrictions, and work discontent. Retirement choices are heavily influenced by financial challenges, such as insufficient compensation; however, non-financial factors such as an unhealthy work environment and ineffective leadership can also play a significant role. Findings from this study call attention to the necessity for longitudinal studies tracking the changes in retirement intentions as well as the paucity of data on the perspectives of middle-level officers. The study's overarching goal is to fill these knowledge gaps so that the Navy can better implement retention methods and make policy adjustments. In the end, this research adds to our knowledge of the nuances of early retirement in military settings by highlighting the significance of monetary

and non-monetary variables in personnel retention.

KEYWORDS: *Financial Constraints, Job Dissatisfaction, Leadership Ineffectiveness, Limited Career Advancement Opportunities, Toxic Work Environment.*

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Officers in the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) are retiring early at an alarming rate, particularly in the years after the economic crisis of 2022. This trend motivates this research. A large increase in the number of officers departing before finishing their whole careers has been seen between 2018 and 2024, which poses serious challenges to the operational capabilities of the Navy. Although the economic downturn and budgetary restrictions have been named as the primary reasons of this issue, additional factors must be investigated further. Key elements impacting retention, according to the present study,

include financial limitations, job happiness, company culture, leadership effectiveness, and opportunities for career advancement. But money worries are not the only reason people retire early. Officers may also feel pressured to retire early if they experience poor leadership, a negative work climate, or a lack of opportunities for professional progress. The research aims to provide a more sophisticated understanding of the factors affecting early retirement decisions by extensively examining these non-financial variables.

Furthermore, early retirements have a greater impact on the Navy as an institution than on the individuals themselves. We need to find a way to prevent the loss of experienced officers, who might have a negative impact on the organization's operational efficiency and strategic skills. With the goal of informing policy reforms targeted at enhancing leadership, expanding career opportunities for officers, and fostering a more positive work environment, this study examines the factors that contribute to officers retiring early. This study attempts to address the increasing incidence of early retirements in the SLN and to provide solutions that may enhance retention, therefore assisting the Navy in preserving its strength and efficiency under economic problems. The survey focused on the respondent's studies from subordinate rank of Sub Lieutenant (SLt) to Commander (Cdr) with tenure of less than twenty years. Thus, more detailed analysis of these aspects was expected to contribute to the acquisition of a less stereotyped understanding of retirement decisions made by SLN officers. The results aim to provide insights for formulating policies that might improve officer retention and tackle critical factors leading to premature retirement.

ISSUES RELATED TO INDUSTRIES

The premature retirement of officers in the SLN has emerged as an increasing problem, especially considering recent economic

events in the whole country. Naval officers are conventionally obligated to a 20-year initial service tenure, after which they may retire. They may also prolong their service till the age of 55. In recent years, there has been a significant trend of officers choosing early retirement, either upon completing the 20-year service tenure or before it. From 2018 to 2024 (Till 30.09.2024), 397 officers (Cdr and below rank) retired after fulfilling 20 years of service or legal approval. Figure 1.1 graph illustrates the rapid increase in officer (Cdr and below rank) retirement from the SLN after 20 years or less (with legal approval). This tendency has prompted inquiries into the fundamental causes behind such decisions and the wider consequences for the Navy's operational efficacy.

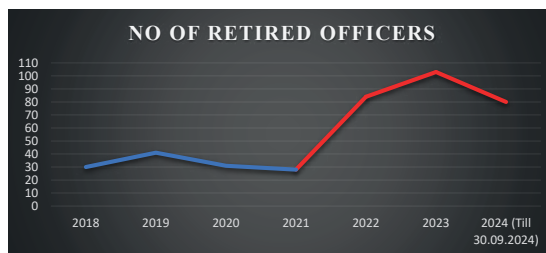


Figure 1.1: No of Retired Officers on Completion 20 Years or Less (with legal approval)

Source: HRIS at SL Navy and Navy General Publications (2024)

The military sector in Sri Lanka, similar to any other business, has various issues affecting personnel demographics, particularly with retention and early retirement tendencies. All industries in Sri Lanka and beyond are feeling the effects of these worries, which are most acute in the SLN. Financial constraints are one of the main issues. The military sector is only one of several that have felt the effects of Sri Lanka's economic crisis of 2022. Several officers are considering retiring early due to the difficulty in maintaining their quality of life due to rising living expenditures, inflation, and

limited income increases. This isn't just an issue for the Navy; it's a problem for all companies when budget cuts affect employee morale and productivity. In many industries, employee retention is heavily influenced by factors like company culture and job satisfaction. People are leaving the military and other fields for a variety of reasons, including financial ones and dissatisfaction with leadership and company culture. High rates of employee turnover are common in industries that fail to provide a positive work environment, clear paths to promotion, and capable management. Like in the private and public sectors, officers in the Navy are unhappy with the effectiveness of leadership and the limited opportunities for professional advancement.

A widespread issue in all industries is the lack of opportunity for professional advancement. People may be tempted to seek out better opportunities elsewhere due to limited development prospects in the defence sector and other fields like healthcare, finance, and information technology. Similar to how many companies struggle to hold on to talented employees because of flat career paths, Navy officers who see little room for advancement are more likely to opt for early retirement. At the end of the day, leadership effectiveness is a major issue in any industry. In the Navy, ineffective leadership has been recognised as a significant factor contributing to early retirements. Industries with inadequate leadership concerns often suffer a decrease in morale and production, which further intensifies retention issues. These concerns are prevalent across all industries, underscoring the need of tackling financial, cultural, and leadership obstacles to enhance retention and overall industry efficacy.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Trend of early retirement among SLN posed substantial challenges to the operational

capabilities of the Navy, as a growing number of officers chose to retire before completing their full service. After analyzing the data from 2018 to 2021, Figure 1.1 illustrates the significant increase in premature retirements of officers after 2022. In 2022 and 2023, the retirement rates climbed to 84 and 103, respectively. As of 30 September 2024, this number reached up to 80 officers in SLN. The SLN now has 1,782 officers with less than 20 years of service, spanning the levels from SLt to Cdr as per the Navy list 2024. Figure 1.2 illustrates the composition of each rank. Out of those officers, many are departing the navy without prior approval and many are being compelled to go before fulfilling the original 20-year bond term by indicating many personal reasons.

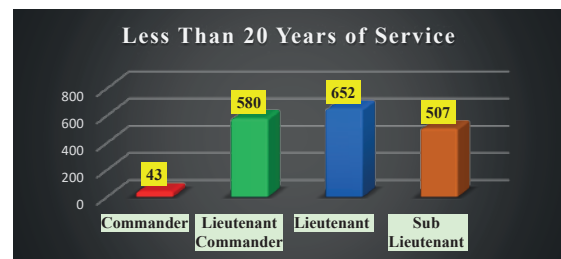


Figure 1.2: No of Officers (SLt to Cdr) having Less Than 20 Years' Service
Source: Navy list (2024)

SLN, which consists of multiple branches, works together to achieve shared objectives. Figure 1:3 shows the officers' evaporation rate in their respective branches. According to the SLN's promotion criteria, all officers can attain the commander rank before completing 20 years of service. However, the offer of commander rank is contingent upon the availability of vacancies within the respective branch. When analyzing the details indicated in Figure 1:3, from 2018 to 2022, it can be seen that a high number of Infantry branch officers (5th Columns in figure 1:3) have retired from the service compared to other branches. Indeed, they are experiencing a decrease in Cdr rank

vacancies within their branch, leading to their retirement from the service. However, from 2022 to the present, there has been a noticeable increase in the retirement rate of officers from other branches also, such as the special executive, engineering, supply, and volunteer forces.

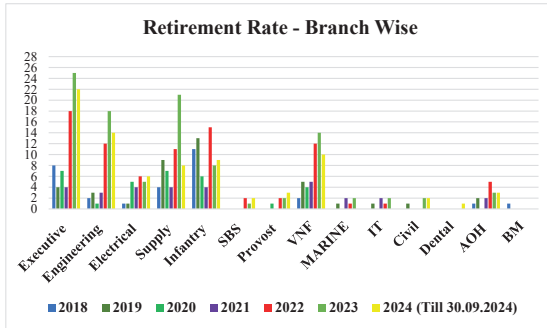


Figure 1.3 Retirement Rate Branches Wise (2018-2024)

Source: HRIS at SL Navy and Navy General Publications (2024)

Upon promoting to the rank of Cdr in the SLN, officers become entitled to use a personal vehicle. Further, SLN offers monthly automobile rentals, fuel allowances and a designated driver. In the past, the majority of the officers aspired to attain the rank of Cdr to benefit from the facilities offered by the SLN. Analysis of the data in Figure 1:4 reveals that Cdr level officers left from the SLN at an accelerated rate after the year 2022. In general, we can understand that the economic crisis had a huge impact on their professional career. However, other factors affecting the early retirement of officers at SLN must be identified.



Figure 1.4 Retirement Rate Rank Wise (2018-2024: Cdr and LCDr)

Source: HRIS at SL Navy and Navy General Publications (2024)

The empirical findings revealed that while financial constraints were often identified as key motivators for early retirement, they were not the only factors involved. The researches emphasised the significance of non-financial elements, like company culture and work satisfaction, which profoundly impacted officers' judgments. A toxic environment at work and inadequate leadership resulted in diminished morale and motivation, forcing officers to choose early retirement to escape adverse circumstances. The absence of job advancement options increased emotions of stagnation, leading to a desire for change. The researches indicated that current literature mostly emphasises financial factors, often overlooking the wider context of workplace dynamics and individual ambitions. Then existing situation highlighted the need for a thorough understanding of the complex nature of early retirement among Navy officers by incorporating these empirical data. Resolving these difficulties required a comprehensive strategy that takes into account budgetary limitations as well as the psychological and social aspects affecting officers' career development. This awareness is essential for formulating efficient retention measures and guaranteeing the Navy's operational preparedness amid increment of retirement rates.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Research objectives are as follows:

- a. To assess the impact of Financial Constraints on Early Retirement Intention.
- b. To assess the impact of Toxic Work Environment on Early Retirement Intention.
- c. To assess the impact of Job Dissatisfaction on Early Retirement Intention.
- d. To assess the impact of Leadership Ineffectiveness on Early Retirement Intention.
- e. To assess the impact of Limited Career Advancement Opportunities on Early Retirement Intention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

UNDERPINNING THEORY OVERVIEW

“A theory is not some hunch, or half-baked idea that you come up with while taking a shower, or being under the influence of something or other.” (Tucker, 2009)

SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is a psychological and sociological paradigm asserting that human interactions are established via a subjective cost-benefit evaluation. The concept was first formulated by George Homans in the 1950s and further developed by Peter Blau and Richard Emerson, posits that people endeavor to optimize rewards while minimizing costs in their interpersonal relationships (See Figure 2.1). SET posits that relationships are seen as exchanges where people assess the advantages received (e.g., emotional support, recognition, or work

satisfaction) against the incurred costs (e.g., time, effort, or stress) (A'yuninnisa and Saptoto, 2015). When the anticipated benefits surpass the expenditures, people are more likely to maintain their commitment to the connection. If costs surpass gains, people may reevaluate their participation or pursue alternatives, perhaps resulting in premature cessation of partnerships, including employment (Memon et al., 2017).

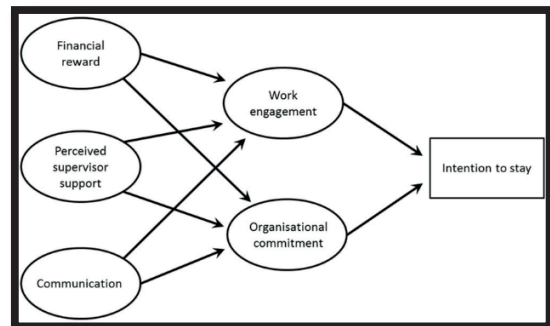


Figure 2.1: Application of Social Exchange Theory on Intention to Stay at Work Place

Source: Cropley et al. (2020)

RESOURCE BASED THEORY

Resource-Based Theory (RBT) is a theory that underscores the significance of a firm's internal resources and capabilities as determinants of competitive advantage and performance. Originally proposed by academics, Jay Barney in the early 1990s, RBT asserts that not all resources have equal value; rather, resources must exhibit certain attributes to provide sustainable competitive advantage (Rhoades et al., 2001). RBT argues that valuable resources are characterized by their rareness, inimitability, and non-substitutability (See Figure 2.2). Resources must be both critical for the organisation's operations and challenging for competitors to imitate (Bothma and Roodt, 2013). Examples of these resources include proficient individuals, proprietary technology, robust brand recognition, and distinctive corporate culture.

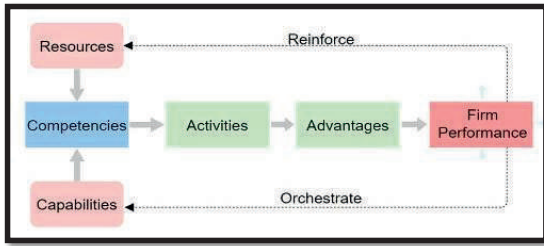


Figure 2.2: Resource Based View Diagram
Source: <https://gitmind.com> (2024)

PLANNED BEHAVIOR THEORY

The Planned Behavior Theory (PBT), formulated by Icek Ajzen in the 1980s, asserts that individual conduct is determined by behavioral intentions, which are shaped by three key factors: Attitude toward the activity, subjective norms, and Perceived behavioral control (Vandenberghe and Tremblay, 2008). This theory offers an extensive framework for comprehending how people make judgments and how these decisions might forecast future behaviors.

a. Attitude toward the Behavior

This component pertains to an individual's favorable or unfavorable assessment of engaging in an activity. In the context of early retirement among SLN officers, if officers see retirement favorably as a pathway to personal satisfaction or enhanced financial security, they are more inclined to plan to resign.

b. Subjective Norms

This component denotes the perceived societal pressure to participate in or abstain from an activity. Officers may be swayed by the perspectives of their colleagues, superiors, or family over retiring, so affecting their goals (Jędrzejczak-Gas and Wyrwa, 2020).

c. Perceived Behavioral Control

This factor relates to the apparent simplicity or complexity of executing the activity. Officers with sufficient financial resources and support are more inclined to plan for retirement (Tett and Meyer, 1993).

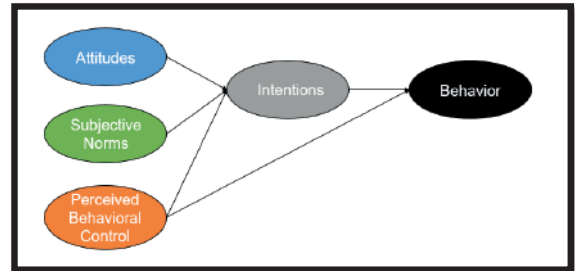


Figure 2.3: Theory of Planned Behavior
Source: <https://ua.pressbooks.pub> (2024)

INTRODUCE VARIABLES

Financial Constraints

Financial restrictions denote the economic difficulties people have owing to limited income, escalating living expenses, or inadequate financial resources (Abdelmoula and Boudabbous, 2021). SET posits that workers evaluate the advantages they acquire from their employment in relation to the associated expenses. When the financial compensation of a position fails to satisfy personal or familial requirements, workers may see the exchange as inequitable and may pursue alternatives, such as early retirement (Khan and Mishra, 2013). The RBT posits that financial resources are essential assets enabling workers to meet their personal and professional responsibilities. Insufficient remuneration may hinder workers' financial capacity to manage escalating job demands, resulting in premature departure choices (Khan et al., 2012). Financial hardship may impact people's views and attitudes on retirement, which in turn influences their intentions to

retire early, according to the PBT (Davies et al., 2017).

Toxic Work Environment

The hallmarks of a toxic work environment include pervasive negativity, poor interpersonal connections, a lack of support, and an unpleasant work culture in general. According to SET (Chien-Wen, 2008), employees stay with companies that they feel valued and supported by. When employees experience mental and emotional stresses at work that outweigh any benefits, they may decide to leave the company altogether or retire early as a result of the toxic work environment. Organisational performance is favorably or adversely impacted by workplace culture, according to RBT, which is an important intangible asset. Workers' emotional and psychological resources are drained by a toxic work environment, which in turn reduces their dedication and increases their intents to leave (Kosteas, 2007). According to the PBT, employees' views about their jobs are negatively impacted by a toxic work environment, which in turn influences their intentions to quit. According to Lane et al. (2010), employees are more likely to plot early retirement if they believe their health might suffer if they stay in their current jobs.

Job Dissatisfaction

Employees experience job dissatisfaction when their expectations about their work role, environment, or incentives are not fulfilled, leading to negative feelings towards their jobs. Dissatisfaction, according to SET, occurs when one party breaches the presumption of reciprocity between the employer and the employee. When employees feel undervalued or unappreciated, they may decide to quit their jobs before their contract is up (Shore and Martin, 1989). According to RBT, human capital is an important asset for companies,

and when employees are unhappy in their jobs, the value of this asset decreases. When employees are unhappy in their jobs, they may cut down on their efforts and perhaps retire early (Jerrell et al., 2014). According to Rabbi et al. (2015), the PBT explains how dissatisfaction impacts factors including attitudes, subjective standards, and perceived control over work-life balance, which in turn influences the desire to retire early.

Leadership Ineffectiveness

When a leader is unable to effectively guide, motivate, or help their team in achieving organizational goals, we say that leadership is ineffective. According to Akhila (2018), a key component of effective leadership is fostering an environment where employees and management can trust and support one another, which in turn benefits both parties. Inadequate leadership leads to a breakdown in the two-way relationship, which in turn makes employees feel unengaged and undervalued, which in turn may make them think about leaving their jobs early. According to RBT, effective leadership is a key factor in an organization's success. According to Luchak et al. (2008), when leaders fail to inspire their employees, it leads to a decline in human capital, which in turn causes higher turnover rates, disengagement, and early retirement. According to the PBT, employees' perceptions of their own agency in their careers are negatively impacted by ineffective leadership (Bulitua, 2006).

Limited Career Advancement Opportunities

Workers experience limited career progression when they realize their current roles do not provide enough opportunities for growth, advancement, or development. According to Javed et al. (2014), workers may seek out alternative options, including early retirement, when they feel their professional goals are unmet, which leads to an imbalance

in the exchange relationship. According to RBT, one of the most important organisational assets for retaining people is the opportunity for professional growth. The lack of these opportunities might make employees feel like their careers are stagnating, which can make them less invested in the company over the long run and perhaps make them want to leave early (Shamsuzzoha and Shumon, 2007). The PBT states that employees' views of their own future inside the company are affected by limited opportunities for advancement (Smith et al., 2010). They may decide to quit their job too soon if they don't see any room for growth or promotion; there's no need in staying in a job that doesn't support their career goals.

Early Retirement Intention

An individual's decision to leave the workforce before the traditional retirement age is known as their early retirement intention. This decision is generally based on an unfair trade, according to SET (Munnell et al., 2015). In this case, the perceived costs of staying in the work (such as financial load or job dissatisfaction) outweigh the benefits. In order to regain control of their own lives, both professionally and personally, employees have the option to retire early. According to RBT, firms lose valuable human resources when employees leave early due to reasons like financial constraints or limited career opportunities. According to this theory, in order for businesses to hold on to their experienced employees, they need to be good stewards of their resources (Dorn and Sousa-Poza, 2007). According to the PBT, factors such as attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control impact the likelihood of planning for early retirement. According to Alcover et al. (2014), employees who have a negative outlook on their job, feel strong social pressure to resign, and believe they have a lot of control over their retirement decision are more likely to desire to leave early.

EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Financial Constraints and Early Retirement Intention

A large body of research points to budgetary constraints as a major motivator for early retirement. Researchers Rashid (2020) found that personnel of the Royal Malaysian Navy were more likely to retire early due to rising living costs and inadequate pay. Rashid (2020) found that financial worries were worsened by economic instability, especially in the wake of economic crises, which led to an upsurge in retirement petitions among Royal Malaysian Navy Commanders. However, although budgetary concerns are often acknowledged, their impact on different levels of the military varies, suggesting the need for rank-specific evaluations in order to implement targeted remedies.

H₁₁: There is an impact of Financial Constraints on Early Retirement Intentions.

Toxic Work Environment and Early Retirement Intention

The culture of the workplace significantly influences early retirement intentions, as shown by a research conducted by Jaiswal et al. (2015) on members of the Indian Navy. The study highlighted that leadership support, unit morale, and organisational coherence were critical elements of workplace culture that profoundly affected job satisfaction and therefore, retirement choices. Supportive and respected employment settings significantly reduce the probability of premature retirement among workers. Conversely, toxic or unsupportive cultures often result in increased discontent, compelling individuals to choose early retirement as a means of evading adverse working circumstances (Cranny et al., 2014).

H₂₁: There is an impact of Toxic Work Environment on Early Retirement Intentions.

Job Dissatisfaction and Early Retirement Intention

Job satisfaction significantly influences employees' choices about continued employment or early retirement. Khaira et al. (2021) discovered that persons with elevated work satisfaction levels were much less inclined to contemplate early retirement. The research, centered on military people, indicated that elements such as purposeful work, acknowledgment, and equilibrium between personal and professional life enhanced job satisfaction. Consequently, content workers demonstrate more dedication to their roles and are less likely to depart prematurely.

H31 : There is an impact of Job Dissatisfaction on Early Retirement Intentions

Leadership Ineffectiveness and Early Retirement Intention

The efficacy of leadership is a recurring subject in several research. Sejbaek et all. (2012) discovered that successful leadership styles cultivated a feeling of connection and commitment among military members, thereby decreasing early retirement rates. On the other side, Rashid (2020) found that the Royal Malaysian Navy's lack of effective leadership caused a decline in morale and engagement among officers, which in turn caused many to retire early. There may be implications for Navy leadership development programme stemming from this comparative study's emphasis on the role of contextual leadership practices in affecting personnel retention (Qureshi et al., 2013).

H41: There is an impact of Leadership Ineffectiveness on Early Retirement Intentions

Limited Career Advancement Opportunities and Early Retirement Intention

One of the most important aspects of retirement planning is the likelihood of career advancement. Military personnel are more likely to retire early if they feel their careers are not progressing quickly enough, according to study by Arian, Soleimani, and Oghazian (2018). In the Indian context, Jaiswal et al. (2015) found that certain officers were unhappy with limited advancement opportunities, which had a significant impact on their decisions to retire early. Though many military settings recognize the value of career advancement, the specific challenges to advancement may differ, necessitating individualized approaches to promote professional growth (Bockerman and Ilmakunnas, 2017).

H51: There is an impact of Limited Career Advancement Opportunities on Early Retirement Intentions

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

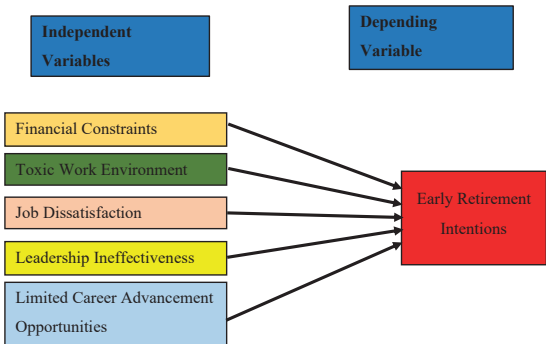


Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework
Source: Author (2024)

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study Onion Model, created by Saunders et al., offers a systematic framework for study design. It has many layers, each symbolizing distinct facets of the research process.

Model

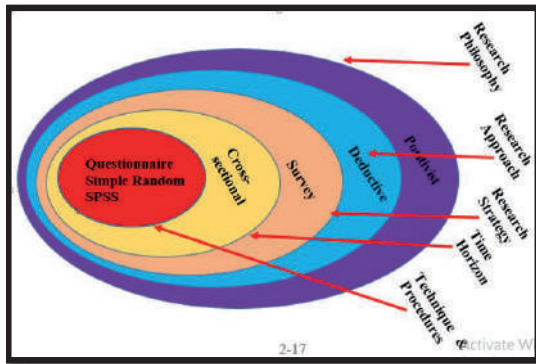


Figure 3.2: Onion Model

Source: Author (2024)

a. Research Philosophy

The study was conducted from a positivist perspective, with an emphasis on quantitative methods for gathering empirical evidence. Using this approach, the researcher was able to dispassionately look at how various factors influencing the desire to retire early interacted with one another.

b. Research Approach

Researcher took a deductive approach, drawing on prior knowledge and existing literature on the topic of early retirement to formulate hypotheses. Collecting and analyzing actual data was the goal in order to assess these claims.

c. Research Strategy

The researcher surveyed a subset of the Sri Lanka Navy's officers using a pre-designed questionnaire. By using this method, quantifiable data could be collected, which in turn allowed the researcher to study the relationships between the variables of interest.

d. Time Horizon

The study collected data at a single point in time, using a cross-sectional methodology. The researcher was able to learn the officers' current feelings and plans for early retirement because of this design.

e. Data Collection Methods

Using a standardized questionnaire that had questions on Likert scales, data was collected. In order to make the questionnaire more accessible and encourage participation, it was distributed both physically and online via a Google form.

f. Sampling Design

Out of a total population of around 1,782, 150 officers were selected using a basic random selection approach. The sample was thoughtfully distributed across different levels and years of service, enabling to get a comprehensive understanding of perspectives on early retirement from all walks of life.

g. Data Analysis

The SPSS was used to analyse the collected data. In order to gather demographic information, descriptive statistics were run. Then, inferential statistics were used to look for connections between different variables and the desire to retire early. To find out what

factors influence officers' desire to retire early, researchers used regression and correlation analyses.

POPULATION

The study population included roughly 1,782 SLN officers with less than 20 years of service (Refer Figure 1.2). The study analyzed Navy officers at their 20-year service milestone, focusing on their experiences and perspectives. The population included officers of varying grades, allowing for a diverse representation of experiences. The research aimed to identify factors influencing early retirement among Navy officers, such as financial limitations, workplace culture, job satisfaction, leadership efficacy, and career progression opportunities, which are critical variables in this demographic.

SAMPLING DESIGN

The sample methodology for this study used a probability sampling method, namely simple random sampling due to known populations (Sekaran 2003, p. 269). The aim of probability sampling is to keep sampling error to the minimum (Bryman and Bell 2003, p. 93). Lynn (2002) asserts that probability sampling is often thought to be the only defensible selection method for serious scientific study unless such a sampling is not feasible. Officers were classified into several tiers according to their ranks to get a comprehensive array of viewpoints on early retirement.

SAMPLE SIZE

An important element of sample design is the determination of the sample size (Lynn 2002, p. 192). A reliable and valid sample ought to enable the researcher to generalize the findings from the sample to the population under investigation. To select the sampling size used the Sekaran rules of thumb method rather

than selecting Morgan table due to limited time constrain. Sample sizes larger than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most research as per thumb of rules (Sekaran, 2003). Hence, sample size of 150 SLN officers was chosen for the study.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study focused on early retirement factors among SLN personnel, adhering to ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. Participants were informed about the research's goals, methods, and rights, and were informed they could withdraw at any time. Personal identifiers were eliminated from data collection, and responses were anonymized to protect participant identities. Data was securely archived and used solely for academic purposes. Questions were courteous and non-intrusive, reducing discomfort for participants. These ethical guidelines maintained honesty and respect, enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the results. These ethical issues reinforced the research's integrity and fostered participants' faith in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Beta Coefficient (β)	p-value	Significance (p<0.05?)	Interpretation Summary
Financial Constraints	4.28	0.55	0.290	0.000	Significant	High mean indicates strong perception of financial constraints, and regression confirms a statistically significant positive influence on Early Retirement Intentions. It is the strongest predictor.
Workplace Culture	3.61	0.67	0.106	0.180	Not Significant	Perceived workplace culture is moderately high, but its statistical effect on Early Retirement Intentions is not supported by regression.
Job Satisfaction	3.56	0.76	0.262	0.005	Significant	Although satisfaction level is moderately high, lower job satisfaction significantly influences Early Retirement Intentions.
Leadership Effectiveness	3.91	0.77	0.082	0.302	Not Significant	Respondents view leadership relatively positively, however leadership does not significantly predict Early Retirement Intentions.
Career Advancement Opportunities	3.69	0.75	0.259	0.000	Significant	Opportunities are viewed at a moderately high level, yet limited career progression significantly increases Early Retirement Intentions.
Early Retirement Intentions (Dependent Variable)	3.72	0.82	—	—	—	Indicates a generally high tendency toward early retirement among respondents.

Descriptive statistics show that all study variables scored in the moderate to high level category based on the mean classifications. This indicates respondents experience considerable levels of financial constraints, workplace culture factors, job satisfaction aspects, leadership perceptions, and career advancement concerns in relation to early retirement intentions.

Regression analysis identified Financial Constraints ($\beta=0.290$; $p=0.000$), Job Satisfaction ($\beta=0.262$; $p=0.005$), and Career Advancement Opportunities ($\beta=0.259$; $p=0.000$) as statistically significant determinants of Early Retirement Intentions. Workplace Culture and Leadership Effectiveness do not exhibit significant effects within this model. Financial Constraints is the most influential variable.

Financial Constraints and Early Retirement Intentions

There is a strong relationship between financial constraints and intentions to retire early, according to the results of the hypothesis test. A beta coefficient (β) of 0.431 and a p-value below 0.05 are evidence that financial limitations have a significant impact on early retirement aspirations, according to the regression study. This suggests that the likelihood of officers intending to retire early also rises as monetary demands rise.

Toxic Work Environment and Early Retirement Intentions

Premature retirement plans are unaffected by a toxic work environment, according to the findings. According to the regression analysis, the beta coefficient (β) is 0.130 and the p-value is more than 0.05, which means that this variable does not significantly predict whether officers would retire early. This suggests that there is no direct relationship between a hostile work environment and

intentions to retire early, even if it may impact job satisfaction.

Job Dissatisfaction and Early Retirement Intentions

Plans for early retirement are greatly affected by job dissatisfaction. A beta coefficient (β) of 0.284 and a p-value below 0.05 are shown by the regression analysis, suggesting that a higher level of job discontent is associated with a higher desire to retire early. Findings like this highlight the significance of raising officer's happiness on the job as a retention strategy.

Leadership Ineffectiveness and Early Retirement Intentions

Leadership ineffectiveness does not significantly affect early retirement plans, according to the findings. Inadequate leadership does not substantially predict early retirement intentions among officers, as shown by the regression analysis, which yields a beta coefficient (β) of 0.088 and a p-value above 0.05. More research into the complexities of leadership's impact on retirement decisions is required in light of this finding.

Limited Career Advancement Opportunities and Early Retirement Intentions

Aspirations to retire early are significantly linked to a lack of opportunities for career advancement. Perceived limitations in career progression are linked to higher intentions to retire early, according to the regression analysis, which shows a beta coefficient (β) of 0.284 and a p-value lower than 0.05. This conclusion highlights the need of creating transparent pathways for promotions in order to enhance military personnel retention.

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Financial Constraints

Financial stability is crucial for Naval officers, as this finding shows. Young officers may choose for early retirement as a solution to increased stress and dissatisfaction caused by economic factors such as low income and rising living expenditures. To reduce the likelihood of early retirement and alleviate these pressures, businesses might think about changing their pay policies or instituting financial support programme.

Toxic Work Environment

Since there is no significant relationship, it is possible that other factors play a more crucial role in determining retirement decisions. Recognizing that job dissatisfaction, a leading indicator of early retirement, may be a consequence of a toxic work environment is critical. In an effort to boost officer's morale and, by extension, their likelihood of retiring, many companies are implementing initiatives to improve workplace culture and provide more resources for officers.

Job Dissatisfaction

Inadequate appreciation, an unhealthy work-life balance, and boring work are three of the main causes of officer's dissatisfaction with their jobs, and this link shows how companies may help. By implementing targeted interventions to improve work happiness, organizations may increase staff retention rates and lower the likelihood of early retirement.

Leadership Ineffectiveness

Leadership is an important part of organisational dynamics, although it may

not have as big of an effect on officers' plans to retire as other factors. A more positive work experience and fewer causes for early retirement could result from strong leadership. Leadership development and training should be an organisation's top priority in order to foster a positive work environment, which might have an indirect impact on officers' retention.

Limited Career Advancement Opportunities

This link highlights how important it is to set up clear paths for career advancement inside the Navy. Officers may decide to retire early in order to pursue other opportunities if they feel their career progression is stalling. In order to encourage officers to improve in their careers and hold on to key personnel, many organisations are looking to mentorship and other career development initiatives.

Early retirement intentions among Naval officers are significantly predicted by financial constraints, job dissatisfaction, and limited career advancement opportunities, according to the statistics. Retirement decisions are unaffected by a toxic work environment or ineffective leadership. Organisations should focus on addressing the most pressing concerns in order to improve retention and create a more positive work atmosphere.

DISCUSSION OF KEY INSIGHTS

Financial Constraints as a Primary Driver

Because of the strong correlation between financial restraints and plans to retire early, it is clear that economic concerns significantly impact personnel decisions. Early retirement is being considered more seriously as a viable option when individuals face increasingly severe financial challenges. Based on this finding, the Navy should prioritise financial wellness, whether via salary adjustments,

financial planning services, or benefits that reduce financial strain.

Job Dissatisfaction's Impact on Retention

The importance of officer's happiness in retention strategies is shown by the strong relationship between work discontent and intentions to retire early. Crucial components for maintaining enhanced job happiness include recognition, work-life balance, and meaningful employment. To reduce the number of officers who leave their jobs prematurely, Navy should listen to their officers' feedback and implement changes that make them happier in their jobs.

Limited Career Advancement Opportunities

The importance of companies offering clear and attainable career paths is highlighted by the finding that limited professional advancement opportunities have a significant impact on the desire to retire early. Professional development programme, mentorship, and transparent promotion processes are ways in which organizations may foster a growth and retention culture, which in turn reduces the likelihood that officers would seek early retirement as a result of feeling stuck in their current positions.

Toxic Work Environment and Leadership Ineffectiveness

Although leadership ineffectiveness and a toxic work environment are important factors in job satisfaction, they may not be the main factors that determine retirement decisions, since they have minimal impact on early retirement intentions. In light of the fact that these difficulties may have an indirect effect on job satisfaction and, by extension, retirement goals, it is critical that they be addressed. In order to boost morale across the board, organizations should focus on creating

a positive work environment and learning effective leadership practices.

Interconnectedness of Factors

According to the results, there is a connection between the variables that influence the desire to retire early. Feelings of stagnation and frustration may deepen when professional advancement is limited, and financial constraints may amplify job dissatisfaction. Given these interconnections, it's clear that a holistic approach is necessary to tackle the goal of early retirement. Organisations should use comprehensive strategies that tackle several factors at once in order to create an environment that encourages officers to stay.

Requirement for Customized Interventions

The findings point to the possibility that different factors may need priority-based responses. To help those who are struggling financially, we may look into financial support programme. To help those who are facing limited opportunities for progress, we can promote professional development activities. When companies take the time to learn about their workers' unique needs, they may craft targeted initiatives to address the root causes of early retirement goals.

Looking at these important points highlights how important it is to understand the complicated nature of young officers' early retirement goals in SLN. Financial constraints, job dissatisfaction, and limited career advancement opportunities are significant aspects that SLN may address, which might lead to improved retention and a more supportive work environment. Recognising the interdependence of these factors also allows for a more comprehensive strategy for managing people, which in turn improves business outcomes.

CONCLUSION

According to the research on intention of early retirement among SLN officers' decisions to leave the service too soon are heavily influenced by financial concerns such as rising living costs and inadequate pay. But these monetary factors are related to psychological and organizational dynamics; for example, officers may see early retirement as a viable option if they are unhappy with their jobs and perceive little room for progress in their careers. Previous studies have mostly concentrated on financial aspects influencing retirement decisions, but this study fills a major need in the literature by examining non-financial variables. A better picture of the retirement scene in SLN is provided by this research. Changes in retirement plans over time, particularly in reaction to policy shifts or economic fluctuations, can only be studied using a longitudinal approach. Research comparing different branches of the military or the military with civilian sectors may provide light on unique factors affecting retention in different contexts. The research shows that if we want to stop young Naval officers from retiring too soon, we need a complete plan. Stakeholders may improve their tactics to increase officer retention and support organisational stability by considering both financial and non-financial factors. In order to create focused interventions that might encourage Navy officers to stay in the service for the long period and decrease the number of officers who retire early, this information is vital.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Financial Constraints

SLN can overcome financial constraints by implementing the following suggestions:

a. Salary Review and Adjustment

To ensure it is competitive and in line with the cost of living, do a comprehensive assessment of the current pay system with Sri Lankan government. Make salary adjustments on a regular basis to account for changes in the economy and inflation.

b. Financial Advisory Services

Help officers to become better money managers by instituting financial advising services. To better manage their finances, officers may get instruction on topics like budgeting, saving, and investing.

c. Incentive Initiatives

Recognise exceptional service and contributions by implementing performance-based allowances and incentives. Officers' hard work may be further recognised and rewarded monetarily in this way.

d. Emergency Financial Assistance

Need to increase the quantity of loans in the SLN and make it easier to get them quickly so that we can deal with unexpected financial problems. Immediate financial constraints and the likelihood of early retirement may both be alleviated with this help.

JOB DISSATISFACTION

SLN can overcome job dissatisfaction by implementing the following suggestions:

a. Officers Engagement Programme.

If you want to know how happy your officers are in their jobs and where they could be

unhappy, you should poll them every so often. Make use of the feedback to develop targeted plans to address dissatisfaction.

b. Recognition and Reward Programme

To recognize officers for their efforts and achievements, formal recognition programme should be put in place. Awards, public commendations, and other forms of non-discriminatory recognition may go a long way toward boosting morale and job satisfaction.

c. Policies for Work-Life Balance

Back policies that make it easier to juggle work and personal life of officers, such as those that allow for more flexibility in scheduling, allow for freedom work, and guarantee enough time off. Gains in happiness and contentment at work could be substantial outcomes of a fair approach.

d. Encouraging Professional Atmosphere

Promote an environment of open dialogue and mutual aid inside the SLN. Encourage upper-level management to be approachable and responsive to staff concerns, creating a climate where officers feel valued and recognised.

Limited Career Advancement Opportunities

SLN can overcome Limited Career Advancement Opportunities by implementing the following suggestions:

a. Clear Career Pathways

Outline the necessary steps and qualifications for officers to develop their careers and make those paths available to them. Because of this transparency, officers may be

better able to grasp the growth opportunities available to them in the Navy.

b. Mentorship and Coaching Initiatives

Establish a programme which links junior officers with more seasoned executives to provide them with guidance and instruction. Helping officers to find their way along their chosen career paths. This provides guidance, support, and insights into moving up the corporate ladder.

c. Opportunities for Professional Development

Invest in programmes that help officers grow professionally by paying for things like seminars, courses, and training that are directly related to their jobs. This might enhance their skills and abilities, giving them an edge when applying for promotions.

d. Regular Performance Reviews.

Periodically assess officers' performance and provide feedback along with suggestions (In addition to existing method of NAV 206 assessment) for how they might improve. Staff members should feel supported in their efforts to advance in their careers, hence it is important that these assessments include conversations about goals and methods for doing so.

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EMERGING RISKS OF VIRTUAL CURRENCIES IN DEVELOPING ECONOMIES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

The research investigates the developing economies and virtual currencies to identify its emerging risks on national security. The intensified use of virtual currencies in the present world offer both opportunities and threats for developing economies, reflecting possible consequences for national security. The research explores how decentralized digital currencies infiltrate developing economies and create economic vulnerabilities, regulatory gaps, and geopolitical dynamics. Referring interdisciplinary literature through official policy documents, regulatory statements, academic publications, and reports from multilateral organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank and UNCTAD, also it is identified the key risk domains such as financial instability, illicit finance, hacking, and erosion of monetary sovereignty. It revealed that how these implications are amplified by decentralization, anonymity, limited supply, low operation costs, Innovative nature, Unregulated and non-institutional control, high volatility, technological dependence,

illegal money laundering and illicit acts and global accessibility and Inclusion of virtual currencies. Further it observed how economic security is damaged by pre-identified virtual currency characteristics highlighting the need for adaptive digital governance frameworks. Finally, it urge immediate policy responses on multidimensional approach for balance innovation with security, ensuring that digital finance contributes to inclusive development without undermining sovereign stability.

KEYWORDS: *Developing Economies, Illicit Finance, National Security, Virtual Currencies.*

INTRODUCTION

The history of currency reflects humanity's evolving methods of trade, value storage, and economic organization. Initially it spans from primitive exchanges (Barter system), to commodity money, to metallic money and to paper money (Beattie, 2024). Inception of banking system, fiat money started to flow and later it developed to credit cards and electronic banking system in the 20th century.

Now, the world is experiencing digital and cryptocurrencies (McKenzie, 2024).

Virtual currencies are digital representations of value that exist only in electronic form and are not issued by central banks. They are typically decentralized, unregulated, and used within specific virtual communities or platforms. Corporate Finance Institute (n.d.) and Financial Action Force (n.d.) revealed that digital existence, operation on decentralized networks, unregulated status, peer-to-peer transactions, limited acceptance, volatility and anonymity as the key characteristics of virtual currencies.

Developing economies are nations that subjected to the process of industrialization, and yet to achieve high economic growth, economic infrastructure and the standards of human development. Furthermore, it is often facing structural challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and limited infrastructure. Agarwal (2025) and GeeksforGeeks (2025) identified Low Per Capita Income, high poverty rates, dependence on agriculture, low levels of industrialization, underdeveloped infrastructure, high population growth and unemployment, limited access to technology, innovation, and vulnerability to External Shocks.

Positive effects of virtual currencies on Developing Economies are easy access to financial services for unbanked populations due to limited banking infrastructure (Narula, 2021), reduction of transaction fees for remittances (World Bank, 2022), enhancement on micro-investments and peer-to-peer trade, cross-border payments and capital access (Olayemi, 2023), stimulation to fintech growth and digital literacy (Fernandez-Villaverde, 2022). Negative effects or risks involved with virtual currencies are Regulatory Uncertainty due to risks of fraud and misuse (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2021), high volatility destabilizing

local economies (Yermack, 2013), greater interconnection with internet availability and digital literacy (UNCTAD, 2022) and capital flight and tax evasion reducing government revenue (Zohar, 2015).

According to Bock & Berkowitz (1966), the term 'National Security' considered as the decisions and actions imperative to protect domestic core values from external threats. Azar and Moon (1988) pointed out that the national security is a bigger concept including internal security, food security, health security and economic security, has greater concern in countries with developing economies, not only limiting to military and defense dimensions.

Because of poor economic situation, developing economies inherently vulnerable to external threats due to structural weaknesses, limited fiscal space, and dependence on global financial and trade systems. In fact, it seems that national security heavily depends on economic status of the country. As Edo & Oigiangbe (2024) pointed out that developing economies tends to show greater possibility to face external shocks such as global financial volatility, commodity price fluctuations, pandemics, and geopolitical tensions. These vulnerabilities stem from several interrelated factors such as structural and financial fragility, trade and commodity dependence, institutional and policy constraints and feedback loops and long-term risks (International Monetary Fund, 2025).

So, Economic security plays a crucial role in defining national security. A country's ability to maintain stable growth, protect its key industries, and ensure access to necessary resources directly impacts its defense capabilities, strategic independence, and capacity to withstand external threats. A strong economy enables the financing of military operations, investment in technological innovation, and the maintenance of social stability, all pillars

of national security. Conversely, economic vulnerability can expose a country to foreign influence, internal unrest, and a decline in its international influence (Retter et al,2020).

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the risks associated with virtual currencies on developing country economies and their effects on security strata?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To investigate emerging risks associated with virtual currencies on developing economies and their effects on national security.

LITERATURE REVIEW

What is Crypto Currency?

Crypto Currency or Virtual currency (Money) refers to a digital representation of value that is issued and controlled by its developers, used and accepted among members of a specific virtual community, and not backed by a central bank or public authority (European Central Bank, 2012). It emphasizes the decentralized and non-regulatory nature of virtual currencies that differ from traditional fiat (normal) currencies.

Corporate Finance Institute (n.d.) identified digital existence (Virtual currencies exist solely in electronic form and have no physical counterpart like coins or banknotes, operation on decentralized networks (operate on decentralized networks using block-chain technology, without central oversight) and unregulated status (not governed by financial institutions or central banks, making them distinct from fiat currencies) as key characteristics of virtual currencies while Financial Action Force (n.d.) recognized peer-

to-peer transactions (enable direct transactions between users without intermediaries), limited acceptance (restricted usage to specific platforms, communities, or merchants who choose to accept them), volatility (significant fluctuation due to market speculation and lack of regulation) and degree of Anonymity (appeal to users seeking privacy but also raises concerns for regulatory bodies).

The Third World Economy and Crypto Currency (Positives and negatives)

Todaro & Smith (2020) define developing economy as a nation with a lower living standard, underdeveloped industrial base, and low Human Development Index (HDI) relative to other countries. Furthermore, he mentioned that these economies often face challenges such as poverty, limited access to healthcare and education, and unstable political environments. So, nations that subjected to the process of industrialization, and yet to achieve high economic growth and standards of a developed nation especially income and human development can be considered as developing economies. In fact, poverty, higher unemployment, and limited infrastructure seem to be a part of it.

Agarwal (2025) identified Low Per Capita Income (significantly lower income per person, which limits savings, investment, and consumption), High poverty rates (A substantial portion of the population lives below the poverty line, often lacking access to basic services like healthcare and education), dependence on agriculture (dominant sector, with limited diversification into manufacturing or services), Low levels of Industrialization (lack advanced industries and rely heavily on exporting raw materials) as characteristics of developing economies while GeeksforGeeks (2025) identified Underdeveloped Infrastructure (inadequate Roads, electricity, water supply, and digital connectivity hindering economic

progress), High Population Growth and Unemployment, limited Access to Technology and Innovation (slower technological adoption leading to minimal research and development activities) and Vulnerability to External Shocks (more susceptibility to global price fluctuations, climate change, and political instability).

The Positive Effects of Virtual Currencies on Developing Economies are as follows.

Financial Inclusion

Virtual currencies offer access to financial services for unbanked populations, especially in regions with limited banking infrastructure (Narula, 2021),

Lower Remittance Costs

Cryptocurrencies reduce transaction fees for remittances, which are vital for many developing nations (World Bank, 2022),

Economic Empowerment

Digital currencies enable micro-investments and peer-to-peer trade, fostering entrepreneurship (Olayemi, 2023) and

Technological Innovation

Blockchain and crypto adoption stimulate fintech growth and digital literacy (Fernandez-Villaverde, 2022).

The Risks and Challenges pertaining to virtual currencies are as follows.

Regulatory Uncertainty

Many developing economies lack clear legal frameworks, increasing risks of fraud and misuse (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2021),

Currency Volatility

Cryptocurrencies are highly volatile, which can destabilize local economies if adopted without safeguards (Yermack, 2013),

Digital Divide

Access to crypto is limited by internet availability and digital literacy (UNCTAD, 2022) and

Capital Flight and Tax Evasion

Crypto can facilitate unregulated capital movement, reducing government revenue (Zohar, 2015).

The National Security

National Security considered as the decisions and actions that imperative to protect domestic core values from external threats (Bock & Berkowitz, 1966). Azar and Moon (1988) argued that the domains of national security are not limited only to the military and defense dimensions but rather include internal security, food security, health security and economic security, especially in the third world or countries with developing economies. Azar and Moon further explain that security heavily depends on economic status of the country and Developing economies are inherently vulnerable to external threats due to structural weaknesses, limited fiscal space, and dependence on global financial and trade systems. So, Economic security plays a crucial role in defining national security. A country's ability to maintain stable growth, protect its key industries, and ensure access to necessary resources directly impacts its defense capabilities, strategic independence, and capacity to withstand external threats.

A strong economy enables the financing of military operations, investment in technological innovation, and the maintenance of social stability, all pillars of national security. Conversely, economic vulnerability can expose a country to foreign influence, internal unrest, and a decline in its international influence (Retter et al,2020). Developing economies are inherently vulnerable to external threats due to structural weaknesses, limited fiscal space, and dependence on global financial and trade systems. Developing economies often face heightened exposure to external shocks such as global financial volatility, commodity price fluctuations, pandemics, and geopolitical tensions. These vulnerabilities stem from several interrelated factors as follows:

The International Monetary Fund (2025) notes that post-pandemic debt surges have intensified financing challenges, squeezing development budgets and increasing default risks. Limited foreign exchange reserves and reliance on external financing constrain their ability to buffer against currency depreciation and capital flight during crises.

Rojas-Suarez (2022) emphasizes that countries with lower macroeconomic resilience prior to global shocks were more likely to experience severe economic distress. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, external debt vulnerability has been linked to constrained policy options and long-term economic stagnation (Edo & Oigiangbe, 2024).

National Security Externality Theory

This theory developed by Olivier Kooi (2025), argues that economic decisions such as trade patterns, investment flows, and industrial capacity, carry strategic value because they affect a nation's resilience in times of conflict or geopolitical tension. In fact, core concepts are resilience as Strategic Value (A country's ability to withstand shocks economic, military,

or diplomatic) enhances its bargaining power. Unpriced Externality is not reflected in market prices, creating a gap between private economic decisions and national security needs and Economic Statecraft. (Governments must intervene via subsidies, reshoring, or trade controls to correct this externality and strengthen national security). Furthermore, it is mentioned that volatility in trade, inflation, or capital flows can erode resilience while countries facing frequent economic shocks are less able to project power or negotiate effectively.

Farrell, H., & Newman (2019) revealed that how economic vulnerabilities such as currency instability and financial dependence, can weaken a state's ability to secure critical imports, including defense technologies, and maintain strategic autonomy. It highlights that countries with unstable currencies leading to volatility may face constraints in sustaining national security capabilities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data collection

Data was collected through a review of official policy documents, regulatory statements, academic publications, and reports from multilateral organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank, UNCTAD, and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Additional information was provided by peer-reviewed articles, cybersecurity reports, and public policy think tanks. The use of secondary data ensured broad coverage of the legal, economic, and security domains, while maintaining credibility through triangulation of multiple reliable sources. This triangulation enhances data validity, reduces bias in conclusions, and cross-checks information.

Data analysis

Collected Data were analyzed through thematic coding - a qualitative method used to identify and categorize patterns in textual data. The analysis proceeded in three stages:

Identification of themes such as 'developing economies', 'virtual currencies', 'economic security' and 'national security'.

Comparison of these themes across collected data to detect similarities and divergences.

Interpretation within the economic security and national security domain.

To ensure **validity**, the research employed cross-referencing of multiple data sources from credible international organizations and peer-reviewed publications from well recognized academic journals. **Reliability** was enhanced by maintaining a consistent coding process and referencing current publications through official government portals or recognized academic databases.

Analysis

This paper examines the greater use of virtual currencies in developing economies and its effects on national security using a thematic coding system deriving themes and analyzing multiple secondary data sources from credible international organizations and peer-reviewed publications from well recognized academic journals. The methodical assessment identifies effects of virtual currencies on national security aspects. Initially seven codes for this study were identified through Currency Evolution, Virtual Currency Characteristics, Developing Economy Challenges, Positive Impacts of Crypto, Risks and Vulnerabilities, Economic Security and National Security Linkages. Then three main themes identified as follows.

Theme 1: Characteristics and nature of Virtual Currencies

Theme 2: Virtual Currency related economic Practices in Developing Nations

Theme 3: Emerging Risks leading to National Security in Developing Nations

Characteristics and Nature of Virtual Currencies

As identified in the literature virtual currencies are considered as digital forms of money not issued by a central bank (ECB,2012) that operate within digital ecosystems and managed by private developers or networks. Yermack (2013) revealed that virtual currencies (Bitcoin) show zero correlation with traditional currencies and ineffective as a diversification tool in investment portfolios.

Several key characteristics of Virtual Currencies were identified as follows.

Decentralization

Tapscott & Tapscott (2016), Bohme et al.(2015), Narayanan et al. (2016) and Nakamoto (2008) revealed that virtual currencies, especially Bitcoin operates without a central authority and is maintained by a distributed network of nodes, which collectively validate and record transactions on a public ledger (the block chain) that distinguishes Bitcoin from traditional financial systems. Buterin (2014) emphasizes that virtual currencies introduced a decentralized consensus mechanism using proof-of-work and it runs on the state of any programmable logic (smart contracts). Furthermore it allows compatible users to write programs that act as decentralized applications. They operate independently of formal financial institutions and are not subjected to monetary policy or legal tender

laws (ECB,2012) but through the block chain technology. This scenario directly violate the economic sovereignty of the countries leading to many fraud economic activities. Ponzi and Pyramid schemes and low financial literacy in developing countries another area where these type of countries fall into trouble most often. The feature of decentralization creates the problem of cross boarder capital flight to avoid exchange controls and taxes which would create problems of national foreign reserves.

Anonymity and Pseudonymity

Fake real world identities matching with wallet addresses allow users to execute illicit use and money laundering activities. However all transactions are recorded on a public blockchain ensuring transparency and preventing double-spending (Bohme et al., 2015; ECB,2012). Buterin (2014) revealed that transactions are executed automatically fulfilling the required conditions without a trust of third party especially in Trustless Execution Ethereum's model.

Limited Supply

As pointed out by Bohme et al.(2015) and Nakamoto (2008) With predictable issuance, Bitcoin's total supply is capped at 21 million coins making it scares like gold that has the deflationary nature of precious metals. Limited supply is always creating greater tendency to be always in the high value reign. This influences the speculation and long term value perception changing with the demand (Narayanan et al., 2016) or in the production process like farming or small industries.

Low Operation Costs

It is a low-cost alternative to traditional payment systems, especially for cross-border transactions (Bohme et al., 2015) that needs

higher cost as well as greater knowledge or assistance from traditional banking services. The system allows members to verify their transaction attributes such as ownership, authenticity etc. Without the assistance of centralized institutions thus lowering cost of auditing and enables trustless exchanges Catalini & Gans, (2016). Furthermore, it facilitate a direct peer-to-peer transactions and smart contracts, self-executing coded embedded in blockchain, lowering the cost of connecting and coordinating among them while enhancing efficiency and reduces the need for manual enforcement or oversight. Tapscott & Tapscott, (2016) mentioned that transaction cost of virtual currencies and processing times reduce that was really important in cross border payments, remittances, and supply chains.

Innovation and Experimentation

Lead to possible hacking Bohme et al (2015) mentioned that systems of virtual currencies are leading to innovation and to capture new markets by designing attractive features (Catalini & Gans, 2016). Buterin (2014) pointed out that users have their freedom to create their own tokens and currencies on top of its block chain.

Unregulated and Non-Institutional control

These currencies are typically created and managed by private developers or online communities. They operate independently of formal financial institutions and are not subject to monetary policy or legal tender laws (ECB,2012). It may be due to non-availability or limitations of modern laws for internet base things especially on cross border transactions.

High Volatility

Virtual currencies exhibits greater rate of volatility than major fiat currencies imposing

higher risk on users (Yermack ,2013) and limits its use as a stable store value (ECB,2012). Furthermore Yermack (2013) pointed out that it is not still used in consumer credit, loan contracts or wage payments and lacks access to banking systems. Because of high volatility nature, it has many limitations in integration into the economy. As pointed out by Yermack (2013), the value of virtual currencies depends on the level of investor sentiment and media attention than economic fundamentals. It seems that Gen Z would set the favourable situation to increase value of virtual currencies with their higher linkage with the internet.

Cryptographic Security and Technological Dependence

Although Virtual Transactions maintained its security using public-key cryptography, a private key to authorize payments (Nakamoto,2008), dependence of the functioning of virtual currencies on cryptographic protocols and digital infrastructure makes considerable amount of risks related to hacking, fraud, and technological failure. (ECB,2012)

Illegal money laundering and illicit acts

Virtual transactions uses certain security measures such as Digital signatures and public-key cryptography to authenticate transactions (Narayanan et al., 2016) and cryptographic techniques to secure transactions and user identities, forming a secure chain through verifying and linking to the previous, that create resistance to fraud and cyberattacks (Tapscott & Tapscott,2016). However, Non-availability of personal identities (cryptographic addresses) of users reduces traceability compared to traditional banking (Nakamoto, 2008). Furthermore he mentioned that irreversibility of transactions protects users from fraud but it requires users to be cautious and technically sound. However, Kaspersky, (2025) highlighted

that 33.3 million banking related cyberattacks in 2024, were reported and is becoming severe and severe with the rise of usage of well advanced mobile phones in the world. They ask victims to pay ransoms in Bitcoin.

Narayanan et al. (2016) revealed that some tends to use pseudonymous addresses, not real identities in order to obtain undue advantages. Platforms like Ethereum expand scripting languages with Turing-complete smart contracts that encourage possibilities for decentralized applications (dApps) and autonomous financial instruments (Narayanan et al., 2016). With the immense computational power, immutability (altering past records) of the blockchain structure is possible (Zohar,2015). This favors a ground situation for illegal money laundering and illicit activities especially when the users are cunning or with fake purposes and less smart to operate the system. It is proven with the finding of Zohar(2015) highlighting potential threats such as 51% attacks, selfish mining, and network partitioning. Yermack, (2013) revealed that uncertain legal status of virtual currencies (Bitcoin) complicates its adoption and create many issues related to tax treatment, anti-money laundering compliance, and consumer protection.

Global accessibility and Inclusion

Virtual currencies has the advantage of easy access and usage only if they have internet connection and bypass traditional banking services especially in developing economies (Narayanan et al.,2016). It becomes borderless and engaging everyone leading to economic empowerment (Tapscott & Tapscott (2016). Furthermore, it is mentioned that User becomes empowered by allowing controlling their own digital identities and managing their own credentials. In fact, Gen Z population, born between 1997-2012 considered as tech-savvy generation addict to internet, in developing countries represents 20-30% of total population

(Jayatissa, 2023) characterized with increasingly active in digital entrepreneurship (Atlantic Council, 2025). One of the high demanding virtual currency, Bitcoin, highlight **Proof-of-Work (PoW)** consensus mechanism, where miners compete to solve cryptographic puzzles and earn considerable rewards in Bitcoin and transaction fees that motivate young people stay in touch with these systems (Zohar, 2015). Therefore sharp increment in long run in using virtual currencies is possible in developing economies.

Virtual Currency related economic Practices in Developing Nations

A developing economy or less developed economy in third world countries is characterized with low human development index, low per capita income, lesser industrialization, high reliance on agriculture based activities etc.

Low Per Capita Income /High poverty rates

According to world bank (2025), poverty rates in developing economies are really high (exceeding 60%) in many low income countries such as South Sudan, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar, Central African Republic, Burundi, Honduras, DR Congo, Zambia etc. furthermore it stated that Sub-Saharan Africa continues to face the highest poverty rates while some Latin American countries also report significant poverty level.

However in South Asia, pockets of extreme poverty exist even though it displayed lower poverty rates. As Agarwal (2025) very correctly pointed it will lowered savings, investments and consumption. So, it will further reduce access to education, healthcare, and nutrition, weakening the workforce and long-term productivity as revealed by Herath & Herath (2020). Easy access through mobile

phones with internet (World Bank, 2023) in the absence of infrastructure, low operation costs (IMF, 2022), Digital Innovation and Economic Diversification (World Economic Forum, 2023), Entrepreneurship (OECD, 2023) encourage use of virtual currencies in the world.

However United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2023) revealed that poverty level increased by usage of virtual currencies without strong regulation, consumer protection, and digital inclusion, High volatility of virtual currencies, Weak oversight and low financial literacy, fake token offerings / fraudulent exchanges, addiction to gambling like settings are worsen the situation in individual level while Large-scale crypto usage, money laundering, tax evasion reduces government revenue and weakens the capacity of government to fund social protection and poverty reduction programs. Although virtual currencies exhibits both positives and negatives, it is very clear that usage of virtual currencies, less regulated and controlled by governments, of less educated people in developing economies causes many losses and aggregate poverty further. The low productivity, limited technological inclusions and low value addition to markets (FAO, 2023). Slow GDP growth and less job creation is evident with high labour based agriculture and less diversified economies with limited technological innovation that stagnate its economy at same level increasing poverty further.

Underdeveloped infrastructure increase costs for businesses reduce productivity and reduce competitiveness in foreign markets and discourage foreign investments (Han et al, 2020), restricts access to education, healthcare and employment opportunities (Foster et al., 2023), constraints digitalization, industrial growth (UNU-MERIT, 2024) has been further exacerbated the importance of using crypto currencies in developing nations.

The concept “Virtual Currency and the negative impact on Economy” derived through the analysis of nature of virtual currency.

The decentralized nature of virtual currency create biggest threat for the developing country economies in the contemporary world scenarios. The traditional system of central bank and the national banks are far away from their controlling the expectations of their populations, specially mentioned in the above analysis. Fraud economic activities, ponzi and Pyramid schemes like things are rampant encouraged in third world countries due to poor banking infrastructure, lack of financial regulations and the literacy. Due to flat forms are not regulated, scams through fake exchanges or wallets would create more irregularities in the financial fields. Ransom payments would be easy and poor cyber security would be easy targets here. In the field of crypto currencies do not report profits make the government sector poorer through evasion of taxes. The independency of the currency use for illicit goods on dark web is a serious issue in developing countries, where they have become transits for illegal commodities. Finally destabilization of banking sector can be happened due to high adaptation of crypto can pull money out of the formal banking system, which would create lack of deposits for banks resulting complicated monetary policy. The high value reign of the virtual currency never ever bearable for the third world countries at any economic situation that we have derived as a finding in this analysis. The high cost of financial products and low inclusion of digital technology has caused less coepetition between traditional financial sector and the virtual currencies. In connection with the Z gen, the third world economies has involved considerable amount of virtual transactions, but are unregulated in a greater scale. Fake and illegal transactions, avoiding traditional banking system, especially on the emerging

drug trade seems to be created a massive financial irregulaties and social disparities in the third world societies today. All in all the absorption of particular amount of income by the virtual related economy has created a situation where the third world economies helpless to implement their economies stable and implementing social networks.

The virtual currency negative impacts on economy effects on national security of third world countries

The modern world “National Security” considered as the decisions and actions that imperative to protect domestic core values from external threats (Bock & Berkowitz, 1966). Azar and Moon (1988) argued that the domains of national security are not limited only to the military and defense dimensions but rather include internal security, food security, health security and economic security, especially in the third world or countries with developing economies. It seems that National security heavily depends on economic status of the country and Developing economies are inherently vulnerable to external threats due to structural weaknesses, limited fiscal space, and dependence on global financial and trade systems. Economic security is in a greater trouble because Virtual currencies seem to operate independently without a central authority of governments operated with smart contracts over the various places in the world, controlled by the computer program created by the particular company for their sake of reaching short term or long term goals. One of the key features in identifying developing economy is its low capita income and poverty rates that reduce lowered savings, investments and consumption. At the same time it reduces access to education, healthcare, and nutrition pushing them to the vicious cycle of poverty. In fact, people in developing economies may not have proper education related to digitalization that leads them to become victim of illicit acts

of virtual currencies. Without proper set of experts, the government may not be able to regulate or control such activities losing great amount of money of their people and inviting an economic shock if loss is not tolerated by the economy of the country. This situation leads to civil unrest reducing economic security in the country. High population growth and high unemployment rate effects badly on wages of people and quality of public services when country is highly depends on agriculture and minimum industrialization that stagnate its economy and encourage brain drain of skilled workforce to developed foreign countries. Its assist fertile place to develop terrorism and ill legal acts developing black economy in the country. So, developing economies have a greater possibility leading to institutional fragility and poor governance outcomes. The feature pseudonymity on crypto based money and laundering can develop un-even economic development in the developing societies creating many societal disparities which would lead to un-stable societies and uprisings.

No real match of world identities and wallet address of virtual currencies set the greater place for (money laundering) illicit use of this program and luting money with higher portion destroying economic security. Limited supply and high volatility of virtual currencies tends to create artificial high values not only falling users in a high risk situation but also whole economy of the country. Low operation costs and higher processing times of virtual currencies motivate users in the third world countries to repeat cross border transactions, causes economies in greater debacle if it is unregulated and non- institutionally controlled by the government. However cryptographic security and technological dependence of virtual currencies seems to have extra advantages for those with smart computer programming skills (hackers) to use it in their way. Therefore, as National Security externality Theory explains, the economic decisions such as trade patterns,

investment flows, and industrial capacity, carry strategic value because they affect a nation's resilience in times of conflict or geopolitical tension. Furthermore, Resilience, unpriced externality, economic statecraft, core concepts of this would effects on national security. Higher use virtual currencies tends to erode resilience with less withstand to economic shock and less economic statecraft is more possible. At the same technological superiority is always with developed countries than developing countries. That would be a new way of influencing developing economies in future.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research was conducted on exploring developing economies, nature and usage of virtual currencies and its effects on national security through certain negative economic impacts. This research identifies characteristics of developing economies such as low capita income and poverty rates, less education especially on digital sector, the feature high population and high unemployment rates have considerable impact on intensifying poverty further, and leading to civil unrest, institutional fragility and poor governance outcomes leading to uncertainties.

Anonymity, borderless nature, less education on digital currency enhances illicit acts exposing users to suffer greater losses. High volatility of virtual currencies seems to create high risk situation while attracting users through low operation costs and high processing time in cross border transaction in the absence of unregulated and non-institutionally controlled by the central government. Developing economies with less skilled experts in the digital field seems to be in a disadvantageous situation compared to developed economies. It is observed that poor outcomes of developing economies multiplied its effects with use of virtual currencies in the

absence of government controlled regulatory nature create a greater impact on economic security leading national security in greater danger. The rise of using virtual currencies instead of traditional system presents a complex situation for national security offering advantages and disadvantages. From the good points, they can enhance financial inclusion, stimulate innovation, and reduce dependency on traditional financial systems while challenging regulatory sovereignty, facilitating illicit financial flows, and expose vulnerabilities in cyber infrastructure and monetary policy.

For developing economies with high poverty, low digital literacy, the disadvantages seems to play greater role. Especially weak institutional frameworks, limited cybersecurity capacity, and high poverty rates amplify the risks of destabilization through unregulated virtual currency use by destroying economic security.

Countries with less digital governance (developing nations) and lack of international cooperation has faced consequences on surveillance, taxation and counterterrorism efforts because of anonymity and borderless nature of these assets. Therefore, the developing nations need a new institutional framework and corporation to identify the modern day Z Gen-Virtual Money-economic activities in the developing countries to avoid the terrorizing the economies.

Safeguarding national security in the age of digitalization by the way of using virtual currency needs through sound multi-dimensional approach integrating technological resilience, legal reforms, economic foresight, geopolitical awareness and most importantly digital regulatory system with the support of the above mentioned institutional support proposed.

Initiate cooperate banking infrastructure development project and digitalization project between the developing nations to mitigate the damage caused by the virtual currency.

The developing countries need to re-organize the traditional way of detecting monitor digital currency based economic activities by amalgamating traditional institutional approaches like central bank, financial intelligence and other law enforcement bodies such as police cyber and criminal instigation units.

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PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING IN MILITARY RECRUITMENT: EVOLUTION, EFFECTIVENESS, AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESILIENCE INVENTORY FOR MILITARY (RIM)

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ABSTRACT

Psychometric assessments have long been used to military recruitment, training and managing individuals in military to systematically understand individuals' cognitive strengths, personality profiles, motivation, and resilience. In military contexts, such tools assist in identifying recruits capable of meeting both the physical and psychological demands of service, which in turn supports appropriate placement and reduces military attrite. Over time, the use of these measures has expanded beyond selection to include leadership development, team compatibility assessments, and the early detection of psychological vulnerabilities. The aim of this paper is three folds. The first is to systematically review the literature relating to the historical and conceptual evolution of psychometric testing in military settings from early instruments such as the Army Alpha and Beta tests to contemporary adaptive and non-cognitive assessments. The methodology involved systematic review of scholarly publications, and related literature, the study examines the effectiveness of these assessments in predicting performance, retention, and mental health outcomes. It was

found that although psychometric testing has enhanced fairness and efficiency in recruitment, several issues persist, notably those related to cultural adaptation, method of administration and the reliable measurement of non-cognitive traits due to social desirability. The review concludes with recommendations for refining assessment practices and developing context-sensitive tools suited to military populations in non-Western settings, including Sri Lanka. The second half of this paper aims to describe the significance of developing a culturally adapted military assessment method and to introduce the newly developed **Resilience Inventory for Military (RIM)** which was designed to assess enlistees' psychological ability to cope with military demands. RIM was developed by Hettigoda & Hammersely (2017) and validated using a 964 tri-forces sample from Sri Lanka. Subsequently predictability of RIM was established through a predictive validity test (Hettigoda & Hammersely, 2019). It was found that RIM can predict military success in terms of mental wellbeing, adjustment and turnover intention. The third section of this paper gives recommendations to the military organizations who intend to use RIM.

KEYWORDS: *Military Recruitment; Non-Cognitive Assessment; Psychometric Testing; Resilience; Sri Lanka.*

INTRODUCTION

Psychological and psychometric assessments have been central to military recruitment since the First World War. The need for a structured and objective way to evaluate individuals' abilities became apparent during the mass mobilizations of the early 20th century, when relying solely on physical fitness or personal recommendations was no longer adequate. Since then, armed forces across the world have increasingly turned to scientifically designed tests to measure cognitive skills, emotional stability, and motivational factors essential for military effectiveness (Przybylski et al., 2013; Rumsey, 2014). The U.S. military set the stage for this development during World War I with the introduction of the Army Alpha and Beta tests innovations that became the foundation for modern aptitude assessments. Over the years, the focus has expanded beyond cognitive ability to encompass non-cognitive domains such as motivation, resilience, and personality reflecting the growing recognition that psychological fitness is as vital as physical ability in determining military effectiveness and retention (Knapp & Tremble, 2007; Gubata et al., 2013). This paper looks at the history, development, and effectiveness of psychometric testing in military recruitment. It evaluates the challenges in putting these tests into practice. It also discusses the implications for future research and military practice, with a focus on contextual issues in Sri Lanka.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The U.S. military pioneered structured psychological assessment during World War I with the Army Alpha and Beta tests. These assessments laid the foundation for modern cognitive aptitude testing, later followed by the

Army General Classification Test (AGCT), the Navy General Classification Test (NGCT), and the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT). The development of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) in 1968 marked a significant evolution, combining selection and classification functions into one system. However, later research emphasized the limitations of cognitive testing alone, leading to the development of non-cognitive assessments such as the Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System (TAPAS) and the Assessment of Individual Motivation (AIM), which aimed to measure motivational and personality factors (Gubata et al., 2012; 2013).

METHODOLOGY

This review employed a systematic literature review approach, examining peer-reviewed journal articles, government publications, and academic books from databases such as PsycINFO, PubMed, and Google Scholar. The inclusion criteria focused on:

- Studies discussing the development, validation, and application of psychometric tests in military recruitment and selection.
- Research on both cognitive and non-cognitive (personality, motivation, resilience) assessments.
- Publications addressing effectiveness, predictive validity, and psychological outcomes.

The review process involved identifying thematic trends (historical development, innovation, challenges, and future directions) and critically synthesizing findings across different periods and military contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History and Evolution of Psychometric Testing in Military Recruitment and Their Effectiveness

The military began using aptitude tests during World War I to screen individuals for service. In 1917–1918, the U.S. Army developed the Army Alpha and Army Beta tests to help commanders assess the abilities of their personnel. The Army Alpha was a group-administered test measuring verbal and numerical ability, the capacity to follow directions, and general knowledge. The Army Beta, its non-verbal counterpart, was used to evaluate illiterate, unschooled, or non-English-speaking recruits. Both tests were cognitive in nature and aimed to identify individuals capable of serving in the military and to classify them into appropriate roles. Approximately 1.5 million recruits were tested with these instruments during World War I.

During World War II, the Army General Classification Test (AGCT) and the Navy General Classification Test (NGCT) replaced the Army Alpha and Beta tests. These tests were designed to assess the general learning ability of Army, Marine, and Navy recruits. Test results were used to assign individuals to different military jobs. About 12 million recruits took the AGCT, and 3 million took the NGCT during this period. In addition to these general ability tests, several specialized aptitude tests were introduced for specific technical areas, including mechanical, electrical, and clerical fields, as well as for driving and language proficiency. By the end of World War II, each military branch had developed its own selection aptitude tests containing vocabulary, arithmetic, and spatial reasoning components.

In 1950, the military decided to adopt a single test for all service branches instead of maintaining separate ones. This led to the

development of the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT), which was modeled after the AGCT and NGCT. Unlike its predecessors, the AFQT was primarily designed as a screening tool rather than for job classification. Its main objectives were to (a) measure a recruit's general ability to absorb military training and (b) provide a uniform indicator of the recruit's potential contribution to the service.

The AFQT was used across all services until 1972. Since it did not classify recruits into specific jobs, additional tests such as the Army Classification Battery, the Navy Basic Test Battery, and the Airman Qualification Examination were used for that purpose.

The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), developed in 1968 and implemented in 1973, became one of the most widely used military tests. Initially, the Air Force adopted the ASVAB, followed by the Marine Corps in 1974. Between 1973 and 1975, the Army and Navy continued using their own classification systems until the U.S. Department of Defense mandated in 1974 that all military branches use the ASVAB for both selection and classification. This integration made the testing process more efficient, enabling the military to match recruits with suitable job roles and provide job assurances to qualified individuals.

From 1976 onward, the ASVAB was used by all services for both selection and classification, with periodic modifications introduced to meet the varying needs of each branch. In 1979, the Department of Defense evaluated a computer-adaptive version of the test. After two decades of research, the Computer Adaptive ASVAB (CAT-ASVAB) was officially launched in 1996–1997 and implemented in Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS).

Recent Developments

The Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System (TAPAS) was developed to evaluate the personality and motivational factors of military recruits. Its primary aim was to predict motivational outcomes such as job commitment, physical fitness, and performance drive (Gubata et al., 2012). TAPAS is a computer-based adaptive test that measures both proficiency and motivation related to a military career. It was specifically designed to reduce social desirability bias, where respondents tend to give overly favorable answers (Gubata et al., 2012). In 2013, Gubata, Niebuhr, Oetting, Weber, Feng, and Cowan published findings on the use of TAPAS as a predictor of mental health fitness. Their study revealed that the physical conditioning dimension of TAPAS could predict attrition, with those scoring lowest showing the highest attrition rates, while those with high scores demonstrated the lowest rates. This dimension also effectively predicted mental health-related problems (Gubata et al., 2013).

The Assessment of Individual Motivation (AIM) is a non-cognitive test developed by the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) as a screening tool for attrition and overall success in military service. AIM gathers self-reported personality information based on past experiences and behaviors, identifying applicants who may not be well adapted or motivated for military life. Since preexisting mental health conditions are a major cause of disability discharges, hospitalizations, and early attrition, AIM's ability to detect individuals unsuited for military service may also serve as an indicator for potential mental disorder diagnoses (Gubata et al., 2012).

The U.S. Air Force has recently introduced the Biographical Evaluation and Screening of Troops (BEST) to identify trainees

with serious mental health concerns. This tool was developed based on the Air Force's needs and derived from the History Opinion Inventory (HOI), created by Feidler (1997) and later revised as HOI-R in 2001. HOI-R assessed recruits on several factors including health concerns, school success, composure, antisocial behavior, family support, parental conflict, immaturity, emotional instability, and interpersonal agreeableness. It demonstrated moderate predictive validity for unsuitability discharge (Garb, Wood, & Feidler, 2012).

The HOI-R eventually evolved into the Lackland Behavioral Questionnaire (LBQ) (Garb, 2005), designed to assess severe mental health and behavioral issues. The LBQ contains 61 items that measure areas such as temper and anger, anxiety and depression, police trouble, psychiatric medication history, suicidal thoughts or attempts, conduct problems in school, alcohol misuse, counseling history, property destruction or theft, and substance abuse treatment history. The LBQ is not intended for use as an exclusionary tool prior to enlistment; instead, it should be applied during training to identify at-risk trainees and facilitate appropriate referrals. It also recommends conducting further psychological assessments before referring trainees for mental health intervention (Garb et al., 2013).

Problems Related to the Implementation of Non-Cognitive Tests and Strategies to Overcome Them

The Army Research Institute for Behavioral and Social Sciences has highlighted the importance of incorporating non-cognitive questionnaires in recruitment and selection, as they are effective predictors of entry-level soldier performance and retention (Knapp & Tremble, 2007). Rumsey (2014) also emphasized integrating non-cognitive assessments into officer selection processes, noting that modern military leadership requires both soft skills such

as management and leadership and hard skills, including technical and physical abilities.

Despite growing recognition of their value, several challenges have hindered the implementation of non-cognitive measures in selection procedures. One major issue is the self-reported nature of these assessments, which allows individuals to manipulate responses in order to present themselves favorably, thereby reducing reliability and accuracy. To mitigate this concern, some researchers have adopted a forced-choice methodology, requiring respondents to choose between equally desirable or undesirable options. This approach minimizes the likelihood of selecting the most socially desirable response (Young & White, 2006).

The U.S. Special Forces introduced another strategy to reduce response distortion by using “actual biodata,” which examines candidates’ past behaviors and reactions to life events to verify the accuracy of their test responses. In addition, certain items are intentionally included in the tests to identify tendencies toward dishonest or exaggerated answers (Rumsey, 2014).

Rumsey also identified hardiness and grit as two key personality dimensions that effectively predict officer performance. Grit, characterized by long-term perseverance rather than short-term intensity, enables individuals to remain focused on long-term goals and persist through challenges (Duckworth et al., 2007, p. 1089).

As with many organizations, the military often resists systemic changes. To address this, Rumsey (2014) proposed several strategies to reduce barriers to adopting new testing systems. First, researchers and test developers should clearly communicate the rationale, administration process, timing, and intended purpose of the assessment—whether it is for

screening, categorization, or training. If the tool is used for training, the appropriate stage of administration should also be specified. Second, the tool’s effectiveness must be demonstrated by identifying measurable benefits and relevant indicators, such as attrition rates, mental health diagnoses, or suicide rates. Clearly articulating the long-term benefits for military performance will help increase institutional motivation for adoption. Third, feasibility must be carefully evaluated in terms of cost-effectiveness, time, available resources, qualifications of administrators, and potential external factors that may impede implementation. Developers should also ensure that introducing new tools does not compromise other organizational priorities.

Cardona and Ritchie (2006) conducted an extensive study on psychological screening of recruits prior to enlistment in the U.S. military, arguing that comprehensive psychological evaluations could reduce the incidence of psychological problems following combat. Reviewing screening practices from World War I, World War II, and the post-war period, they concluded that evidence on the predictive validity of psychological screening for post-combat mental health outcomes is limited—likely due to measurement shortcomings rather than the concept itself. They proposed that the following aspects should be evaluated prior to enlistment (Cardona & Ritchie, 2006):

- a) Mental health history
- b) Family history of mental illness
- c) Trauma history and adaptive skills
- d) Personality composition
- e) Severity of psychological symptoms
- f) Presence of other psychological stressors in personal life
- g) Motivation for continued service
- h) Safety factors

Cardona and Ritchie (2006) further recommended that screening tools should be used to identify relevant psychological characteristics of recruits, detect individuals likely to struggle with adjustment, and predict attrition. They also suggested that basic training should include targeted resilience-building interventions, particularly for individuals identified as being at higher risk of psychological difficulties.

Significance of having culturally adapted Military Assessment for Sri Lanka

There is substantial evidence suggesting that psychological screening tools are valuable in military recruitment and advancement, despite the limited effectiveness of some tools currently in use. Cardona and Ritchie (2006) emphasized that the lack of sufficient evidence for the effectiveness of existing assessment tools does not imply that screening tools are useless, but rather that current instruments are not sensitive enough to assess risk and protective factors accurately. Many tools are theory-driven, with developers focusing on confirming theoretical assumptions rather than acknowledging observed variations. Some instruments were originally designed for civilian contexts and later applied directly to the military. For example, the concept of mental toughness originated in sports, yet the MTQ48 has been used in military contexts based on the assumption that the same attributes are applicable. Others were developed in Western contexts, creating cross-cultural limitations when applied elsewhere. Additionally, some assessments were designed around the traditional roles of military personnel, overlooking the evolving responsibilities within modern military organizations. This presents a significant challenge for military researchers, as the military setting has unique characteristics, compounded by the inherent individuality of human personality. Consequently, continued research in this area is essential. It may also

be unrealistic to rely on a single global tool to evaluate all aspects of recruits' personalities across different cultural contexts.

As highlighted in the literature, individuals who experience adversity in childhood may develop psychological problems in adulthood (Cabrera et al., 2007; Felitti et al., 1998; D. MacManus et al., 2012b; Pagura, Cox, Sareen, & Enns, 2006). Conversely, some researchers argue that despite early adversities, individuals can develop highly positive and resilient personalities, with or without subsequent supportive experiences (Adler, Williams, McGurk, Moss, & Bliese, 2015; Bartone, 1999; Clough, 2014; Connor & Davidson, 2003; Eidelson & Soldz, 2012). Some people who have faced childhood adversity become highly competent adults, while others experience mental health or personal difficulties later in life (Wenner, 2009). Therefore, it is unfair to reject a candidate from recruitment solely because of childhood adversities without assessing their resilience level. To understand the effects of adversity, comprehensive longitudinal studies are required, although such studies demand considerable time and resources.

If a cross-sectional approach is adopted, both protective and risk factors should be assessed simultaneously. Hence, there is a need for a comprehensive assessment tool that integrates pre-enlistment risk and protective factors of individuals. Such a tool could provide a cost-effective and time-efficient alternative.

Some argue that the "Big Five" personality traits can predict success in any profession. However, Hystad, Olsen, Espevik, and Säfvenbom (2015) cited two studies by Hartmann and colleagues (Hartmann & Grønnerød, 2009; Hartmann, Sunde, Kristensen, & Martinussen, 2003) involving naval special forces candidates, which found that none of the Big Five traits predicted military

training performance. This further supports the need for context-specific tools for the military.

To address this, Hardy, Beattie, Arthur, Fitzwater, and Bell (2015) developed the Military Training Mental Toughness Inventory (MTMTI) and validated it within the British military. Following Hardy et al.'s (2013) recommendation, they assessed mental toughness through observer ratings rather than self-reports, with trainers evaluating trainees' behavior and performance. However, this study had limitations: the tool was validated only with army candidates, and since the three military branches have different goals and training programs, its applicability across services is uncertain. Moreover, the study did not determine whether the tool could predict coping ability or psychological well-being among trainees.

Additionally, resilience has been defined in multiple ways across contexts, and researchers have used various terms interchangeably. Several scales exist to measure resilience-related traits or personality facets (Bartone, 1991; Clough et al., 2002; Connor & Davidson, 2003; Wagnild & Young, 1993). Given the diversity of scales used in military research, it would be more efficient to develop and validate a single resilience scale specifically for military populations.

Sri Lanka, having endured over three decades of armed conflict, possesses strong armed forces but currently lacks psychological screening in recruitment. No research has yet evaluated the effectiveness of psychological assessments in the Sri Lankan military context. Moreover, there are limitations in applying existing psychological tools developed and validated primarily in English-speaking countries. Therefore, Sri Lanka must develop its own culturally appropriate tool for assessing military recruits.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESILIENCE INVENTORY FOR MILITARY (RIM) FOR SRI LANKA

Recognizing the absence of culturally appropriate psychological assessment tools for military recruitment in Sri Lanka, a new measure titled the Resilience Inventory for Military (RIM) was developed by Hettigoda, K. & Hammersley, R. (2017).

The RIM was designed to assess both protective and risk factors associated with military readiness, integrating the theoretical constructs of resilience, mental toughness, and hardiness. The inventory includes several sections:

- Demographic and service-related variables,
- Childhood adversity and psychosocial background,
- History of psychological difficulties and family mental health,
- Core resilience subscales, assessing traits such as persistence, adaptability, confidence, emotional control, and social support. This resilience subscales includes 47 items representing resilience and mental toughness.

Additionally, the RIM incorporates *risk indicators* including exposure to early adversity, impulsivity, past trauma, and suicidal ideation offering a holistic perspective on the recruit's psychological preparedness.

The instrument was validated among 964 officers and cadets from the Sri Lankan Army, Navy, and Air Force. Statistical analysis confirmed excellent internal consistency,

construct validity, and predictive reliability. The RIM therefore stands as the first empirically validated military psychological assessment tool developed within the Sri Lankan sociocultural context, capable of informing both recruitment decisions and targeted resilience-building interventions.

Following the validation of the RIM, Hettigoda and Hammersley (2019) carried out a longitudinal study to examine its predictive validity among 92 cadet trainees. This study investigated the relationships between the predictive and outcome variables, revealing significant correlations between them. Multiple linear regression (MLR) analyses indicated that the RIM significantly predicted all outcome variables except examination performance, which showed no correlation with any predictive factor and warrants further investigation. While risk factors were associated with GHQ scores, they did not predict other outcomes possibly due to the MLR model emphasizing RIM's effects. Overall, the study largely achieved its objectives, demonstrating RIM's strong statistical relevance to key military outcomes. The following chapter presents a summary of findings, implications, study limitations, recommendations for implementation, and future research directions.

Recommendations for Military Services Intending to Use the RIM Tool for Enlistment

Before employing the RIM as a screening tool, it is essential to establish appropriate cut off scores for decision-making. Currently, no cut off point has been defined, and ethically, individuals should not be accepted or rejected solely on the basis of a single psychometric measure. As further empirical validation is required, the RIM in its current form should primarily be used to identify individuals at risk those with high pre-enlistment vulnerability and low resilience rather than as an exclusionary

instrument. Conversely, individuals with high resilience and low risk scores can be confidently considered for special operations or international missions.

Consistent with Cardona and Ritchie's (2006) recommendations, the RIM can be used to gather psychological information to identify recruits at risk of poor adjustment or attrition. Such information can inform targeted resilience training during basic training. Military organizations should maintain their recruitment standards while incorporating preventive mechanisms including psychological screening and early intervention to manage potential risks effectively.

The RIM should be administered by a qualified recruitment team, ideally under the supervision of a chartered psychologist or professional counsellor attached to the military service. In the absence of a fixed cut off, comparisons between protective and risk factor scores are recommended. Recruits may be categorized into four groups:

- The top 10% on resilience scores as the "high resilience" quartile,
- The bottom 10% as the "low resilience" quartile,
- The top 10% on risk scores as the "high risk" quartile, and
- The bottom 10% as the "low risk" quartile.

Particular attention should be given to individuals falling into both the high-risk and low-resilience categories, as they may be more vulnerable to mental health or behavioral issues. Ongoing psychological monitoring during training and service, particularly before and after deployment in high-stress or specialized

missions, is strongly advised. Regardless of category, integrating resilience-building modules into basic training would benefit all recruits.

Given the possibility of socially desirable responding, it is recommended to include items that assess this tendency. The 13-item Marlowe–Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MC–SDS; Reynolds, 1986) can be incorporated for this purpose, with its results analyzed separately to estimate the influence of response bias. High scores on social desirability may indicate a tendency toward inaccurate self-reporting. While this addition cannot completely eliminate faking, it can reduce bias in responses. To complement self-report data, additional information such as medical records, police records, peer or supervisor evaluations, and other archival data should be used to strengthen the assessment of pre-enlistment behavior and mental health.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this review and the successful validation of the Resilience Inventory for Military (RIM), the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Integrate Culturally Grounded Tools into Recruitment:**
Military institutions should adopt validated, locally developed tools such as RIM for pre-enlistment screening to ensure contextually appropriate assessment of resilience and risk.
2. **Incorporate Psychological Screening into Selection Policy:**
Establish mandatory psychological evaluation as part of the recruitment process to identify at-risk individuals and provide early interventions.
3. **Use RIM Data for Training and Support Planning:**
Beyond selection, RIM results can guide resilience training modules, mental health programs, and officer development initiatives.
4. **Promote Cross-Cultural Validation:**
Future research should explore the applicability of RIM across other South Asian or post-conflict military settings to test its generalizability.
5. **Combine RIM with Longitudinal Monitoring:**
Implement periodic follow-ups to track recruits' mental health, adjustment, and retention, thereby building evidence for predictive validity.
6. **Enhance Awareness among Leadership:**
Conduct workshops for commanding officers and selection boards on interpreting psychometric data and using it ethically in recruitment decisions.

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INVESTIGATING THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO INCREASED ABSENTEEISM: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO OFFICERS IN THE SRI LANKA ARMY

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the increasing absenteeism among officers in the Sri Lanka Army, particularly amid the economic challenges the country has faced since 2019. The study aims to identify key factors driving absenteeism, focusing on economic hardships, job satisfaction, career progression and personal as well as organizational dynamics. A mixed-method approach was used, combining quantitative data from surveys with qualitative insights from interviews. The findings reveal that economic hardships, particularly inflation and rising living costs, significantly contribute to absenteeism, as officers face financial stress and seek additional income outside their military duties. This economic strain affects both their professional responsibilities and personal lives. Moreover, job satisfaction was found to be a critical factor in reducing absenteeism, with higher satisfaction in terms of compensation, recognition and working conditions leading to lower absenteeism rates. On the other hand, career progression had

a minimal impact, as immediate financial concerns overshadowed long-term career aspirations. Qualitative analysis further highlighted the role of personal factors, such as family stress and work-life balance, along with organizational issues like poor leadership and inadequate support systems, which also contributed to absenteeism. Furthermore, the study suggests that targeted interventions, such as enhanced financial support systems, improved job satisfaction through better working conditions and stronger leadership development programs, are necessary to address absenteeism effectively. These findings well-structured to the broader understanding of absenteeism in military contexts and offer practical recommendations for policymakers and military leaders to mitigate absenteeism, improve morale and ensure operational effectiveness during economic challenges.

KEYWORDS: *Absenteeism, Retention strategies, Economic hardship, Military absenteeism, Career progression, Job satisfaction.*

INTRODUCTION

Employees are the base of an organization's operational action and competitive benefit. Employee turnover, as defined by Abassi et al. (2000), denotes to the movement of workers between firms, jobs and employment statuses. Understanding the reasons to employees leave can be complex, but it is necessary for addressing retention. Before 2019, the Sri Lanka Army exhibited a strong record of officer attendance, characterized by minimal premature retirements and Absent Without Obtaining Leave (AWOL). This consistency was critical for maintaining operational effectiveness and setting a standard of dedication among its ranks.

However, this constancy has been broken up since 2019, due to increasing of AWOL, particularly in 2022 and 2023 (Psyops, 2023). Officers are getting AWOL, or opting for premature retirement. These behaviors are alarming, mainly in light of the nation's economic downturn, which suggests that economic stressors may be manipulating officers' decisions to leave prematurely. The impact of AWOL is not only organizational but also affects the discipline and morale within the military, raising concerns about operational readiness.

The Sri Lanka Army, well known for its discipline and operational effectiveness, has historically boasted low AWOL rates among officers. This was mainly true before 2019, an era marked by stability and commitment within the ranks. Officers, seen as pillars of strength and discipline, were rarely AWOL, setting an exemplary standard across the army's various regiments. Such consistent attendance not only reinforced the operational structure of the army but also played a vital role in maintaining high morale and efficiency.

Specifically, the landscape began to change dramatically around 2020, signifying the onset of economic challenges in Sri Lanka. These hardships brought forth a multitude of pressures that permeated various sectors, including the military. The Sri Lanka Army, not immune to these challenges, began to witness an unsettling trend a rise in officer AWOL. This shift, initially gradual, culminated in a stark escalation in year 2023.

Therefore, this research targets to discover the factors contributing to increased absenteeism among Sri Lanka Army officers, mainly in the context of economic challenges. By understanding the connection of economic pressures, personal and professional challenges and their influence on AWOL, this study look for offer solutions that could overcome this growing issue. Developing targeted strategies to address AWOL is essential for restoring operational effectiveness, maintaining discipline and preserving the integrity of the Sri Lanka Army.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The Sri Lanka Army has historically been renowned for its discipline, commitment and operational effectiveness. However, recent years have witnessed a notable shift in the attendance patterns of officers and Other Ranks (ORs) within the military. Economic challenges, particularly evident from around 2020, have introduced a range of pressures across various sectors, including the armed forces. These pressures have manifested in increased absenteeism rates among both officers and ORs within the Sri Lanka Army, as depicted in Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2 respectively. While the reasons behind this surge in AWOL are multifaceted, economic constraints are believed to be a significant contributing factor. Understanding the nuances of this phenomenon is crucial for addressing its

implications on military readiness, morale and operational effectiveness.

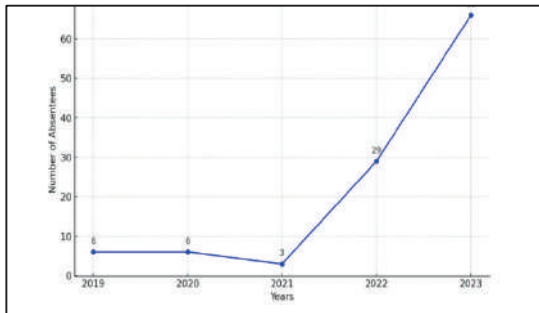


Figure 1.1: Rate of Officers Absenteeism 2019 to 2023.

Source: Directorate of Psychological Operation, 2023.

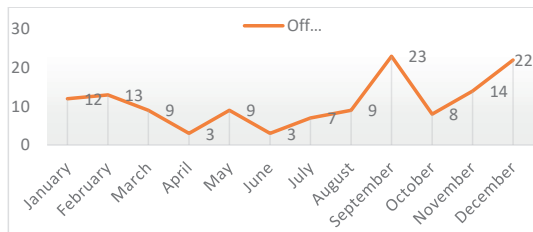


Figure 1.2: Rate of Officers Absenteeism During the Year 2023.

Source: Directorate of Psychological Operation, 2023.

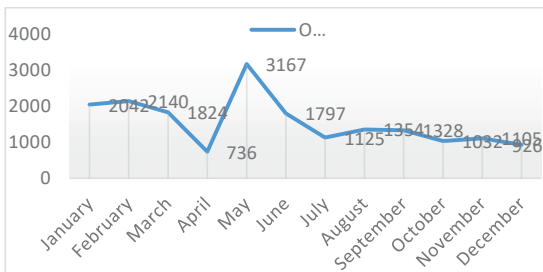


Figure 1.3: Rate of Other Rankers Absenteeism During the Year 2023.

Source: Directorate of Psychological Operation, 2023.

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 illustrate the concerning rise in AWOL among Sri Lanka Army officers between 2019 and 2023,

particularly during the four quarters of 2023. Figure 1.1 emphasis a significant upward movement in officer AWOL, with an alarming increase following the economic downturn. In Figure 1.2, the AWOL rate over the four quarters of 2023 is clearly detailed, showing a steady rise in AWOL cases, with 34 absences in the first quarter and climaxing at 44 in the fourth quarter. Not only that but also, Figure 1.3 demonstrates AWOL trends among ORs, showing higher absolute numbers but following a same upward trajectory, underscoring the systemic nature of the issue across all ranks and considering the cadre strength of the ORs and Officers, Officers' AWOL higher and continue to increase. This surge in AWOL presents substantial challenges for military operations, morale and discipline, prompting the need for urgent analysis and intervention to address the underlying economic and organizational factors driving this trend.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To identify the key factors contributing to increased absenteeism among officers.
- To analyze the impact of economic hardships on officers' professional and personal lives.
- To compare absenteeism trends across different regiments.
- To develop strategies for reducing absenteeism during economic challenges.
- To contribute to policy and strategy improvements in the Sri Lanka Army.

LITERATURE REVIEW

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MILITARY ABSENTEEISM

The concept of Absenteeism without leave (AWOL) is regulated across various military forces worldwide. In the United States, AWOL is governed by Article 86 of the 2005 Manual for Courts-Martial (MCM) (US Army, 2005), while the British Army follows the Armed Forces Act. Similarly, the Indian Army operates under the Army Act of India and the Sri Lanka Army adheres to the Army Discipline Regulations, 1950. These laws, despite differing in specifics, uniformly define unauthorized absenteeism, outline the offence's elements and prescribe disciplinary measures through their respective military justice systems. Article 86 of the MCM and sections 67-74 of the Sri Lanka Army Act, 1950, provide a clear framework for understanding and addressing AWOL (SLArmy, 1950). The offence involves a range of actions, such as failure to report to an appointed place of duty, unauthorized departure after reporting, or remaining absent from the unit or duty station without authorization. These actions must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt in a court-martial for disciplinary measures to be taken.

In addition, other elements include abandoning watch or guard duty without authorization and intentionally avoiding maneuvers or field exercises by being absent during the designated period. These laws ensure that military personnel remain accountable and that such offences are addressed consistently (US Army, 2005). The overarching goal of these provisions is to maintain military discipline and operational effectiveness by ensuring that personnel adhere to their assigned duties. Across different armed forces, these laws serve to reinforce the importance of commitment and responsibility within military organizations, providing a structured approach to dealing with AWOL and maintaining order

in military operations. This consistency is vital for upholding morale, readiness and discipline within the ranks (Wainstein, 1986).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS EXPLAINING ABSENTEEISM

Several theoretical frameworks explain absenteeism among military personnel, each offering a unique perspective. Role theory suggests that individuals' behaviours are influenced by their perceptions of organizational roles. According to Qian (2018), role conflict, ambiguity and overload contribute to absenteeism as personnel struggle with unclear or overwhelming expectations. In contrast, job satisfaction theory links absenteeism directly to low job satisfaction, which is often driven by inadequate compensation, lack of career growth and unsatisfactory working conditions (Saari, 2004; Mihaela, 2022). This theory posits that dissatisfaction with one's job environment leads to disengagement, making employees more prone to absenteeism.

Moreover, Social exchange theory offers another perspective, suggesting that individuals assess their relationship with an organization based on perceived costs and benefit (Emerson, 2003). In this context, absenteeism may be a reaction to perceived injustices or unfavourable treatment, complementing job satisfaction theory by framing absenteeism as a response to dissatisfaction with broader organizational issues. Additionally, Stress theory highlights that high-stress environments, such as frequent deployments and trauma exposure, can increase absenteeism (Ralf, 2018). This contrasts with the other theories by focusing on external stressors rather than internal organizational factors. Collectively, these frameworks provide a comprehensive understanding of how roles, job satisfaction, social dynamics and stress contribute to absenteeism in the military.

EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON THE IMPACT OF TURNOVER

Numerous empirical studies have examined the impact of turnover, including absenteeism, on organizational performance in military contexts. Mihaela (2022) demonstrated that high absenteeism rates among military personnel directly correlate with reduced unit readiness and operational effectiveness. Units with elevated absenteeism tend to suffer from lower morale, decreased cohesion and diminished mission readiness, highlighting the broader consequences absenteeism can have on military performance.

Further, a similar study by the US Army (1978) showed that higher absenteeism negatively affects combat readiness. Units with higher absentee rates displayed lower training proficiency and were less prepared for combat operations, aligning with Mihaela's (2022) findings on absenteeism's detrimental impact. Both studies underscore the importance of personnel presence for maintaining a unit's operational effectiveness in mission-critical situations.

Additionally, a meta-analysis by (Bøg, 2018) and Wainstein (1988) revealed a significant negative correlation between absenteeism rates and military unit performance metrics, including mission success rates and overall combat effectiveness. These studies reinforce that absenteeism is a critical factor affecting not just personnel numbers but also broader organizational performance in military operations. Addressing absenteeism is therefore crucial to maintaining unit cohesion, readiness and mission success.

ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MILITARY ABSENTEEISM

Economic conditions have a significant impact on military absenteeism rates through various channels. Psyops (2023) highlighted that during economic downturns, budget constraints and resource limitations lead to reduced staffing and heightened operational demands, increasing stress and absenteeism among military personnel. Moreover, financial instability affects the well-being of personnel and their families, causing financial stress and the need for additional income, which can detract from job performance and raise absenteeism rates (Ozyuksel, 2022).

Further, research has shown a positive correlation between economic hardship and absenteeism intentions, particularly in regions facing higher economic vulnerability (Suriyabandara, 2023). Factors like unemployment and inflation are key predictors of absenteeism intentions (Dale, 1983), with qualitative studies indicating that financial pressures significantly influence career decisions and absenteeism.

In addition, Psyops (2023) further noted that during economic instability, heightened job mobility drives personnel to seek alternative employment, exacerbating absenteeism. Additionally, limited career advancement opportunities during downturns can lower morale and job satisfaction, leading to increased turnover and absenteeism rates (Dagher, 2024). Economic inequalities within the military can further foster resentment, contributing to absenteeism. Thus, understanding the link between economic conditions and military absenteeism is crucial for creating effective policies that enhance organizational resilience in times of economic difficulty.

JOB SATISFACTION AND MILITARY ABSENTEEISM

Job satisfaction in the military context refers to the overall contentment military personnel feel regarding their roles, responsibilities and work environment, encompassing aspects like pay, benefits, workload, career advancement and relationships with superiors and colleagues (Suriyabandara, 2023). This satisfaction is often measured using tools like the Military Job Satisfaction Scale (MJSS) or adaptations of the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) (Sutherland, 2020).

Moreover, the relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism can be explained through several theoretical frameworks. Social Exchange Theory posits that military personnel engage in a cost-benefit analysis regarding their service. When job satisfaction is high, personnel feel more committed to their duties, reducing absenteeism (Tamarai Kannan, 2020). Conversely, low satisfaction diminishes motivation, increasing absenteeism rates (Suriyabandara, 2023).

In addition, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory differentiates between motivators, such as recognition and achievement and hygiene factors like resources and support. Satisfaction with motivators enhances commitment and reduces absenteeism, while dissatisfaction with hygiene factors can lead to frustration and disengagement, thereby increasing absenteeism (Alrawahi, 2020).

Similarly, Equity Theory suggests that perceptions of fairness in workload, recognition and rewards influence absenteeism. When personnel perceive inequity, it diminishes job satisfaction and increases absenteeism as they seek to rectify perceived injustices (Dagher, 2024).

Further, empirical studies affirm the link between job satisfaction and absenteeism. Suriyabandara (2023) found a negative correlation between job satisfaction and absenteeism rates among Sri Lankan Naval personnel. Dagher (2024) and MacGregor (2020) showed that job satisfaction levels could predict future absenteeism behaviour. Interviews by Mihaela (2022) and (Alrawahi, 2020) further emphasized the role of job satisfaction in reducing absenteeism. These findings underscore the importance of enhancing job satisfaction to foster commitment and reduce absenteeism, thus improving overall military effectiveness.

EFFECTIVENESS OF RETENTION STRATEGIES OF ARMIES

The retention strategies employed by armies encompass a variety of approaches designed to retain military personnel. These strategies often include financial incentives, career development programs, work-life balance initiatives, recognition systems, leadership development and organizational culture enhancement (Suriyabandara, 2023). Financial incentives like bonuses, allowances and retention rewards are common, while career development programs offer training, education, promotion pathways and mentorship to enhance professional growth (Saari, 2004).

Further, work-life balance initiatives may involve flexible work arrangements, family support and counseling services to meet personal and family needs. Recognition systems reward outstanding performance, fostering a sense of belonging and leadership development programs equip personnel with the skills to effectively lead teams (Sutherland, 2020). Additionally, organizational culture initiatives aim to build a positive work environment characterized by trust, respect and inclusivity, thus enhancing morale and retention (Dagher, 2024).

Moreover, the effectiveness of these strategies is evaluated by measuring key retention metrics such as turnover rates, satisfaction levels and organizational performance. Data collection methods like surveys, interviews and focus groups help gauge the impact of these programs. Comparative analyses can identify best practices, while longitudinal studies track trends to assess the long-term sustainability of retention efforts (Suriyabandara, 2023).

In addition, several factors influence the success of retention strategies, including organizational culture, leadership support, communication and alignment with organizational goals. A supportive culture, strong leadership and effective communication enhance buy-in from personnel. Flexibility in adapting strategies to meet evolving needs, along with adequate resource allocation, ensures continued relevance and effectiveness (Bell, 2014; Suriyabandara, 2023 and Dagher, 2024). Stakeholder engagement, involving collaboration with military leadership, personnel and families, strengthens the collective effort toward meeting retention goals (Saari, 2004). These factors are crucial in building sustainable retention programs that meet the diverse needs of military personnel.

PERSONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING MILITARY ABSENTEEISM

Work-life balance plays a crucial role in military absenteeism, as (Berndtsson, 2023) highlighted that the demanding nature of military service long hours, frequent deployments and unpredictable schedules can disrupt the equilibrium between professional and personal life. This imbalance often leads to stress, burnout and dissatisfaction, which in turn increase the likelihood of absenteeism. Oskarsson (2021) illustrated that when military personnel perceive inadequate work-life balance, they are more inclined to take time off to manage personal needs, family commitments, or to reduce stress.

Similarly, family-related stressors have a profound impact on absenteeism. Frequent relocations, separation from loved ones due to deployments and financial strains can affect the well-being and morale of military personnel. (Berndtsson, 2023) further suggested that these stressors make personnel more susceptible to absenteeism as they attempt to address family issues or cope with prolonged emotional strain. Hence, family pressures are a key driver behind absenteeism in military settings.

Further, health-related issues also significantly influence absenteeism, as Jaiswal (2015) highlighted. Physical injuries, mental health challenges and emotional distress can impede an officer's ability to fulfill their duties, leading to medical absenteeism. These health issues may even prompt personnel to consider early retirement or leave due to health-related limitations. Jaiswal (2015) further emphasized that proactive health initiatives and accessible healthcare services can mitigate absenteeism and support retention by promoting well-being and resilience.

In light, the interplay between work-life balance, family stressors and health-related concerns is central to understanding absenteeism in the military. Addressing these personal factors can help organizations create supportive environments, enhancing personnel satisfaction, resilience and overall mission effectiveness.

MILITARY-SPECIFIC FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ABSENTEEISM

Military personnel face unique challenges that contribute to absenteeism, distinct from those in civilian contexts. Dexter (2020) highlighted that frequent relocations, extended separations from family and exposure to combat-related hazards are factors that differentiate military service, often leading to absenteeism. The physical and mental stressors,

combined with the rigid structure and discipline of military life, can further strain personnel and influence attendance behaviour (Sutherland, 2020). Thus, the demands of military service inherently create absenteeism risks not commonly seen in civilian employment.

Moreover, deployment-related stress plays a significant role in absenteeism patterns. MacGregor (2020) illustrated those long deployments, combat exposure and the stress of reintegrating into civilian life can lead to psychological distress, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Absenteeism may serve as a coping mechanism for military personnel dealing with the mental health impacts of deployment, seeking support during these vulnerable times.

Further, organizational factors also contribute to absenteeism. Effective leadership, unit cohesion and a positive organizational climate promote attendance, while ineffective leadership or perceived injustices can erode morale, leading to higher absenteeism rates (Dagher, 2024; Alvinus, 2016). Ngwenya (2023) further emphasized that policies promoting work-life balance and mental health support play a critical role in mitigating absenteeism.

By recognizing these unique military-specific factors, organizations can implement targeted interventions like resilience training, leadership development and family support services (Dagher, 2024) (Wolor, 2022). Such strategies help address the challenges military personnel face, fostering a supportive environment that enhances well-being, reduces absenteeism and sustains operational effectiveness.

CROSS-COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ABSENTEEISM

Absenteeism is a global challenge in military forces, driven by various economic, cultural and organizational factors. For instance, Jaiswal (2015) highlights that the Indian Military struggles with officer shortages due to better external employment opportunities, emphasizing the role of economic stability and job satisfaction. Similarly, the US Army faces absenteeism, further complicated by discrepancies in absenteeism records, highlighting systemic issues (GAO, 2022). The UK Army manages absenteeism by categorizing it into short- and long-term absenteeism s, reflecting a tailored approach (Steventon-Kiy, 2024). The Canadian Army also faces absenteeism challenges, underscoring the widespread nature of the issue (Bériault, 2021).

While economic downturns universally exacerbate absenteeism, response strategies vary. The Indian Military's shortages emphasize economic stability and job satisfaction, while the US Army focuses on improving organizational policies. The UK Army's nuanced approach to absenteeism s and the Canadian Army's call for comprehensive strategies suggest a need for diverse, multi-faceted responses.

Additionally, interventions such as financial incentives, career development programs and family support services aim to proactively target the root causes of absenteeism, including economic pressures, job dissatisfaction and military life stresses. Key strategies like enhancing job satisfaction, improving financial stability and fostering a supportive organizational culture help reduce absenteeism.

In the Sri Lanka Army, a multi-dimensional approach is vital, incorporating career advancement, flexible duty schedules, financial support, leadership development,

mental health programs and continuous monitoring. These targeted interventions address both organizational issues and individual needs, helping to mitigate absenteeism and strengthen the overall resilience of military personnel.

LITERATURE GAP

Despite considerable research on military absenteeism, several gaps remain regarding the factors driving absenteeism among Sri Lanka Army officers. Existing literature largely focuses on global forces, such as the US, Indian and UK armies, with little emphasis on Sri Lanka's unique socio-economic and cultural context. While studies have addressed economic hardship, job satisfaction and organizational policies, there is limited exploration of how these factors interact specifically within the Sri Lanka Army, especially amid recent economic challenges. Furthermore, research often highlights external stressors like deployments, but few studies examine the internal dynamics of leadership, organizational culture, or mental health support systems in the Sri Lankan military. There is also a lack of analysis on proactive interventions, such as leadership development or family support services, which could potentially mitigate absenteeism. This study seeks to fill these gaps by analyzing the unique factors contributing to absenteeism in the Sri Lanka Army and assessing targeted strategies for reducing it.

METHODOLOGY

This study conducted a detailed analysis of primary data collected through structured questionnaires, focusing on the influence of financial and organizational factors on absenteeism among officers in the Sri Lanka Army. The research aims to explore the relationship between key variables, including job satisfaction, career progression and economic downfall and how they impact on absenteeism

rates within the military context. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were utilized to investigate these relationships, with IBM SPSS Statistics 27 used for data analysis, ensuring the validity and reliability of the conclusions drawn. Furthermore, this study incorporated qualitative analysis through thematic exploration to provide a comprehensive understanding of absenteeism, considering the perspectives of officers affected by financial stress and organizational challenges. This dual approach enhances the depth of the study, aiming to provide insights into how economic and organizational dynamics affect the motivation, morale and absenteeism of officers, thereby informing recommendations for systemic improvements within the Sri Lanka Army.

RESEARCH DESIGN

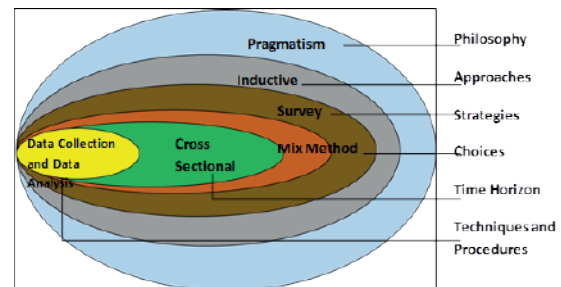


Figure 3.1: Research Onion.

Source: Saunders et al (2009).

Pragmatism is the philosophical underpinning of the research, which allows for a practical and problem-centered approach, incorporating diverse viewpoints and mixed methods to understand the phenomenon. An inductive approach is chosen, aiming to generate new theories or hypotheses based on the observation of empirical data collected through the study. The survey strategy is utilized to collect a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data from a substantial sample, which is conducive to understanding broad patterns and in-depth insights. A mixed-

methods choice integrates the quantifiable data of surveys with the rich, contextual data from interviews, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The cross-sectional time horizon implies that data are collected at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of the influences and manifestations of absenteeism during the economic downturn. Google Sheets are used to collect and preliminarily organize survey data due to its accessibility and user-friendly interface.

For detailed analysis, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) serves as the tool for conducting statistical tests, including hypothesis testing, to examine the relationships between job satisfaction, career progression, economic problems and absenteeism. The Cronbach's alpha test is utilized to assess the reliability of the scales used in the survey. The questionnaire is distributed among 352 officers (as per the online calculator) in the army to ensure a robust sample size for quantitative analysis, 7 x interviews are conducted with officers who have records of being absent, to gain qualitative insights into personal experiences and contextual factors influencing absenteeism.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

The following is the conceptualization of the variables related to the problem:

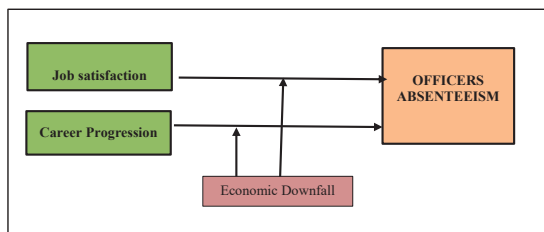


Figure 3.2: Conceptual Framework.
Source: Created by Researcher.

Independent variables are the factors that are presumed to influence or predict the outcome of interest, which, in this case, is the absenteeism of officers. In the context of this research, they could include:

JOB SATISFACTION

In the military, job satisfaction includes factors like assignments, working conditions and recognition. Higher satisfaction leads to greater engagement and lower absenteeism.

CAREER PROGRESSION

Opportunities for promotions, training and development increase motivation and commitment, reducing absenteeism when officers see clear advancement paths.

The dependent variable is the outcome that the research aims to explain or predict. In this study, it is:

OFFICERS' ABSENTEEISM

The study's main outcome variable, absenteeism, refers to instances when officers are absent without authorized leave. It is examined in relation to job satisfaction and career progression to understand how these factors affect absence rates. Moderating variable is a factor that might affect the strength or direction of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This could include:

ECONOMIC DOWNFALL

An economic downfall acts as a moderating variable in this model. It influences the relationship between job satisfaction, career progression and officers' absenteeism. Economic hardship can amplify the effects of

job dissatisfaction or alter the importance of career progression in an officer's decision to be absent.

H4: Economic Downfall significantly moderated the relationship between CP and Abs

HYPOTHESES

H1: Job satisfaction has a significant negative impact on officers' Absenteeism.

H2: Career progression has a significant negative impact on Absenteeism.

H3: Economic downfall significantly moderated the relationship between Job Satisfaction and Absenteeism

OPERATIONALIZATION

Operationalization is essential in research because it provides a clear framework for defining and measuring variables, ensuring reliability and comparability across studies and enabling meaningful statistical analysis. Operationalization of variables is given below:

Ser	Concept	Variable	Indicator	Measure
1.	Job Satisfaction	Degree of Job Satisfaction	Pay Benefits Working Conditions Welfare Social Recognition	Job Satisfaction Survey Participants rate their agreement or satisfaction level with each statement on a Likert scale
2.	Career Progression	Effectiveness of Career Progression	Commanding appointments, Promotion, Staff Privileges	Each career Progression is listed and participants rate the effectiveness of each career milestone
3.	Economic problem	Economic problem Interferences	Work Interference due to Economic Problems	Participants rate their agreement with each statement on a Likert scale and the scores obtain overall measure of economic problem Interferences

The above illustrates the operationalization of key variables in the study, showing how job satisfaction, career progression and economic challenges are defined and measured to understand their impact on absenteeism. Job satisfaction is assessed through pay, benefits and working conditions, while career progression is evaluated by indicators like promotions and staff privileges. Economic

challenges are measured by factors such as financial obligations and decreased purchasing power. Using standardized surveys with Likert scales, the study quantifies how these factors contribute to absenteeism in the Sri Lanka Army.

DATA ANALYSIS

RELIABILITY TEST

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Result
Job Satisfaction	0.938	Reliable since 0.938 is greater than 0.7 ($0.938 > 0.7$)
Career Progression	0.937	Reliable since 0.937 is greater than 0.7 ($0.937 > 0.7$)
Economic Downfall	0.938	Reliable since 0.938 is greater than 0.7 ($0.938 > 0.7$)
Officer Absenteeism	0.937	Reliable since 0.937 is greater than 0.7 ($0.937 > 0.7$)

Table 4.1: Summary of Reliability Analysis of Variables.
Source: Created by Researcher.

The internal consistency for all the variables that have been measures here shows that all the constructs have got high reliability which is checked by Cronbach's Alpha with all values being above the acceptable 0.7. In particular, the items related to the variable Job Satisfaction (0.938), Career Progression (0.937), Economic Downfall (0.938) and Officer Absenteeism (0.937) have been identified as reliable and this shows that the items in each variable are indeed tapping into the intended construct. This high reliability showed that the data collected for these variables are reliable and can be used in further analysis.

VALIDITY TEST

Table 4.2: Validity Test

MO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.921
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5228.423
	df	378
	Sig.	.000

Source: Created by Researcher.

The KMO Bartlett's Test above demonstrates the validity of the research instrument. According to the data, the KMO value is 0.921 which is higher than 0.5. Therefore, it can be argued that, the measurement of variables in this study is correct.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The demographic analysis reveals that the sample is predominantly male (89.5%), with a smaller proportion of female respondents (10.5%). Most respondents are aged 31-35 (51.2%), followed by those aged 36-40 (27.2%), reflecting an early to mid-career workforce. A significant majority (79.6%) hold the rank of Major, with only 1.9% at the Lieutenant Colonel level or above. Infantry roles are most common (59.3%), while support and service roles are less represented. Most respondents have 11-15 years of service (62.3%) and educational attainment is primarily at the diploma level (72.2%), with fewer holding bachelor's (18.5%) or master's degrees (9.3%). This suggests a mid-level, experienced workforce focused on infantry, with moderate educational qualifications.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The descriptive statistics highlight key concerns regarding job satisfaction, career progression, economic challenges and officer absenteeism. Job satisfaction scores for compensation, benefits and recognition were low, ranging from 1.74 to 1.88, indicating widespread dissatisfaction, particularly with compensation and recognition (Table 4A.1). In terms of career progression, mean scores ranged from 1.70 to 1.93, showing dissatisfaction with leadership opportunities and the promotion process (Table 4A.2). The unanimous perception of economic challenges is reflected in high mean scores (4.27 to 4.34), indicating significant impacts from inflation and rising financial obligations (Table 4A.3). Officer absenteeism was found to have increased due to economic stress and career dissatisfaction, with mean scores ranging from 4.15 to 4.28,

reflecting the belief that absenteeism negatively affects career progression and performance (Table 4A.4). Standard deviations across all categories show moderate to high agreement among respondents. In summary, dissatisfaction with compensation, career growth and financial stress are key drivers of absenteeism among officers. Detailed data is provided in Annex A.

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Correlation analysis is used to identify relationships among variables. The Pearson Correlation value represents the strength of the relationships between variables. The values can be from -1 to +1. These values should have a significance value less than 0.05 to be statistically significant. +1 indicates a perfect positive correlation. On the other hand, -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation (as one variable increases, the other decreases).

Table 4.3: Correlations

Variable		Job Satisfaction	Career Progression	Economic Downfall	Officer Absenteeism
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.833**	-.659**	-.731**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	162	162	162	162
Career Progression	Pearson Correlation	.833**	1	-.667**	-.686**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	162	162	162	162
Economic Downfall	Pearson Correlation	-.659**	-.667**	1	.821**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	162	162	162	162
Officer Absenteeism	Pearson Correlation	-.731**	-.686**	.821**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	162	162	162	162
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

Source: Created by Researcher.

Correlation analysis in the above table analyses the relationships between independent, dependent and moderator variables of this study. Job satisfaction has a strong negative relationship with officer absenteeism ($r = -0.731$, $p = 0.000$) which is statistically significant. Therefore, it can be argued that when the job satisfaction increases, officer absenteeism reduces. Career progression has a significant negative relationship with officer absenteeism ($r = -0.686$, $p = 0.000$). On the other hand, the

moderator variable of economic downfall has a significantly positive relationship with officer absenteeism ($r = 0.821$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, it is clear that when the economic downfall increases, officer absenteeism increases. According to the above data, the strongest relationship exists between economic downfall and officer absenteeism. On the other hand, the weakest relationship exists between career progression and officer absenteeism.

LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Table 4.4: Logistic Regression Analysis

Variables	B (Coefficients)	S.E. (Standard Error)	Wald	Sig. (p-value)	Exp (B) (Odds Ratio)
Job Satisfaction	-0.431	0.134	10.347	0.001	0.650
Career Progression	-0.124	0.145	0.732	0.392	0.883
Economic Downfall	1.204	0.234	26.435	0	3.334

Source: Created by Researcher.

Regression Analysis shows the output as follows:

JOB SATISFACTION.

A significant negative effect ($B = -0.431$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that as job satisfaction increases, the likelihood of absenteeism decreases.

CAREER PROGRESSION.

No significant effect ($p > 0.05$), which aligns with the earlier analysis.

ECONOMIC DOWNFALL

A significant positive effect ($B = 1.204$, $p = 0.000$), showing that economic downturn increases the likelihood of absenteeism.

EXP(B) INTERPRETATION

Exp(B) values indicate the odds ratio. For example, the odds of absenteeism increase by a factor of 3.334 for each unit increase in Economic Downfall, while Job Satisfaction decreases the odds by a factor of 0.650.

Table 4.5: Model Summary

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.859a	.738	.733	.38728
a. Predictors: (Constant), Economic Downfall, Job Satisfaction, Career Progression				
b. Dependent Variable: Officer Absenteeism				

Source: Created by Researcher.

The model summary table above demonstrates the predictability of Officer Absenteeism using Economic Downfall, Job Satisfaction and Career Progression. The R is 0.859 which indicates a strong positive correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The R Square (0.738) suggests that 73.8% of the variability in Officer Absenteeism can be explained by the predictors in the model.

Table 4.6: ANOVA

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	66.706	3	22.235	148.252	.000b
	Residual	23.697	158	.150		
	Total	90.403	161			
a. Dependent Variable: Officer Absenteeism						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Economic Downfall, Job Satisfaction, Career Progression						

Source: Created by Researcher

The ANOVA table above presents the overall significance of the regression model in predicting the dependent variable. The F-statistic (148.252) indicates that the model explains a significant portion of the variance in absenteeism since it is higher than 1. The p-value (Sig.) is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the model is significant.

Table 4.7: Coefficients

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.298	.327		7.027	.000
	Job Satisfaction	-.330	.078	-.321	-4.223	.000
	Career Progression	-.022	.079	-.022	-.282	.778
	Economic Downfall	.588	.056	.595	10.536	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Officer Absenteeism						

Source: Created by Researcher

The coefficient analysis of this model is presented in the above table. Job satisfaction has a negative significant impact on officer absenteeism ($B = -.321$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, it is clear that job satisfaction significantly reduces officer absenteeism and it accepts the H1. On the other hand, even if the career progression variable has negative beta value, the effect is not significant at 0.05 ($B = -.022$, $p > 0.05$, $p = 0.778$). Therefore, rejects the H2. Economic downfall has a positive significant impact on officer absenteeism. Hence, it is clear that the independent variable of job satisfaction and moderator variable of economic downfall have significant impacts on the dependent variable of officers' absenteeism.

INTERACTION EFFECT ANALYSIS

The interaction analysis of this model was done considering only the job satisfaction variable since the career progression had no significant impact on officer absenteeism. Therefore, the moderator effect of economic downfall on the relationship between job satisfaction and officer absenteeism was analyzed based on logistics regression analysis. A separate variable is created for the purpose of analyzing the interaction effect in this model.

Table 4.8: Coefficients

Variables Entered/Removed ^a			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Int Term, Economic Downfall, Job Satisfaction ^b		Enter
a. Dependent Variable: Officer Absenteeism.			
b. All requested variables entered.			

Source: Created by Researcher

Table 4.9: Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.887 ^a	.786	.782	.34956
a. Predictors: (Constant), Int Term, Economic Downfall, Job Satisfaction				

Source: Created by Researcher.

The model summary table above demonstrates the predictability of Officer Absenteeism using Economic Downfall, Job Satisfaction and interim term variables. The R is 0.887 which indicates a strong positive correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The R Square (0.786) suggests that 78.6% of the variability in Officer Absenteeism can be explained by the predictors in the model.

Table 4.10: ANOVA

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	71.096	3	23.699	193.943	.000b
	Residual	19.307	158	.122		
	Total	90.403	161			
a. Dependent Variable: Officer Absenteeism						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Int Term, Economic Downfall, Job Satisfaction						

Source: Created by Researcher

The ANOVA table above presents the overall significance of the regression model in predicting the dependent variable. The F-statistic (193.943) indicates that the model explains a significant portion of the variance in absenteeism since it is higher than 1. The p-value (Sig.) is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the model is significant.

Table 4.11: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.702	.286		9.444	.000
	Job Satisfaction	-.064	.069	-.062	-.935	.351
	Economic Downfall	.393	.059	.398	6.704	.000
	Int Term	.125	.021	.487	6.002	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Officer Absenteeism						

Source: Created by Researcher

According to the above coefficient table values, it is clear that the interaction term variable has a significant impact on the dependent variable of Officer absenteeism. This demonstrates the moderator effect of economic downfall (B = 0.487, p = 0.000). Therefore, it is clear that economic downfall significantly moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and officer absenteeism.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The qualitative analysis explores the factors influencing absenteeism among officers in the Sri Lanka Army during the economic downturn. The data, gathered from interviews with seven respondents, were analyzed using thematic analysis, revealing several key themes as follows.

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND FINANCIAL STRESS

It is emerged as the primary factor driving absenteeism. Officers cited that financial strain due to insufficient salaries, failed to keep up with rising living costs. Expenses for food, housing and transportation further burdened officers, forcing many to seek additional income, which in turn led to increased absenteeism.

CAREER PROGRESSION AND RECOGNITION

Officers expressed frustration with limited advancement opportunities and a lack of recognition for their efforts. Nepotism and seniority-based promotions were identified as key barriers, leading to dissatisfaction and disengagement, which contributed to absenteeism.

JOB SATISFACTION AND WORKING CONDITIONS

Many officers were dissatisfied with their job assignments, feeling that their skills were underutilized. Poor working conditions and inadequate support from leadership further exacerbated feelings of being undervalued, increasing absenteeism.

BALANCING WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE

A common challenge with respondents reporting family stress identified as a key contributor. Long working hours and restricted leave policies made it difficult to balance personal and professional responsibilities, prompting absenteeism as officers struggled to meet family obligations.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

It was seen as inadequate. While programs like the Suwasahana loan system provided some relief, officers felt these were insufficient to address financial stress. Respondents emphasized the need for improved financial support, including low-interest loans and more comprehensive assistance programs.

MORALE AND MOTIVATION

Low morale and motivation were consistently low due to systemic issues such as nepotism, poor leadership and limited career growth. Officers reported feeling undervalued which, coupled with the economic downturn, further reduced motivation and increased absenteeism.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Recommendations for Improvement included increasing salaries to match rising living costs, enhancing benefits to reduce financial stress, implementing fair promotion policies, improving career progression based on merit and expanding financial support systems. These suggestions underscore the need for systemic changes to address absenteeism within the Army.

The quantitative analysis, using descriptive statistics and logistic regression, revealed that economic downfall significantly increases absenteeism, while job satisfaction plays a crucial role in reducing it. However, career progression showed no substantial impact on absenteeism. The qualitative analysis, based on thematic exploration, further supported these findings, highlighting financial stress, lack of career progression and low job satisfaction as key drivers of absenteeism. Officers expressed frustration over financial burdens, inadequate recognition, poor working conditions and the difficulty of balancing work and personal life. Together, these analyses emphasize the critical need for addressing economic and organizational challenges to reduce absenteeism and improve overall morale and engagement within the Army.

DISCUSSION

By drawing on both the data and existing literature, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors driving absenteeism and offers recommendations for targeted interventions to address these challenges within the Sri Lanka Army.

ECONOMIC DOWNFALL AS A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TO ABSENTEEISM

The research reveals that economic hardship is a significant driver of absenteeism among Sri Lanka Army officers. A strong positive correlation ($r = 0.821$, $p = 0.000$) shows that financial stress due to inflation and rising living costs led officers to seek additional income, increasing absenteeism. This aligns with literature, where studies like Bell (2014) and Psyops (2023) confirm that economic pressure often shifts priorities toward personal financial survival over duties. The moderating effect of economic downfall on job satisfaction has further worsened absenteeism, reinforcing previous findings of Suriyabandara (2023) and Dale (1983).

JOB SATISFACTION AS A KEY FACTOR IN REDUCING ABSENTEEISM

Job satisfaction strongly reduces absenteeism, with a negative correlation ($r = -0.731$, $p = 0.000$). Officers satisfied with compensation, working conditions and recognition reported lower absenteeism rates, consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Syptak, 1999). The logistic regression also showed that higher job satisfaction significantly decreases absenteeism ($B = -0.431$, $p = 0.001$). This supports studies by Mihaela (2022) and Alvinus (2016), highlighting that improving job satisfaction through better compensation, recognition and career development can mitigate absenteeism (Suriyabandara, 2023; Dagher, 2024).

LIMITED IMPACT OF CAREER PROGRESSION ON ABSENTEEISM

Contrary to expectations, career progression had minimal effect on absenteeism ($B = -0.124$, $p = 0.392$). Officers were frustrated with limited advancement opportunities, but this did not significantly contribute to absenteeism, as economic insecurity was a more immediate concern. This aligns with studies by Saari (2004) and Psyops (2023), suggesting that during economic hardship, career development's motivational effects diminish, as officers prioritize financial stability over long-term goals.

ROLE OF PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS IN ABSENTEEISM

Personal factors, including family stress, work-life balance and health issues, were significant contributors to absenteeism. Officers struggled with balancing work and personal life, exacerbated by long working hours and limited leave, aligning with Ngwenya (2023)

and Oskarsson (2021). Additionally, health concerns such as stress and burnout increased absenteeism, consistent with Jaiswal (2015). Organizational factors, like poor leadership and lack of recognition, also led to low morale and absenteeism, reflecting findings by Alvinus (2016) and MacGregor (2020).

EFFECTIVENESS OF RETENTION STRATEGIES

Current retention strategies, including financial incentives and support systems, were found insufficient. Officers were dissatisfied with programs like Suwasahana loans, which failed to fully address financial challenges. This highlights the need for more comprehensive retention strategies, echoing findings from Suriyabandara (2023) and Saari (2004), which emphasize tailored financial and personal support systems to mitigate absenteeism.

In light of these findings, these findings highlight the need for a multi-faceted approach to reduce absenteeism, focusing on improving job satisfaction, addressing economic stressors, enhancing leadership and providing more robust support systems for military personnel.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

ECONOMIC DOWNFALL AS A KEY DRIVER OF ABSENTEEISM

The study found a strong link between economic hardship and absenteeism, consistent with prior research (Bell, 2014; Psyops, 2023). Officers facing financial stress due to inflation and reduced purchasing power were more likely to be absent from work, as economic pressures led them to prioritize personal financial survival over professional responsibilities. Social Exchange Theory (Emerson, 2003) explains this as a cost-benefit calculation, where officers disengage when financial pressures outweigh

the benefits of job security. To address this, the Sri Lanka Army should consider economic support measures to help mitigate the impact of national financial instability on its workforce, echoing recommendations by Dale (1983) and Suriyabandara (2023).

JOB SATISFACTION AND ITS ROLE IN REDUCING ABSENTEEISM

Job satisfaction was found to have a strong negative correlation with absenteeism, reinforcing the importance of employee satisfaction in reducing absenteeism and turnover. Studies by Herzberg (1999) and Mihaela (2022) similarly link satisfaction with compensation, recognition and working conditions to lower absenteeism. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory supports the finding that officers who are satisfied with hygiene factors such as pay and work conditions are less likely to disengage from their duties. Improving job satisfaction through better compensation, working conditions and recognition can thus be instrumental in reducing absenteeism, as supported by research from Suriyabandara (2023) and Alvinus (2016).

Further, Social Exchange Theory further explains this, as officers who perceive that the organization values their contributions are more likely to show loyalty and commitment, reducing absenteeism (Emerson, 2003). Investing in measures that enhance perception of job satisfaction such as welfare benefits and recognition programs, could therefore have a significant impact.

CAREER PROGRESSION: MINIMAL IMPACT ON ABSENTEEISM

Contrary to expectations, career progression had a minimal impact on absenteeism, diverging from literature emphasizing career advancement as a key motivator (Saari, 2004; Sutherland, 2020). The

findings suggest that in times of economic hardship, officers prioritize immediate financial concerns over long-term career goals. This aligns with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which indicates that basic financial security takes precedence over higher-order needs like career advancement during difficult economic times (Psyops, 2023).

Equity Theory also sheds light on this issue, suggesting that perceived inequities in promotion opportunities such as favoritism or nepotism may contribute to dissatisfaction, but financial pressures remain the dominant factor influencing absenteeism (Dagher, 2024). While career development remains important, it must be coupled with financial and personal support to be effective in reducing absenteeism.

PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS IN ABSENTEEISM

Personal factors, including family stress, work-life balance and health issues, were significant contributors to absenteeism. Officers reported struggles balancing professional and personal responsibilities, a finding consistent with Ngwenya (2023) and Oskarsson (2021), who identified work-life imbalance as a key driver of absenteeism in military settings. Additionally, health-related issues such as stress and burnout emerged as important factors. Jaiswal (2015) highlights that personnel under high levels of stress are more prone to absenteeism that emphasize the need for better health and wellness programs, including mental health support. Moreover, leadership and unit cohesion were critical in shaping absenteeism behavior at the organizational level. Officers experiencing poor leadership and a lack of recognition reported lower morale, which led to disengagement. This supports findings by Alvinus (2016) and Sutherland (2020), which emphasize the importance of effective leadership and a positive work climate in reducing absenteeism. Improving leadership

development and fostering a supportive environment within the Army could play a significant role in lowering absenteeism rates.

EFFECTIVENESS OF RETENTION STRATEGIES

The study's findings suggest that the Sri Lanka Army's current retention strategies, such as financial incentives and career development programs, are insufficient in addressing absenteeism. Officers expressed dissatisfaction with the existing support systems, particularly financial assistance programs like the Suwasahana loan system. More comprehensive financial support and improved work-life balance measures are needed, reflecting the recommendations from Suriyabandara (2023) and Saari (2004). A holistic approach that addresses both financial and personal well-being would likely improve retention and reduce absenteeism.

The hypotheses testing in this study provided clear insights into the relationships between economic downfall, job satisfaction, career progression and officer absenteeism. The first hypothesis (H1), which posited that economic hardships are positively correlated with increased absenteeism, was strongly supported, as economic stressors like inflation and financial obligations were found to significantly increase absenteeism rates. This aligns with the literature, particularly the findings of (Ozyuksel, 2022) and Psyops (2023), highlighting the direct impact of economic instability on attendance. The second hypothesis (H2), suggesting that career progression impacts absenteeism, was rejected as career progression showed a minimal effect, diverging from studies such as those by Saari (2004), which emphasized career growth as a key retention strategy. The third hypothesis (H3), which proposed that targeted support strategies reduce absenteeism, was confirmed by the qualitative findings. Officers who

received adequate financial and personal support were less likely to be absent, supporting the importance of comprehensive retention strategies as discussed by Suriyabandara (2023). Overall, the hypotheses testing confirmed the critical influence of economic factors and job satisfaction on absenteeism, while indicating that career progression alone may not be sufficient to reduce absenteeism in times of economic hardship.

CONCLUSION

This research explored the factors contributing to increased absenteeism among Sri Lanka Army officers, with a particular focus on economic challenges, job satisfaction and career progression. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses, the study identified economic downfall as the most significant factor influencing absenteeism, with financial stress driving many officers to seek alternative income sources, leading to their absence. Job satisfaction was found to be another key determinant, with officers who were satisfied with their compensation, recognition and working conditions showing lower absenteeism rates. Career progression, while relevant to officer motivation, had a minimal impact on absenteeism in the context of economic hardships.

The findings of this study align with established theoretical frameworks, such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Social Exchange Theory, which emphasize the importance of job satisfaction and equitable treatment in reducing absenteeism. Economic hardship exacerbated absenteeism as officers faced rising costs of living and inflation, highlighting the critical need for improved financial support systems. The study also revealed the importance of organizational factors, including leadership and work-life balance, in shaping absenteeism behavior. Effective leadership and cohesive work

environments were shown to reduce absenteeism, while personal stressors, such as family pressures and health concerns, further contributed to absenteeism rates.

In sum, this research provides valuable insights into the factors influencing absenteeism among Sri Lanka Army officers and offers practical recommendations for reducing absenteeism. By addressing the key drivers of absenteeism, including economic stress, job dissatisfaction and organizational challenges, military leadership can implement targeted interventions that improve officer retention, morale and operational effectiveness. The study's conclusions contribute to the broader understanding of absenteeism in military contexts and provide a foundation for developing policies that support the well-being and professional growth of Sri Lanka Army personnel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

STRENGTHENING FINANCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Given that economic downfall emerged as a significant contributor to absenteeism, it is essential for the Sri Lanka Army to improve its financial support systems. Introducing enhanced financial aid programs, such as low-interest loans, salary adjustments in line with inflation and emergency financial assistance, would help reduce the economic stress of officers. This would alleviate financial burdens and discourage absenteeism by ensuring that officers can maintain financial stability while fulfilling their professional duties.

IMPROVING JOB SATISFACTION THROUGH RECOGNITION AND COMPENSATION

To address the negative impact of job dissatisfaction, the army should focus on enhancing compensation packages and recognition systems. Regular salary reviews, bonuses for outstanding performance and non-monetary rewards such as public recognition and career development opportunities can improve job satisfaction. When officers feel valued and fairly compensated, they are more likely to remain engaged and committed, leading to reduced absenteeism.

IMPLEMENTING COMPREHENSIVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE INITIATIVES

Issues related to Work-life balance were identified as significant contributors to absenteeism. The army should implement flexible working arrangements, such as more generous leave policies, family support programs and shorter deployment periods. Offering counseling services and resources to help officers manage personal and family-related stress would improve their overall well-being and reduce the likelihood of absenteeism due to personal reasons.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Poor leadership was found to contribute to low morale and absenteeism. The Sri Lanka Army should invest in leadership development programs that equip officers with the skills to manage their teams effectively, foster cohesion and create a positive work environment. Leaders who are trained to motivate and support their subordinates can create a culture of trust and engagement, which would in turn reduce absenteeism.

ENHANCING CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Although career progression had a minimal direct impact on absenteeism, improving career development pathways could still enhance officer retention. Offering more transparent and merit-based promotion systems, mentorship programs and access to advanced training will help officers feel more motivated to stay engaged in their roles. This would foster long-term commitment and reduce disengagement among those frustrated with limited opportunities.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING PROGRAMS

The study identified health-related stress and burnout as key contributors to absenteeism. To address this, the army should introduce mental health support programs, including access to counseling, stress management workshops and routine mental health check-ups. Proactively addressing mental health concerns will not only reduce absenteeism but also improve overall productivity and morale among the officers.

DEVELOPING TAILORED RETENTION STRATEGIES

The army should implement tailored retention strategies that address the unique challenges faced by military personnel during economic downturns. This could include offering retention bonuses, ensuring career stability during challenging times and creating specialized retention teams to monitor officer engagement and provide timely interventions. These strategies will help retain key personnel and mitigate absenteeism, especially during periods of financial difficulty.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future research should explore the intricate role that mental health and organizational culture play in absenteeism within the military. While this study identified economic pressures and career progression as major factors, mental health challenges, such as stress and trauma, are likely significant contributors to absenteeism. Additionally, organizational culture leadership styles, communication and support systems should be investigated to understand how they influence attendance behaviors. Researchers should also examine absenteeism across different military divisions and ranks, as the pressures and challenges may vary significantly depending on the operational demands and hierarchical structures of each unit. To enhance the robustness of future studies, employing a more diverse sample, including different branches of the military and various geographic regions, is recommended. Objective data, such as absenteeism logs and performance metrics, could complement self-reported data to provide deeper insights into the complex factors contributing to absenteeism.

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DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The descriptive analysis is based on analysis carried out through SPSS.

Table 4A.1: Descriptive Statistics of Job Satisfaction

		1. I am satisfied with the compensation I receive for my role.	2. My pay reflects the amount of work I do.	3. The non-wage benefits (e.g., healthcare, retirement) provided by the Army meet my needs.	4. I believe the benefits package contributes positively to my job satisfaction.	5. The working conditions in my unit are comfortable and promote well-being.	6. I feel that the Army takes good care of my welfare, both physically and mentally.	7. I feel recognized for my contribution by my peers.	8. I believe that society values the role of Army officers like myself
N	Valid	162	162	162	162	162	162	162	162
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.78	1.77	1.88	1.78	1.80	1.74	1.77	1.81
Std. Deviation		.890	.887	.897	.876	.876	.874	.843	.843

Source: Created by Researcher

Responses from 162 participants yield a mean satisfaction rating of compensation and benefits that is relatively low and centered around a dissatisfaction scale that has lower values representing higher level of dissatisfaction. The coefficients of variability of all questions, which are near 0.9, indicate good agreement of the attitudes of respondents about these statements. Concisely, the results revealed that the officers in the Army may feel that they are paid less than what their worth and expected, are offered minimum provision and are not recognized enough to fulfill the satisfaction level within the rank they hold and the social status they accorded.

Table 4A.2: Descriptive Statistics of Career Progression

		9. I am satisfied with the opportunities to take on leadership positions in my career.	10. The process for being appointed to command roles is fair and transparent.	11. I am satisfied with the promotion opportunities available to me.	12. The Army's promotion process encourages growth and development.	13. I believe that the privileges associated with staff positions reflect the responsibilities I undertake.	14. The benefits of being in a higher rank motivate me to pursue further career progression.	15. I am satisfied with my career progression so far.	16. The milestones in my career reflect my growth and achievements.
N	Valid	162	162	162	162	162	162	162	162
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.76	1.70	1.81	1.91	1.85	1.93	1.80	1.78
Std. Deviation		.862	.857	.843	.904	.941	.874	.913	.780

Source: Created by Researcher

The mean scores of the leadership opportunities and career progression based on the respondents are generally low ranging from 1.70 to 1.93, where all the scoring related to dissatisfaction (the lower the score the higher the dissatisfaction). The standard deviations ranging from 0.780 to 0.941 show that variability of responses tends to be moderate which means that although most of the participants had relatively similar attitudes towards the matters considered as relevant to career advancement, there were also some players who held different views on certain matters regarding career development and related processes. Altogether, these conclusions suggest that there are severe doubts and concerns regarding the equality and openness of the promotion in the workplace, indicating the general trends and directions for the further development of leadership tasks and strategies for the promotional practice in the context of the organization's activities.

Table 4A.3: Descriptive Statistics of Economic Downfall

		17. Inflation has made it difficult for me to maintain my standard of living.	18. My financial obligations have increased as a result of the economic situation.	19. I am concerned about the impact of economic conditions on my savings.	20. I have considered finding additional sources of income outside my military service.	21. I have been forced to significantly reduce my household expenses.	22. I am anxious about my long-term financial security due to economic challenges.
N	Valid	162	162	162	162	162	162
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.27	4.34	4.29	4.33	4.28	4.28
Std. Deviation		.825	.850	.854	.878	.914	.881

Source: Created by Researcher

The results of the poll lead to conclusions that respondents' perceptions are unanimous regarding the influence of the economic situation on their financial situation, as evidenced by the high-meeting values of the statement with the means ranged from 4.27 to 4.34 that concerns inflation, rising obligations, and attitudes to savings. The low standard deviations of 0.825 to 0.914 indicate that the respondents are in agreement with what they consider as their key financial concerns and with the desire to minimize household expenditures. Taken together, these results indicate increased concern with financial stability for the long term and thus the need to look for other sources of income in the current economy.

Table 4A.4: Descriptive Statistics of Officer Absenteeism

		23. I have been absent from work more frequently over the past few months.	24. Economic difficulties have contributed to my increased absenteeism.	25. I have missed work due to personal financial challenges.	26. Career dissatisfaction has led me to take more time off from work.	27. My absence from work has affected my ability to fulfill my responsibilities.	28. I believe my absenteeism has negatively impacted my performance and career progression.
N	Valid	162	162	162	162	162	162
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.20	4.15	4.15	4.20	4.19	4.28
Std. Deviation		.871	.850	.828	.850	.907	.843

Source: Created by Researcher

The analysis of the obtained responses shows that respondents had high level of agreement towards the statements regarding absence management, as their mean values on the five-point scale ranged from 4.15 to 4.28 that can be considered as positive attitude towards the statements. In particular, the result exhibits that the respondent highly agrees that their absenteeism affects performance and career progression with the highest mean score of 4.28. The coefficients of variations mark as 0.828 to 0.907 which also show that people have more consensuses about the effect of economic difficulties and career dissatisfaction on their absenteeism.

Ser	Theme	Initial Coding	Key Points	Related Research Objective	Related Research Question
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
1.	Economic Challenges and Financial Stress	Economic downturn, financial issues, high cost of living, insufficient salary, unnecessary deductions	Financial strain due to insufficient salary, high cost of living, and unnecessary deductions	To analyze the impact of economic hardships on officers' professional and personal lives	How do economic hardships specifically impact the professional and personal lives of officers, potentially leading to increased absenteeism?
2.	Career Progression and Recognition	Lack of recognition, nepotism, limited career development opportunities, focus on seniority over qualifications	Frustration with lack of career advancement and recognition, nepotism, and seniority over qualifications	To identify the key factors contributing to increased absenteeism among officers	What are the primary factors contributing to the increase in absenteeism among officers in the Sri Lanka Army following the economic downturn?
3.	Job Satisfaction and Working Conditions	Dissatisfaction with assignments, poor working conditions, lack of motivation, unprofessional leadership	Dissatisfaction with job assignments, poor working conditions, lack of motivation, and unprofessional leadership	To identify the key factors contributing to increased absenteeism among officers	How do economic hardships specifically impact the professional and personal lives of officers, potentially leading to increased absenteeism?

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
4.	Balancing Work and Personal Life	Family stress, inability to balance work and personal life, restricted leave	Challenges in balancing work and family life, family stress, and restricted leave	To analyze the impact of economic hardships on officers' professional and personal lives	How do economic hardships specifically impact the professional and personal lives of officers, potentially leading to increased absenteeism?
5.	Support Systems and Financial Assistance	Lack of effective support systems, need for better financial support, beneficial programs like Suwasahana loan system	Insufficient support systems, need for better financial support, some beneficial programs like Suwasahana loan system	To develop strategies for reducing absenteeism during economic challenges	What strategies and interventions have been developed to reduce absenteeism among officers in the Sri Lanka Army during economic hardships?
6.	Morale and Motivation	Low morale, demotivation, frustration with the system	Low morale, demotivation, and frustration with the system	To identify the key factors contributing to increased absenteeism among officers	How do economic hardships specifically impact the professional and personal lives of officers, potentially leading to increased absenteeism?

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
7.	Recommendations for Improvement	Increase salaries, improve benefits, reduce nepotism, enhance career progression opportunities, provide better support systems	Suggestions for increasing salaries, improving benefits, reducing nepotism, enhancing career progression opportunities, and providing better support systems	To develop strategies for reducing absenteeism during economic challenges	What strategies and interventions have been developed to reduce absenteeism among officers in the Sri Lanka Army during economic hardships?



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IMPLICATIONS OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT ON NATIONAL SECURITY; A CASE STUDY OF AMPARA AND BATTICALOA DISTRICTS

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ABSTRACT

Unemployed youth have become vulnerable in the society and has created a significant threat to the national security both in Sri Lanka and globally. This study focuses on identifying the threats that the unemployed youth pose to national security due to their vulnerability with particular emphasis on Ampara and Batticaloa districts. It further proposes probable solutions, policy recommendations aimed at strengthening National Security. Henceforth, a field survey, key informant interviews and a comprehensive desk review was carried out by the researcher, with the intent to identify the threat these unemployed youth could pose to national security. The researcher was successful in identifying the possible threats unemployed youth possess and the major findings revealed that due to lack of skills, poor education qualifications and insufficient job opportunities the target audience would seek all possible means to find an income immaterial of the manner in which they would achieve their

ultimate objective, which can be defined as a realist version of human nature. It was revealed that the majority supported the illegitimate activities indirectly and was used by the groups and individuals who carried out these activities as an auxiliary force. Therefore, it is evident that necessary attention should be paid in identifying the unemployed youth and arming them with knowledge and skills to find suitable employment or to become self-employed which will mitigate the threat towards national security while aiding the country's economy.

KEYWORDS: *Education, Extremism, Job Opportunities, National Security, Skills, Unemployment.*

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN 1985 defines the word 'Youth' as a group of individuals who are between the ages 15-24 years. It can be defined that the population falling within the category of youth in a country is the main foundation

of the future of the respective country. Further, the economy of that state is especially dependent on the youth who are expected to contribute towards its future development and progress. Therefore, it is pivotal to direct them in the correct path to ensure that they select a profession that will assist the nation's future developments. Nonetheless, as per the statistics presented in the consensus (Government of Sri Lanka, 2021) the youth in Sri Lanka indicates a high unemployment rate, at 21.4%.

The main reasons for unemployment can be identified as the lack of education, lack of job opportunities, lack of entrepreneurial aptitude and lack of skills to match the existing job opportunities, shortage of jobs curated to facilitate the unemployed and wrong mentality created by society to prefer white collar jobs over others.

Furthermore, personal and social effects of unemployment lead to financial challenges, domestic disputes, shame and stigma, social isolation, boredom, degenerating work skills and ill-health. It has been identified that the unemployed can in certain instances become vulnerable targets to illegal activists seeking manpower to conduct their illegal activities, and threatening the national security of a state.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Unemployed youth, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO 2016) consists of all those who are of a working age and seeking employment but are not employed. This definition may differ from country to country and respective regions. However, it is apparent that the youth are the most suitable category of the population capable of strengthening a country's economy.

It is evident that the reasons for youth unemployment vary depending on education

qualifications, experience, job expectations, skills, knowledge, gender and individual mind-set. Students and other individuals involved in career development trainings are not considered as unemployed in this study and only the youth seeking for employment or available for employment shall be considered as unemployed.

Financial instability and poor income which restricts basic needs could lead to frustration and desperation among youth who could instead of finding legal employment which needs skill, talent and hard work look for options which provides fast money with less effort but at a higher risk. According to Mendis, (1992), National Security of Sri Lanka (NSSL) can be defined as safeguarding the territorial and sovereign independence and identity of a state from invasion, occupation and acquisition by a foreign power or internal subversion and insurrection which seek to overthrow it by unlawful means.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Eastern Province is one of the most vulnerable areas for major illegal activities within the country, in the likes of extremism, drug trafficking and arms smuggling. Within the context of Easter Sunday Attacks, areas such as Kattankudi, Sainthamauthu and Kalmunai were found to be the most vulnerable areas related on extremism, due to the number of extremist activities such as conducting of Madrasas by extremists and for maintaining safe houses, etc. Additionally, as reported by the Institute for Security Studies and (Global Crime Index, 2021) "Arms trafficking is believed to occur primarily in Puttalam, Kalmunai in the Ampara district..." Hence, it can be argued that the personal and social implications of unemployment eventually lead these youth to individuals and organizations involved in illegal activities, Diasporas and extremist groups who will achieve their ulterior motives by forming

insurgent groups, and thereby directly threaten the national security and the territorial integrity of the state.

Hence, this study mainly focuses on the Implications on National Security of Sri Lanka (NSSL) arising from youth unemployment and the study will specifically focus on Ampara and Batticaloa districts.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- a. To explore the reasons behind youth unemployment in the Ampara and Batticaloa districts.
- b. To identify the possible contemporary threats to NSSL in the Ampara and Batticaloa districts which arise due to youth unemployment.
- c. To suggest possible pre-emptive measures that will mitigate the possible contemporary threats to NSSL due to youth unemployment in the Ampara and Batticaloa districts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many definitions on “unemployment”, the most prominent is given by The International Labour Organization (ILO 2016) as, “all those of working age who were not in employment carried out activities to seek employment during a specified recent period and were currently available to take up employment given a job.” Furthermore, the Indeed Editorial Team describes unemployment as “individuals who do not have a full or part time job and anyone who is available for work and available at present to be employed but does not have a job” (Team, 2021).

There are many reasons for unemployment, as conveyed in the report on Factors Influencing Youth Unemployment in Sri Lanka by the Asian Journal of Management Studies (AJMS) “causal factors for unemployment are education, digital literacy skills, training, language literacy levels and demography such as, age, gender, marital status and house hold size are the main influences on unemployment (studies, 2021).

The Economics and Labour Relations Review highlights that unemployment could take place due to market clearance. The employees may take time in looking for appropriate jobs while the employer will take time in scrutinizing the recruits to ensure they select the most suitable individual for vacancies, which creates volunteered unemployment which is known as ‘frictional search unemployment’ however, this is considered as short-term unemployment.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Youth are considered as one of the most valuable resource in any nation. According to the UN and ILO youth are considered as any individual between the ages of 15 to 24. However, youth in this age category who are undergoing education do not fall under the unemployment category. Only the youth in the stated age category who are available to be employed but have not been able to find suitable employment, are considered as unemployed.

Youth unemployment is a lingering issue which is affecting the younger generation who are expected to care for their parents in the future but still struggling to be independent and is at the disadvantage side in the economy, which in turn affects the level of national security. The higher the rate of youth unemployment, the more frustrated youth will be, and it serves as a ground to forming rebellious groups that will wage war against the state of injustice, exploitation, inequity, and every state apparatus including its national security.

Labour Force and Unemployment ^(a)						
Unemployment Rate	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 ^(b)
By Gender						
Male	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.3	4.0
Female	7.6	7.0	6.5	7.1	7.4	8.5
By Age Groups (years)						
15 – 19	24.1	27.1	21.0	26.5	26.0	31.4
20 – 29	14.2	14.2	13.5	15.0	15.3	18.1
30 – 39	3.1	2.4	2.7	3.0	3.1	3.5
40 and above	1.0	0.8	0.9	0.7	1.2	1.1
By Level of Education						
Grade 5 and below
Grades 6 – 10	3.4	3.3	2.8	2.9	3.3	4.0
GCE (O/L)	6.4	5.8	5.9	5.2	6.5	7.2
GCE (A/L) & above	9.2	8.3	8.1	9.1	8.5	9.8
Overall	4.7	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.8	5.5
<p>(a) Household population aged 15 years and above</p> <p>(b) Provisional</p> <p>Note : In July 2016, the Department of Census and Statistics published a reweighted and revised labour force data series for 2011 onwards.</p> <p>... = negligible</p>						

Source : Department of Census and Statistics

Figure 1: Labour force and unemployment rates of Sri Lanka
Source: (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2020).

REASONS FOR YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

According to sources available for this study it is evident that there are multiple reasons for youth unemployment. It differs from education, demography, marital status, etc. Furthermore, according to a reasearch article on Factors influencing Youth Unemployment in Sri Lanka published by the AJMS *“one-fifth of the youth are unemployed in Sri Lanka”* (Weerasiri & Samaraweera, 2021). In the study on youth unemployment and its effect to national security study, conducted by Afolabi at the Cultural and Religious Studies (Afolabi, 2013), it is highlighted that one of the major reasons for youth unemployment is the education growth outstripping the growth of economy in which the supply of jobs are unable

to meet the needs of the graduates moving out from tertiary institution.

RADICALISATION, EXTREMISM AND DRUGS

The European Union describes Radicalisation as the ‘phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas, which could lead to acts of terrorism’. While (Ekici et al, 2016) states that radicalization is a personal process where an individual, group or mass of people use extreme cultural, religious, political, beliefs to attain certain goals by using or threatening to use violence (p. 132). It is understood that various terrorist groups, political parties and illegal organisations have various ways of radicalising according

to the needs of that particular organisation. Furthermore, radicalisation takes place due to social, cultural and family backgrounds as revealed by de-radicalised former Jihadi allies Tanya Georgelas during her interview with the BBC where she states that due to the way society, the culture and her own parents treated her and as well as the social circles she grew up in led her to radicalisation. Furthermore, the extremist groups have brainwashed her by exposing her to disturbing images where Muslims were ill-treated while stating that it was the responsibility of the Muslims to protect the religion, she goes on to state that her role was to be a child making machine so that the population will grow to pay taxes to the pro Jihadi organizations in the future while up bringing more fighters to fight for Jihad.

It could be argued that radicalisation has various categories which may vary from ethnicity to religious ideologies to political beliefs to name a few as well as certain phenomena where normal individuals fall for the laid out traps to be radicalised. However, a person to fall prey to radicalisation has numerous reasons, once they do, they will be radicalised through various means and it can be explained as a process which will lead people to support extremism or terrorism and participates in such activities directly or indirectly.

However, as Jihadi ally Tanya Georgelas and one of the terrorists of Mumbai attacks Kasab revealed majority of these individuals who went on to become extremist and terrorists after radicalisation were at the beginning just dissatisfied individuals who joined these terrorist groups where they felt that they will become heroes in a particular society by being radical terrorists who conduct violent activities in the name of ethnicity, religious or political beliefs. Nonetheless, radicalisation is considered as the initial stage and a radicalised individual will turn into extremists or terrorists and thereby harming anyone who is against their beliefs and ideologies.

According to (Scerri, 2011), extremism has become a nebulous term with many different interpretations and definitions linked to it. Extremism, in a particular context may not be extreme in another, while anyone could label any contradictory ideologies as extremism. Certain ideologies branded as extreme in certain states may not be the same when it comes to another. As penned by Sorensen majority of military extremists living in the West are young men who were born and bred in the West itself, they have been radicalised after going through a process, where Internet, established extremist ideologists and charismatic people have played a vital role as well as the friends with personal networks and visits to foreign countries (Sorensen, 2016).

However, it is not just the men and women living in the West, but even in other parts of the world too are susceptible to be radicalised. Especially, when they are dissatisfied and unemployed, humans will be more vulnerable, moreover during a period of time, where information and education is at your fingertips through modern technology. Furthermore, by using merely the internet one can create social groups which gives the access to know who shares the same interests as they do while providing them the opportunity to meet each other virtually and thereby giving them the access to expand radicalized circles as per the individual mutual ideologies.

The USAID defines violent extremism as “advocating, engaging, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic or political objectives” (USAID, 2011). While Violent Extremism can be considered as a synonym for terrorism, the initial step towards radicalization, which eventually leads to violent extremism or terrorism.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime defines drug trafficking as a global illegal trade

which involves cultivating, manufacturing, distributing and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws. According to a report by the UN, Sri Lanka as a country is described as one that does not cultivate opium. However, it highlights the illicit cultivating of cannabis, while the most significant issue related to drugs in Sri Lanka remains the trafficking of heroin from India for local consumption.

The Global Initiative Institute and Institute for Security Studies and Interpol stated that the “Arms trafficking is believed to occur primarily in Puttalam, Kalmunai in the Ampara districts of Sri Lanka...” (Global Organized Crime Index, 2021). This gives a clear understanding that majority of the arms trafficking in the island takes place both in eastern and western parts of the country, rendering unemployed youth quite vulnerable of being used for these illegal activities furthermore making Ampara district more vulnerable for illegal activities.

When considering Sri Lanka’s history, there had been quite a few instances where extremist groups have steered youth to take arms against the existing governments. One such occurrence was the forming of a leftist political party which was formed in line with the ideologies of Marxist Lenin as Zylva narrates the majority of its members consisted of rural youth who were frustrated with the government since it failed in providing employment and upward social mobility to youngsters (Zylva, 2019). This eventually led them to take arms and they tried to take power by force in 1971, however, this attempt was suppressed, but once again in the late 1980s they took arms which too was suppressed and later with the party being reformed, is now a democratic part in Sri Lanka’s electoral system.

Sri Lanka once again faced an uprising when the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), took arms. The group which was formed

by a youth named Vellupillai Prabahakaran was in his late teens when he laid the stepping stone to this organisation. A majority of the youth, who joined the LTTE, fought on the ideologies of ethnicity, requesting for a separate state for the Tamils. This organisation became one of the most ruthless terrorist organizations in the world until it was defeated by the Sri Lankan Military Forces in the year 2009. Furthermore, the LTTE recruited predominantly youth and even children. According the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), 6,903 children are known to have been recruited by the LTTE between 2002 and 2007 (IRIN, 2010). Majority of these kids were abducted and radicalised using various means. Furthermore, the LTTE went to the extent of creating a separate suicide force, thereby making history as the first ever terrorist organisation to create human bombs, for which they used a majority of volunteers and mainly it was the depressed and unemployed youth who joined the LTTE without much hope.

One of the existing extremist organisations at present is the Bodhu Bala Sena (BBS) which mainly consists of youth monks. ‘It has mainly attracted youth monks and it is furthermore believed that its leader too is a product of youth radicalisation’ (Dewasiri, 2016). Moreover, they have been able to rally the masses on the lines of Sinhala- Buddhist nationalism where youth have gone to the extent of creating groups such as Sinhalese.

However, one of the most brutal incidents in recent Sri Lankan history was recorded on Easter Sunday in 2019 where a series of explosions went off, around the country mainly targeting the Christian community. As per the available sources, it was revealed that these attacks were carried out by a branch connected to a Sri Lankan Salafi group by the name off National Tawhid Jamaat (NTJ) which was inspired by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). ‘The first transition Zaharan Hashim the individual who was the mastermind of these

attacks made was drawing Muslim youth with his sharp debates' (International Crisis Group, 2019). Further, it could be highlighted that the majority of these lectures were conducted in Batticaloa targeting the youth, this was revealed, once they were arrested for attending these special sessions conducted by Zaharan Hashim.

It is on a frequent basis that Sri Lankan news agencies report on drug traffickers as well as consumers being arrested by the authorities. These groups include youth and, at times, school going children who are arrested at get-togethers organized by groups. A research conducted by Howell and Gleason (1999) in the USA manifests that 93% of the gang members involved in drug selling in the USA was below the age of 24 years (Howell and Gleason, 1999).

POSSIBILITY OF UNEMPLOYED YOUTH BEING EXPOSED TO ILLICIT ACTIVITIES

The “youth bulge” theory explains that rapidly growing youth populations result in large groups of unemployed and frustrated young people who are susceptible to radicalization. While Ayllon and Ferreira Bastista explain that in Brazil young men who are unemployed is at a very high risk of being vulnerable for crimes. Research has exposed that unemployment has exposed them to new forms of organized crimes and criminal activities and transformed these youth as gateways for selling stolen, smuggled or counterfeit goods, as well as trafficking illegal drugs, such as co-caine and marijuana (Ayllón and Ferreira-Batista, 2018).

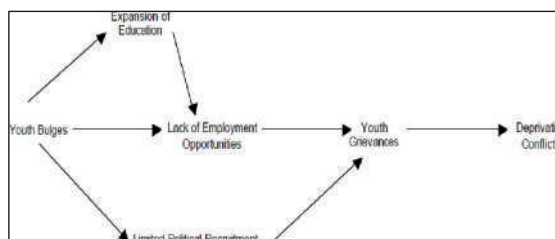


Figure 2: Youth Bulge Theory
Source: (Urdal, 2004)

In the Sri Lanka’s post-independence context it is quite evident that during most of the conflicts as well as illegitimate activities which were conducted, the youth were used to achieve the ulterior intentions of the politicians as well as certain organisations. This has been common with the LTTE using youth for illegal activities such as drug trafficking and arms smuggling which were carried out as well as the radicalisation and extremist lectures which were conducted by Zaharan Hashim. It is reasonably noticeable in all these instances the targeted audience was the unemployed youth.

NATIONAL SECURITY

The concept of national security is ambiguous and it can be argued that there is a need to look into the concept of security itself. The concept of security is highly complex. Individuals and States have different definitions on the concept of security based on the value placed on what aspect of security such as human security, economic security, social security, political security or military security. Security is commonly based on whether a country’s borders are safe from attack and whether a state is able to guarantee a reasonable degree of law and order so that citizens can live free from harm. At the same time, there is also a more subjective dimension to the notion of security as the degree to which people perceive themselves to be secured from harm. According

to Mendis (1992), national security means the safeguarding of the territorial and sovereign independence and identity of a country from a foreign state or other illegal activities, which is the responsibility of the existing rulers. However, many unemployed youth have been exposed to illegal activities due to the hidden agendas of many politicians (Afolabi, 2013). National security is the pivot on which the prosperity, governance and the general welfare of the citizens of any country turns.

IMPLICATIONS OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON NATIONAL SECURITY

The unemployed youth are very much vulnerable to the challenges that lay ahead, where they can be used by illegal activists to fulfil their requirements. Sorensen (2016) stated that Ajmal Kasab, one of the terrorists of the 'Mumbai Attacks', took to terrorism because of poverty and unemployment. Furthermore, according to his statement the majority of the terrorists were unemployed youth.

Hence, it is possible to arrive at a conclusion that unemployment is a threat to national security. Even though a multiple number of researches have been conducted on youth unemployment, it is evident that there are insufficient researches conducted on unemployment's implications to national security in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, it is important to fill the existing research gap by identifying the possible threats to NSSL due to youth unemployment in Ampara and Batticaloa districts in order to address the impending issue and explore solutions or recommendations to mitigate the problem at large.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH APPROACH

The initial foundations for the research were laid after identifying the gravity that youth unemployment could cause to NSSL by the unemployed youth. The study began with secondary data, case studies and grounded theories.

RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Considering the climate of the study area both phenomenology and interpretivism philosophies have been focused on to enhance the productivity of the study. As it is argued by Barnes (2007) that positivism philosophy is mainly focused on statistics and it will not be sufficient to collect the actual perceptions from the ground level individuals related to a study, hence, the phenomenology philosophy, a variation of interpretivism method, was employed. Considering the lack of in-depth understanding that could be caused it was decided to adopt the interpretivism philosophy through key informant interviews and desk reviews.

RESEARCH DESIGN

It was found that there is lack of research on its implications to NSSL, hence, it was decided to conduct the research by discovering certain incidents which unfolded within the country during the last few decades and the manner in which youth unemployment influenced those incidents and caused a threat to NSSL. In this research the primary data was gathered through field surveys, conducting in-depth interviews with key informants and government officials and secondary information was gathered through research studies and statistical surveys.

RESEARCH STRATEGY

The survey strategy is often linked with the deductive approach, as stated by Bryman and Bell 2011 this method gives the opportunity for the researcher to collect data which is rich and reliable through sampling a representative population. Hence, the survey method was conducted to collect empirical data from the unemployed youth in Ampara and Batticaloa with the intention of understanding the vulnerabilities of unemployment.

POPULATION AND METHOD OF SAMPLE SELECTION

In this research the cross-sectional method was selected, further, considering the techniques, the snowball sampling method was used when conducting this research.

Participants who are employed in related fields were selected mainly focusing on their involvement to mitigate unemployment in the area, using random sampling method, thereby selecting the most useful individuals for the purpose of the study, the researcher focused on a sample comprising respondents under different social ways of life. Furthermore, individuals who are government officials who are directly involved with the related subject were also interviewed. Thereby, selecting 55 youth among whom the questionnaire was distributed, the questionnaire comprising 20 questions which was formulated by the researcher was distributed to gather primary data. Considering the requirement of this research this research was mainly conducted according to the semi structured pattern where an interview protocol was used to help guide the researcher through the interview process, where it is mostly a directed discussion between the researcher and the participant, even though it maintains a structure to a certain extent it had the flexibility of gathering additional details according to the manner the questions are answered by the

participant. Secondary data such as interviews conducted by other individuals and institutions, information from other research studies were also used to get a better understanding of the developing trends.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

During this study, a total sample of 55 employed and unemployed participants were selected. The demographic aspects identified during the field survey included 74.1% of male participants and 25.9% female participants respectively. Moreover, 50% were between the age group of 15-24 years while 33.3% between 25 to 30 years and 16.7% between 31 to 35 years respectively. The respondents represent the 2 districts taken into consideration in this research as 55.6% from Batticaloa and 44.4% from Ampara respectively.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Accordingly, the Youth Unemployment (independent variable) had been recognized under certain sub-variables. These sub-variables have been assessed in the survey questionnaire as follows:

- a. Status of Employment and Income Level: Questions 7-8.
- b. Involvement in terrorism, extremism and organic crimes: Questions 9-18.
- c. Dependent Variable: National security (human security) - Questions 19-20.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME LEVEL

Initial questions were mainly focused to identify the status of employment of individuals at present, the reasons for unemployment, their monthly income levels and whether it's sufficient for them to fulfill the basic needs.

As per the feedback majority of the respondents comprising 85.5% agreed that Lack of Sufficient Education was one of the main reasons for unemployment. Consecutively, 81.8% of respondents agreed that the Lack of Job Opportunities was another key reason for unemployment. 63.6% of the respondents thought the Lack of Skills as another key reason for unemployment. Significantly, it can be concluded that the 3 main reasons as per the respondents' feedback are

1. Lack of Education,
2. Lack of Job Opportunities and
3. Lack of Skills.

While 52.7% stated that the individual's mind set was a key reason, a minority of 16.4% assumed that the individual's gender was the cause for unemployment.

Moreover, when considering about the current status of employment of the respondents that a significant majority of respondents constituting 52.8% were unemployed as they 'never worked before' or were unable to find employment. It can be concluded therefore that the current status of unemployment for a vast majority of respondents in these areas is due to their inability to find suitable employment. 22.2% of respondents have been unable to find reemployment opportunities even after 1 year, with 13.9% of respondents claiming that they

haven't found reemployment for over a month. Only a minority of 5.6% have responded that they have been unemployed for a lapse less than a month. Furthermore, it was revealed that 38.5% of the respondents' current status of unemployment is due to dissatisfaction with the salary they were receiving, while 34.6% responded it was due to the lack of sufficient skills they acquired to perform. 15.4% didn't like work any longer and hence left the job and 11.5% were found overqualified for the jobs they applied.

Further, probing questions were asked from the respondents who had answered 'currently employed', to gather further insight into their levels of income. The first of which was to gather information of their monthly income, through which it was revealed that the monthly income of a majority, constituting 42.9% of the respondents, who were currently employed was between Rs.21,000 to Rs.30,000, while 25.6% of the respondents were earning below Rs. 20,000. 21.5% were earning between Rs. 31,000 to 40,000. Only a minority of 10% were earning a monthly income over Rs. 40,000. This provides a clear image of the disparity of pay prevailing among the residents of these areas. Further, when considering the salary they earn or what they earned while being employed is somewhere between Rs 21,000/= and Rs 30,000/= is not sufficient to fulfil the basic needs within a month, especially with the inflation rate skyrocketing at present due to the existing economic crisis Sri Lanka is facing.

Secondly, whether they believed their income levels were sufficient for them to cover the monthly expenses. A vast majority of 78.9% respondents claimed their monthly income was not sufficient to cover their expenses. 21.1% had responded that they were able to meet the expenses of their family with their level of monthly income.

INVOLVEMENT IN EXTREMISM AND ORGANIC CRIMES

The next set of questions were focused on the involvement of respondents in terrorism and extremist activities as well as organic crimes, through which the researcher tried to mainly identify whether the sample group has been exposed to any activities that would cause a threat to the NSSL directly or in-directly or whether they know anyone who has been exposed to any acts of extremism or organic crimes.

It was clearly evident that majority (84.9%) knows someone who has been recruited or radicalised by any of the above activities, while 50.9% of the respondents have been directly approached by individuals or groups to join or attend the sessions of these illegal groups. 32.1% have known individuals who are involved in attending the lectures being conducted by these groups. 58.5% have come across individuals who have been invited to join the either political parties or religious groups who hold extremist ideologies.

Nonetheless, it cannot be directly proven whether all these individuals who attend these lectures, joined certain political parties or religious organisations are directly involved in illegal, extremist or terrorist activities. However, it can be identified their willingness to attend or join these groups and parties as well as attending lectures have a higher possibility of brainwashing them as well as using them as auxiliaries in support of any violent acts which one could perform.

With the number of arrests which took place after the Easter attacks, the individuals who were involved were exposed to the close relations and friends, nonetheless, it cannot be directly proven whether they were actually involved since some were arrested on suspicion. However, 50% of the sample group has been

invited to join either extremist religious groups or political parties at different stages.

Furthermore, except for a minor 3.7% who directly accepted that they had some sort of involvement in extremist activities and organic crimes the rest have replied negatively or neutrally. However, during the survey 18.5% have accepted them feeling motivated to join or support certain extremist activities as well as organic crimes out of which 90% were unemployed which too clearly depicts that these acts do provide a sustainable financial backing. It was also evident that 59.3% from the sample group knew individuals who were involved in arms smuggling (13%) as well as drug dealing (46.3%), which may give an impression that the personnel from the sample group had some involvement with these activities especially considering the fact that someone involved in such acts would hardly expose themselves.

Moreover, 58.2% of the respondents knew someone who was either involved in arms smuggling (12.7%) and drug dealing (45.5%). This indicates that the majority of these youth associated with individuals who are involved in organic crimes, making them vulnerable of being involved. Nonetheless, it could be assumed some of them too have some involvement in these organic crimes even though they haven't indicated such involvement to the researcher. 63.6% believed that individuals who were unemployed had a higher rate of being involved in either extremism or certain organic crimes. Thereby, it further testifies that the individuals who are involved in these activities mainly contributed to these extremist and organic crimes purely due to unemployment.

NATIONAL SECURITY

The remaining questions were focused on the national security and to inquire whether the extremist acts as well as organic crimes would pose a threat to NSSL. It was quite clear

that the majority 77.8% believed it would. Moreover, respondents believe that individuals/groups conducting organic crimes or spreading radicalized & extremist ideologies pose a threat to the security and safety of the area.

Moreover, a majority of 42.6% stated that if youth can find suitable employment with decent wages it would help the youth to resist being involved in illegal activities, being radicalized and being involved in extremist ideologies, while an overwhelming 85.2% of the respondents agreed that youth employment would result to mitigate the security threat in the area.

ANALYSIS ON INTERVIEW DATA

In order to gain an in depth understanding on the implications to NSSL due to youth unemployment semi-structured interviews were conducted focusing on key informants who know what is going on in the community, as well as high ranking government officials who are directly involve in advising the strategic level decision makers regarding the security threats which exist within the country and the society.

- a. Interviewer 1
Director General State Intelligence Services.
- b. Interviewer 2
Assistance Divisional Secretary, Addalachchenai.
- c. Interviewer 3
Unemployed Youth from Ampara.
- d. Interviewer 4
Unemployed Youth from Batticaloa.

Since, thematic analysis is a method which facilitates to analyse and present data which is important while addressing the research and explaining the existing issue it was decided to follow the thematic analysis method in summarizing the interviews which were conducted.

Unemployment and poverty as well as the lack of sufficient income especially for minor employment is an encouragement for youth to get involved in illegal activities to supplement the basic needs. Nonetheless, as illustrated by Director State Intelligence Services during his interview: Narrating the Easter attacks, he said *"the Ibrahim brothers who came from a wealthy family did not do it for monetary gain but due to the strong brainwashing of Zaharan Hashim", describing further, he stated "even though one may support or conduct certain illegal acts for financial gain for an individual to carry out a suicide mission for the ideologies' they need a strong brainwashing."*

Nonetheless, it is quite evident that youth become more vulnerable to groups/organizations that conduct illegal or extremist activities and organic crimes, that may motivate them to join in assurance of monetary gain and a better life style. As one of the youth who was interviewed stated, he was motivated to conduct illegal activities since it provided him a better financial status to fulfil the needs of the family within a short span of time, even though he knew the risk which evolved around it. However, the vulnerability of employed youth cannot be written off especially due to the attractive sums of money they are being paid. When inquired about their ability of being self-employed the respondents stated that they lack sufficient skills even to be self- employed.

It was further revealed during the interview that the recruitment is mainly conducted via social media platforms or special programs conducted after identifying these

individuals or via directly contacting them through certain personnel contacts. Thereafter, these individuals will be requested to meet certain individuals or attend certain programs where they will be further educated and finally, they will be tasked to carry out certain responsibilities.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to E H Carr, Human nature in a realist world, is driven first and foremost by the satisfaction of basic needs, which includes food, shelter, physical security, belonging and positive self-identity. Furthermore, as per the study it gives clear evidence that the target audience have failed to attain the above needs due to the lack of employment and minimal wages they receive even if employed, mainly due to the lack of education, skills and job opportunities. As described by Hobbes on human nature, man will compete violently to obtain the life necessities and also strive to achieve other material gains. As per the description and the research findings it is evident, the unemployed youth may seek illegal means of obtaining finances in order to fulfil ones needs.

The survey data evidently highlights that majority of the respondents have come across or heard of illegal activities happening in the area, even though they do not know or is reluctant to accept that they know anyone who is directly involved in these illegal activities. Nonetheless, 50.9% of respondents accept the fact that they have been invited to be a part of certain illegal activities and 41.8% claimed to have been indirectly involved in certain illegal activities as it was clarified during the interviews they have been involved as auxiliaries supporting or housing certain individuals and groups involved in illegal activities. A minority of 3.6% explicitly confirmed that they had certain direct involvement with certain individuals and groups.

During the survey it was also proved that 18.2% felt motivated to get involved in illegal activities and during the interviews an individual who was involved in illegal activities accepted the main reason behind it was unemployment and even though he knew the consequences he had no option at that time rather than being involved ignoring the possible consequences that one may have to face. Further, he ascertains that the risk he took was worth considering the financial benefits he gained during his involvement. Nonetheless, later on after being apprehended he had felt the gravity. However, he still does not have any other option other than being involved especially since he does not possess any education qualifications or skills to find a suitable employment which will provide him with similar financial benefits that he enjoys at present. This literally confirms the Classic realist Thomas Hobbs assertion that, everyman ought to endeavour better livelihood, as far as he has hoped of obtaining it, and if he cannot obtain it, he may seek and use illegitimate means. Hence, it is clearly evident that individuals may seek unethical and illegal means to achieve once aspirations whilst seeking better livelihoods and recognition over others.

As per the study, the demographic parameters indicate that the majority of the respondents are youth between ages 15 to 24 years. According to Walker (2016), youth age is characteristic of proneness to innovation, risk aversion, fast actions and reactions and social propensity. They are, motivated by their emotional self-interest. Until their basic needs are satisfied, they are unlikely to be guided by conscious moral frameworks. Since most of the respondents represent youth, they also can seek undesirable innovations, loose moral consciousness when their basic needs, satisfaction and survival at stake. Thus, these frustrated youth can significantly be prone to being involved with illegal, extremist and terrorism activities.

Mohammed (2018) states that poverty, unemployment and drug addiction are highly inter-related. Financial deprivation may lead to a stronger identification with or joining illegal or extremist activities. Thomas Hobbs also shows that habits inculcated in a particular society have the power to shape human conduct and complement additional motivation apart from pure self-interest. Survey data also visibly indicates the substantial vulnerability of these youth to engage in such activities. The relationships with persons belonging to extremist or illegal groups can be a prominent motive for them to get used to drugs, associate criminals and embrace such extremist belief systems over time. Further, during the key informant interviews, the ASP of Ampara stated *“When we conduct police patrols in and around the area we have seen plenty of youth who are idling on the streets whom we have arrested either with drugs or on suspicion and some seek refuge with illegal groups.”* This statement too well supports the researcher’s argument in this regard.

Realism attributes an important role in human nature. It adopts a broader conception of human nature informed by the insights of neurobiology. Within this view, people may be driven by basic instincts or higher aspirations. When survival is at stake, basic instincts take precedence (Walt, 2017). Hence, the basic instincts of unemployed youth also can drive towards illegal actions to reach their aspirations whilst overcoming existing strains. Thomas Hobbes is also of the view that conflict in society is the result of negative propensities in human being. He has depicted a very cynical picture of the nature of man and applied the same to state. To him, a man by nature is selfish, brutish, egoistic, cunning and aggressive. People are prepared to use violence to attain their ends and, in some situations, at least in the short term, to use violence and to behave selfishly or horrendously. Survey data also prove this human nature, as 45.4% of respondents; have

indirectly or directly engaged with an illegal or extremist group.

National security is of prime concern to all responsible states and citizens given the paramount importance it occupies in survival, peace, stability and development of every state (Mandel, 2013). In the present context, the notion of national security based on territoriality is diminishing. Security has assumed wider connotations than sustaining country as an impregnable fortress. Internal dimensions of national security is equally or more important than the conventional approach to national security largely centred on the conventional armed forces and external threats because no nation can boast of credible security and defence plan if its home base is first not in order.

Dalby (1995) has stressed the configuration and scope of human security of citizens, emphasizing the importance and indispensability of each security concern in achieving national security. The basis of human security is primarily ensured by meeting common aspirations that people cherish most. However, findings of this study reveal the unemployment of youth in the areas of Ampara and Batticaloa narrowed employment opportunities and lack of necessary skills seriously undermined their basic capacity to participate effectively in society by engaging in resourceful and legitimate avenues to earn a living. As per the macro trends reported by the World Bank, the Sri Lankan youth unemployment rate for year 2021 was 26.06%, a 0.52% increase from the previous year (2020). It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on the marginal or fragile environment with no human security. In Hobbes’s words, “the wickedness of bad men also compels good men to have recourse, for their protection which is violence and fraud.” In this way, human insecurity concerning economic, food and health can generate socio-

political tensions that manifest in overall social insecurity and crime. Together these phenomena can exacerbate the deterioration of other components of human security, namely personal, community and political security, which in turn can aggravate economic-human security in a self-reinforcing cycle the result of which is potentially deleterious for national security.

Hence, it is asserted that the unemployment of youth in Ampara and Batticaloa districts, which leads to creating conditions for illegal or violent activities, can pose a threat to NSSL. Therefore, this segment of society needs to be identified as a community who requires specific attention to avoid possible threats that can be generated by them to compromise the NSSL. The third subsidiary research question is focused to ascertain possible pre-emptive measures could be taken to mitigate possible contemporary threats such as arms smuggling, drugs and extremism to NSSL. In that, it is worthwhile to probe how other countries that are facing similar problematic conditions have attempted to mitigate these actions and strive for the feasibility of adopting them within the context of Sri Lanka.

Countries around the world use different strategies to alleviate the negative implications of this inevitable phenomenon. Nigeria is ranked the 6th largest oil production in the world, yet the country's unemployment rate is one of the highest in the world. In response to this, the Nigerian government, through the Nigerian Youth Employment Action Plan for the period 2021 to 2024, aims to address this situation has adopted a skill-oriented education principle, to train man power, to build and maintain its critical infrastructure, to drive the economy and also create employment opportunities. They have also identified the need to promote sound moral and ethical value in the country. (Abuja, 2021). In the case of India, the ever-increasing

size of the youth workforce, both skilled and unskilled, in an environment of job scarcity more young people are faced with limited employment opportunities, causing them to be either underemployed or unemployed. As a measure to combating youth unemployment and its related challenges, India has introduced a number of employment-generating schemes, including those under MNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act). Similar policy initiatives have been taken for skilled workers. India has created measures to obtain international cooperation among different labour market actors (trade unions, vocational training organisations, committees at the national level) to sustain it. (Sinha, 2013). Therefore, the researcher strongly suggests that Sri Lanka also need to take prompt steps to address the various implications of youth unemployment in the Ampara and Batticaloa to NSSL, and to implement viable policies to regulate it, whilst appreciating possible threats and opportunities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The field survey and interviews along with a desk review were conducted to identify the socio-economic realities of the target audience, in which the main intention was to convert those findings in realistic version of human nature in order to link it to possible national security threats while providing suggestions to mitigate the threats caused due to youth unemployment.

Findings of this study have highlighted the absence or lack of job opportunities and economic security which has exposed the unemployed youth to extremist and illegal activities due to the numerous life disputes one would face, which eventually has limited the opportunities for them to aspire in ethically correct employment. Ethically correct employment which would take a prolonged

period as well as effort and skills amidst many of these vacancies in the government sector is filled by political henchmen further limits the opportunities of these individuals. Nonetheless, it could be further highlighted as explained by the realists in nature the humans are cunning, egoistic, brutish and selfish, hence, this group of individuals are no exempt. Furthermore, it is quite evident that this would eventually threaten the NSSL.

The hypothesis of the research study is thereby proven and it is possible to come to the conclusion that unemployed youth could be driven to involve in illegal activities which would result in having implications on national security. Hence, it is important to address the varying reasons of youth unemployment and address it at different levels to diminish the threat it would cause to the NSSL.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations can be derived in order to address the threats that would cause to national security due to youth unemployment:

a. Findings of this research reveals that the educational background, lack of skilled based training and lack of job opportunities have restricted the unemployed youth from finding employment. Therefore, it is important to promote education and skill development facilities to create more avenues for them to find local or foreign employment. Furthermore, it is important to educate these individuals of their vulnerability for illegal and extremist activities.

b. The findings expose the threats that could be caused by these unemployed individuals who are not monitored. Hence, as the 'Defenders of the Nation'

Sri Lanka Army should be responsible in identifying and monitoring these youth who are vulnerable for illegal and extremist activities. Hence, a mechanism should be established by intelligence groups to keep a clear record of unemployed individuals in their area of responsibility to monitor these individuals and their activities with the help and assistance of the civil affairs officers and Divisional Secretariats in those respective areas while ensuring that the respective Intelligence Officers need to share a cordial relationship with the Civil Affairs Officers especially when it comes to sharing details in regard to unemployed youths. The Civil Affairs Officers should too conduct programs to win the hearts and minds of the civilians which will be beneficial in getting more information of the illegal and extremist activities which could be passed to relevant authorities to take necessary action.

c. Findings further highlight that schools do not contribute in identifying students who are involved with illegal and extremist activities. Hence, teachers who have a first-hand contact with students should be utilized by educating and if necessary, a training being provided to identify children of any age group who is into illegal or extremist activities or speaks about or displays signs of these extremist groups, which would eventually be helpful in tracing down details to where or by whom these children have been influenced.

d. There should be frequent seminars and workshops for self-employed youth by the government and private bodies with little or no fee. Education and skills policies at an early age can prevent youth unemployment, by tackling it at the

roots. From an efficiency perspective, every government has budget restraints and is likely to agree that investing in young people not yet in the labour market ensures a longer payback period. It is better to prevent than to cure.

e. The government should make the business environment friendly for local and foreign investors, so that there would be increase in job opportunities for the youth. A suitable business environment for sustainable youth employment requires provision of basic social amenities, political, economic and institutional stability, good governance, social dialogue, investment in infrastructure, investment in health care, investment in education and skills development, access to financial services, information and communication technology, support for Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) development, policies promoting productivity and competitiveness, flexible labour market policies and the absence of red tape, safety net for failed start-ups.

f. Entrepreneurship education is not only a means to foster youth entrepreneurship and self-employment, but at the same time to equip young people with the attitudes (e.g., more personal responsibility) and skills (e.g., flexibility and creativity), necessary to cope with the uncertain employment paths of today's societies. To create or develop an enterprise culture, it is crucial that young people have an "entrepreneurial mindset." They must have the skills and knowledge to start a new business. They must possess personal qualities such as creativity, responsibility, initiative, taking risks, rising to challenges. They must be aware that there are ways to make a living that goes beyond traditional employment.

g. There should be a provision and access to soft loans of government and private bodies with little or no interest rate for unemployed youths with entrepreneurial mindsets or a business plan.

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MILITARY CAPABILITIES AND NATIONAL SECURITY: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO “ARAGALAYA”

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ABSTRACT

The public uprising against the 2022 government, known as Aragalaya was a benchmark in the recent socio-political history of the country, where the Armed Forces of the country was driven to play a critical role in ensuring National Security. From varied perspectives, it was said that the military with years of warfighting experience was not able to successfully cope with the growing unrest and manage it due to some setbacks within the National Security nexus. In this background, this empirical study was launched to derive lessons from the Aragalaya and to develop the capabilities of the Army, going beyond the Sri Lanka Army's traditional military framework, to overcome multifaceted security challenges and dynamics in the future. This inductive approach research following the interpretivist research philosophy, conducted a thematic analysis through the NVivo analytical tool. Data for the study was collected from the semi-structured interviews with the military and police officers in action during the uprising and deep ideologies from some professionals in the field

such as global security specialists, university lecturers and lawyers. Through thorough qualitative analysis, the study tried to identify threats and tactics of the Aragalaya, weaknesses of the Sri Lanka Army and lessons learnt from the hostility, to derive appropriate strategies and tactics for the Sri Lanka Army to counter or mitigate the recurrence of such unrests in the future. The study found that the uprising drew security concerns about the spread of radicalism, misinformation, and adoption of gray zone tactics, socio-political and economic instability and miscoordination of intelligence, exacerbating the crisis. The study suggested recommendations for creating committees to address political and economic setbacks, intelligence network and crisis coordination, adoption of technological innovations, fostering community engagement and enforcing laws in hostile activities protecting human rights.

KEYWORDS: *Afanasy Nikitin Seamount, India, Indian Ocean Region, Sri Lanka, United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.*

INTRODUCTION

The National Security has become a critical significance in the changing geopolitical environment around the globe (Holmes, 2015; Karatas, 2024). “A country’s strength is often measured by the capability of its Armed Forces to counter threats to national security.” The study primarily focused on examining the link between National Security and the capability of the Armed Forces to ensure safety during events such as social uprisings in the nature of the Aragalaya in Sri Lanka in 2022. Aragalaya was a significant event in the modern history of Sri Lankan politics as it was able to overthrow the democratically elected executive president from the seat. (Gamage, 2023; Imtiyaz, 2023). This provides strong evidence that social uprising may threaten the National Security demanding a military intervention to protect the national interest at a given time. National Security is not only protecting the borders of a country but also it has several aspects such as protecting national cohesion, political order and internal stability (Cabral, 2023; Koukakis, 2024).

During the past social uprisings which have frequently, caused internal disputes within nations’ governments were able to maintain the law and order with the help of their military forces (Jayamaha, 2022). However, the Aragalaya uprising presents a different perspective as its impact on the leadership of the country was devastating (Centre for Policy Alternatives - Social Indicator, 2023). This study aims to understand the causes of how the Armed Forces were unable to meet the demand in this case. Aragalaya means the struggle of the people demanding a system change, which was mainly driven by the social problems of Sri Lanka, which also exhibited the weakness of the National Security structure of the country (Hensman, 2022).

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Sri Lanka is a country full of rich heritages, found itself at a crossroads in the advent of the Aragalaya with the socio-political landscape in 2022 (Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2023). The Aragalaya socio-political mixed uprising and a revolution by the people finally overthrew the president of the country (Hensman, 2022). In light of this event, the military forces were doubted about their capability to withstand a threat that hampered the political interest of the country. By then, Sri Lanka was identified as a country that faced numerous difficulties from the outside world to internal strife (Jayamaha, 2022). However, the Aragalaya became the most powerful event in recent history which took the government on its knees (Modin-Lundin & Björk, 2022). This event exhibited that the military’s capability approach didn’t adequately address the issue, for which the people of the country had gathered.

In this background, the military forces were employed to deter the people and prevent violence and harm to public properties. However, the underlying intention of preserving the political interest was unable to be achieved as the force of people was overwhelming the capability of the military as well as the lessons learned from the past experience of the military in handling people in such disputes. Hence, the research aims to understand the main causes of why the military was unable to fully control the situation and protect the country’s leadership, without being overthrown.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The 2022 Aragalaya is a defining event in recent history and marked a turning point with the resignation of the President of Sri Lanka. Aragalaya highlighted the complex relationship between National Security, political systems, and military forces and revealed the vulnerability of apparently stable countries to internal

disruption. In an environment, where complex geopolitical dynamics are involved amidst ever-changing security challenges, understanding the interplay between a country's military capabilities and its ability to maintain internal peace is critical. The Aragalaya is a significant reminder of the complex issues of contemporary states, highlighting the need for a detailed analysis of the interplay between military capabilities and internal peace. The destruction caused by Aragalaya in a very short period in Sri Lanka clearly shows the need for such research. Disrupting normal people's lives, invading the President's Office and official residence, seizing state media, trying to invade parliament, burning many politicians' houses, killing a member of parliament on the road, severely disrupting the country's economic process for several days, damaging the reputation of Sri Lanka, influencing the political structure of Sri Lanka and distorting public opinions show the real destructiveness of this uprising. Therefore, a problem that needs to be studied is how the struggle made Sri Lanka such a weak state even though there were security forces that were able to fight and defeat the world's worst terrorist group, which operated in Sri Lanka for almost 30 years in recent history. In this scenario, the study aims to understand the phenomenon, of how a strong military could not avert the threat which ultimately overthrew the leader of the country who had a majority of the power in the parliament.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Research objectives are as follows:

- a. To identify the Aragalaya specific threats to National Security posed by the Aragalaya.
- b. To analyse the tactics used by the Sri Lankan Army and their weaknesses in controlling the Aragalaya.

- c. To recommend measures to mitigate or control future unrest based on lessons learned from the Aragalaya.

CORE ARGUMENT

It is essential to derive lessons learned from the 2022 struggle to develop capabilities beyond the framework of the Sri Lanka Army's traditional military capabilities to ensure state security in such illegal protests, insurgencies and struggles that may arise in future social, economic and political contexts, thereby preparing for plans.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The geopolitical tensions, socio-political upheavals and growing security issues have characterized the global context, yet keeping National Security as a top priority for all countries, irrespective of their size or location (Rajapaksa, n.d.; Karataş, 2024). The combat power of a country has become the center of gravity that keeps National Security intact and has become the source of the power of a country. The concept of Fighting Power is the country's ability to withstand external and internal threats against the interest of the country and its people (Sri Lanka Army Training Command, 2018). The literature review has explored these complexities by evaluating the theoretical frameworks, empirical evidence and some insights collected through secondary data. The review examines the link between a country's military power and how it behaves when dynamic situations arise such as in the nature of the Aragalaya uprising in Sri Lanka.

The Aragalaya was a significant event in the history of Sri Lankan politics as it was the first time that a social uprising could overthrow the country's leadership. Hence, it is critical to study as it helps to understand the link between the stakeholders who are involved

in protecting National Security and interests. National Security refers to the measures of a country, to protect its sovereignty and national interests (Senaratne, 2017). The Aragalaya was a significant example of how internal turmoil could jeopardise the stability and interest of the country (Kapur, 2023). Hence, it is important to understand the concepts involved in the study to examine the critical link between these elements. The following are a few concepts that are involved in the study:

NATIONAL SECURITY

National Security refers to the measures that a country takes to protect the national interest, sovereignty and territorial integrity against all the threats, coming towards them internally and externally (Jayasinghe, 2022; Karataş, 2024). National Security is not only the security of the country but also refers to law and order, information, economy and health resilience (Victoria, 2018). National Security seeks to protect the country's values and fundamental principles while creating stability and prosperity (INSS, 2023). It involves risk management, the use of resources to mitigate threats and ensuring the country is on the path toward its development without internal or external turmoils (Rajapaksa, n.d.).

FIGHTING POWER

The capacity and capability of the military forces are referred to as the Fighting Power of that country (MOD.UK, 2012; Osisanya, 2024). It consists of all the powers including the technology and capabilities, experiences and concepts of the military forces while forces develop their capabilities in the areas of operational effectiveness, training and logistics (Victoria, 2018). Fighting Power is the deterrence against all threats or adversaries in internal or in a large scale international scenario (Sri Lanka Army Training Command, 2018). The Fighting Power mainly consists of

three components that are essential to study to better understand the concept:

CONCEPTUAL COMPONENT

The conceptual component of Sri Lanka's Fighting Power includes the concept of military power. The doctrine, theories, tactics and procedures (Sri Lanka Army Training Command, 2018). The doctrines provide the understanding of warfighting while the tactics and procedures guide the operational success. The significant factor that makes doctrines more effective is the decision-making support that it provide for all levels of leaders.

MORAL COMPONENT

Ethics, morale and discipline are the most significant elements of the moral component (Sri Lanka Army Training Command, 2018; UK Army, 2011). The loyalty, integrity and dedication to the service of the soldiers are driven by the moral component while instilling a strong sense of responsibility toward the service and the nation. The conduct of the soldiers during peacetime and war is guided by the moral component of the Fighting Power.

PHYSICAL COMPONENT

The physical component of the Fighting Power refers to the manpower development, technology and sophistication of the equipment and techniques (Sri Lanka Army Training Command, 2018; UK Army, 2011). The training and development, recruiting of manpower, managing human resources and use of physical force and assets come under this component, leading to more kinetic use of Fighting Power (Sri Lanka Army Training Command, 2018).

SOCIAL UPRISING

Social uprising refers to a gathering of the mass population initiating activities and actions against the governing party of the country. Many examples can be taken into consideration to explain the social uprisings. However, each social uprising has its unique nature and a cause which makes them different from each other. 'The Indian farmers protesting against the government policies' was an example where a limited community engaged in the protest. 'The social uprising against the police assassination of George Floyd in May 2020, triggered a nationwide wave of demonstrations and civil unrest (ACLED US, 2020). The Hong Kong crisis which took place in 2019 with a large number of protests against the ruling Chinese government's created violations of the city's autonomy and human liberties (Lindsay Maizland & Clara Fong, 2024). The recent incident in Bangladesh showcases how brutal an end to a social uprising can go as many as 300 lives were taken in the middle of the cause (United States Institute for Peace 2024). Regardless of their specific origins and dynamics, these upheavals share a common thread: citizens' demands for accountability, justice and genuine social change.

REALISM

In the theory of realism, the highest priority is given to the state as the main actor and it encourages the protection of the state against the anarchic environment. The realism prioritizes the security against the big powers where there is no security for small powers in the world order (Relations, 2018; Kivisto, 2020) realism itself exhibits the power struggle and denies other countries to attain the same or more power than the self. Hence, this struggle for power will always seek to use all means to keep other countries unstable while keeping the own state more protected and stable to ensure the own attainment of power (Hemachandra & Sivasundaram, 2024).

CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism refers to the idea that the identity, norms and values of the people of the state dictate the behavior of that state (Hein, 1991). This concept or theory has a critical link to the social uprising of Sri Lanka as the people have done what they believed to be correct. However, this had a severe effect on the state which overthrew the country's leadership threatening the whole law and order system of the country (Hasangani, 2024).

AGENDA SETTING THEORY

The initiation, implementation, priority activities and planning of any action make up the sequence of the Agenda Setting Theory (Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2023). In the present context, the most clear phenomenon is that the public and social media are vitally used to follow the above sequence and to create changes in the perception of the people making it a part of the Agenda Setting Theory (Binti & Zain, 2014). In any social uprising, the main source of power and the center of gravity would be the people and their ideology (Gamage, 2023). Hence, the Agenda Setting Theory must be used to set the goals and milestones for the success of an uprising in such a nature as the Aragalaya.

THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY

The Aragalaya was a critical example that showcases the change in people's perception and how it can affect the country's stability. A country that has a stable government after many years, has been dissolved in the context of people's power amidst the military efforts to prevent it. It indicates that Aragalaya has been a threat to National Security and the following are a few areas how Aragalaya has threatened National Security:

WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE

The widespread violence has been the main concern of the Aragalaya social uprising. The peaceful protest against the government was transformed into a violent rebellion against the government and some characters gave it a more violent look (FIDH/CHRD, 2023). This has created chaos in the country, making it a significant indication that several groups have infiltrated the core ideology of the Aragalaya which was started as a peaceful non-violence against the government (Modin-Lundin & Björk, 2022b; UNO, 2019).

Misinformation and Propaganda

The misinformation campaign has been the most severe threat that was identified during the Aragalaya. Several ideas have been planted and were virally spreading anonymously without control over the country by using social media (Fedricks et al., 2022). Some of these were false narratives that ultimately misled the mass population pushing them to support the core idea of throwing the government away (Anderson, 2021).

Impact on Military and Police

The impact on the military and mainly the police was heavy as they were crushed between the legitimate government and the mass population (Imtiyaz, 2023). The government was selected by the majority of the people as they had legitimacy at the time of the Aragalaya (Degaut, 2019). The people, gathering were the Sri Lankans who have the right to vote and the right to protest. Hence, the military was in a situation where the government orders must be applied while preventing any harm to civilians and ensuring their security (Rosen, 2014).

Impact on Law and Order

The impact chaotic and unstable nature of the country which led to islandwide turmoil, jeopardised the National Security of the country (Jayamaha, 2022; Karataş, 2024). At a point in time, the police and the military were seen as actionless and optionless as there was no clear evidence of what would be the end of the situation developing. The people's aggression over the police force and military was gradually developing making clear signs that if it continued, it would lead to clear human rights violence (de Mel; et al., 2023). Hence, the actions taken by the military and the police mainly focused on safeguarding the citizens and the public properties.

Economy and Essential Services

The main devastation was done to the economy and essential services. The whole country was in chaos at the time of the Aragalaya which led to the downfall of the stock market and other businesses. Essential services were critically threatened as the hospitals and public transport were used by the people in their interest (Rambukwella, 2023).

Use of The Military as a Strategy to Counter

Use of the military as a strategy brought mixed results towards the control of the Aragalaya uprising (Kapur, 2023). The military was able to prevent the waves which led to disrupting the government's actions in the initial stage (Rajapaksa, n.d.). However, sooner it developed and spread ideas against the military forces and tried to demoralize the military forces against their actions, to prevent social uprising activities (Hattouni Spencer & Hattouni, 2021). However, the military was able to hold the rope for a limited period as the government failed to negotiate and solve the issue on general grounds (USCIRF, 2023). The

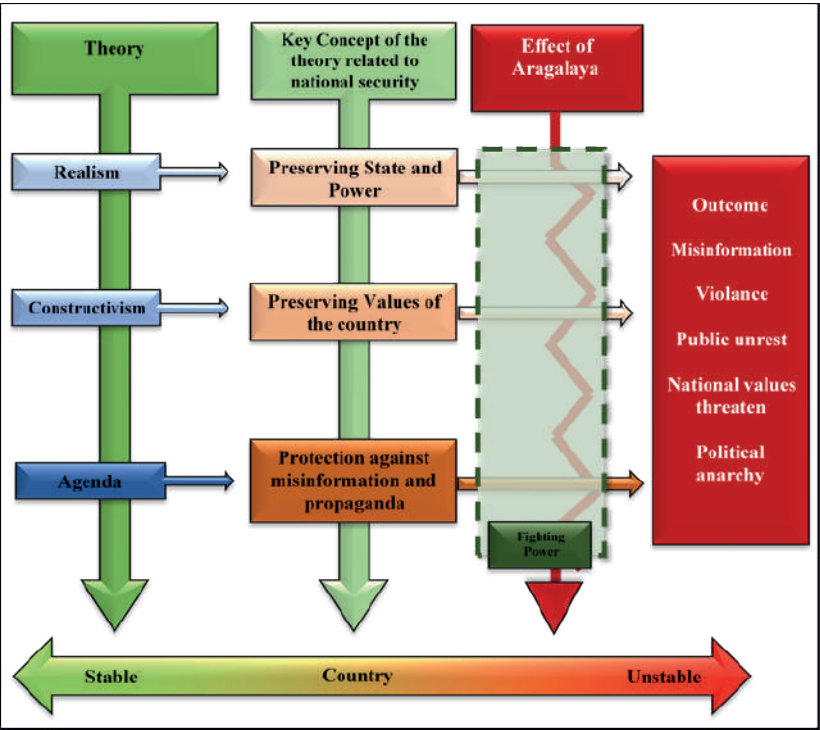
actions were criticised and indications were there that the military and police were also losing their grip as the force was getting more powerful against the government (Rannan-Eliya et al., 2023).

Bangladesh Uprising in a Closer Look

The Bangladesh social uprising exhibited similar results to the uprising in Sri Lanka as they were also able to overthrow a

well-established political regime through a social uprising (United States Institute of Peace, 2024). However, the comparison indicates that the police forces and military forces were more disciplined and had more concerns about the protection of the local population while doing all possible actions to prevent any damage or threat to the government or public property (Print India, 2024).

Theoretical Framework



The above theoretical framework illustrates how each theory related to state and National Security, can be connected to the consequences of the Aragalaya uprising. Realism contributes to National Security by preserving the state and its power. Constructivism contributes by preserving the national identity and values of the state. Agenda Theory can be a threat to National Security if

media is not handled wisely by the state actors. This framework indicates how key concepts of each theory related to National Security were affected by Aragalaya and what its outcomes are. The consequences have ultimately contributed to the instability of the country, making a threat to National Security.

Research Gap

When reviewing the existing literature regarding the 2022 Aragalaya in Sri Lanka, it is clear that the vast majority of them were prepared based on political ideologies. Furthermore, this event had a severe impact on the social, economic and political structures of Sri Lanka and completely changed the economic and political processes of the country, but it appears that there is very little research on this discipline from different perspectives. Almost all the existing literature represents the political and economic aspects, while the research on social and international influence remains relatively low. This created a serious threat to the state security and completely jeopardised the state security, but the Sri Lankan security forces were unable to ensure the state security. In such a situation, since there is no research conducted from the security perspective, it appears that there is a clear knowledge gap to explore the field through an analytical research study.

Methodology

Research Design

Insufficiency of data for research has led the study to be done in a descriptive approach, leading to conducting a thematic analysis. Having answered the research objectives through the collected data, the study efforts to draw the findings through the narratives of the analysis. The research qualities are as follows:

Research Philosophy

The philosophy of the study was based on interpretivism which refers to understanding social events and incidents through actions, beliefs, norms and values (Mukherjee, 2019). Pandey & Pandey (2015) briefs that research of this nature collects data related to an event

where those data will then be analysed based on personal opinions and the outcome will be interpreted to build the narratives. Hence, this research follows the interpretivism research philosophy to analyse the data related to Aragalaya.

Research Approach

In the field of research, theories are tested or new theories are built based on the data (Gupta & Gupta, 2023). The inductive approach aims at building a new theoretical foundation. (Pandey & Pandey 2015). As the data for this research is not readily available, the research would be completed using the inductive research approach where a theory will be built, based on the available data analysis.

Research Strategy

The research strategy refers to the main strategy which is used to identify whether the data collected and the analysis of those data are done according to the research objectives. The study was mainly set up, based on the research questions, and the interviews were conducted with semi-structured questions which were following the research questions.

Research Choice

The research is mainly based on the opinions and expertise of the Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and subjects who were interviewed. Research of this nature is identified as mono-choice research which follows the qualitative data analysis to derive the findings (Gupta & Gupta, 2023). Hence, this research will be in the choice of a mono-choice research.

Conceptualization

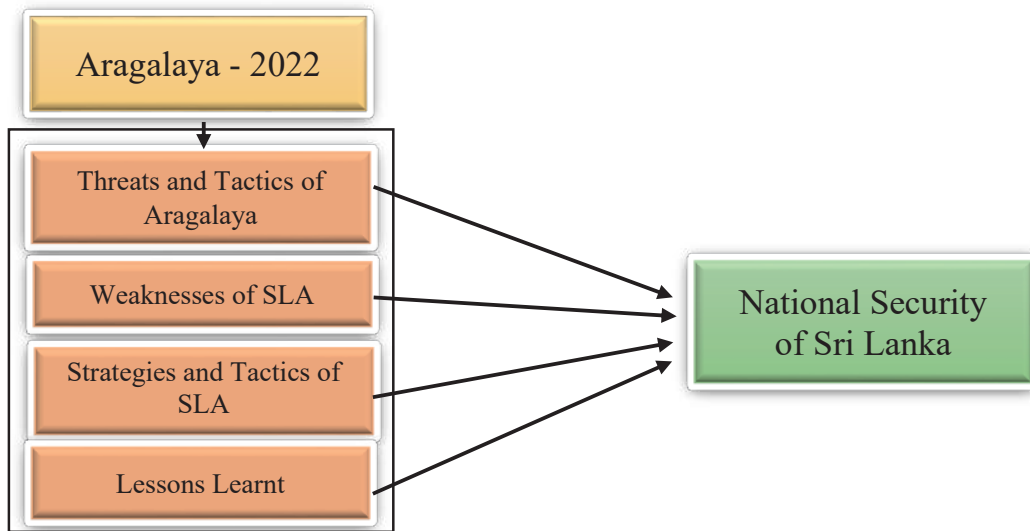


Figure 3.1: Conceptualization of the Research
Source: Designed by the researcher

Sampling of Key Informants (Interviews)

A meticulous data collection was conducted to gather the relevant data that address the National Security and military concerning Aragalaya. Despite the literature review, the data was mainly gathered by the semi-structured interviews conducted among the Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and a few other purposively selected participants. The relevant data would be gathered only by the officers and SMEs who possess experience in the event or who have an academic foundation to describe the events taking place during the period concerned. Hence, purposive sampling was selected to gather the most relevant data for the study.

Core Argument

It is important to identify the measures to be taken regarding the protection of National Security in future protests, riots, and public

uprisings by studying the way the fighting power of the Sri Lanka Army was used during the Aragalaya in Sri Lanka in the year 2022.

Operationalization

Operationalization is the systematic alignment of research variables, dimensions and indicators to lay the groundwork for data collection and analysis. But, in inductive research, researchers face some constraints in preparing a complete operationalization. In this research, the researcher prepared the operationalization by using new dimensions and indicators through the analysis in addition to the dimensions and indicators identified through the existing literature. Here, the elements shown in blue were found with a literature base and the elements shown in yellow are those that were discovered through chords and themes in the analysis:

Table 3.1: Operationalization Chords and Themes Analysis Chart

Variable	Dimensions	Indicators	Source
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Aragalaya - 2022	Threats and Tactics of Aragalaya	Radicalism	Thematic Analysis
		Social Media Propaganda	
		Information Warfare	
		Gray Zone Tactics	Literature Review
		Political Instability	
		Economic Downfall	
	Weaknesses of SLA	Lack of Experience	Literature Review
		Ignored Warnings	
		Poor Situational Awareness	Thematic Analysis
		Misguided Focus	
		Limited Intelligence Authority	
		Poor Agency Coordination	
		Tech and Cyber Gaps	
	Strategies and Tactics of SLA	Use of Minimum Force	Thematic Analysis
		Counterpropaganda	
		Show of Force	
		Protection of Human Rights	Literature Review
	Lesson Learnt	Political Framework	Literature Review
		Enhancing Legal Mechanism	
		Improving Social Cohesion	Thematic Analysis
		Advancing Intelligence Capabilities	

Source: Designed by the researcher

Instruments

Documentary research and interviews with Key Informants (KIs) were the study's primary data sources. The military documents such as operational plans and related documents were limited in accessibility as they were classified. The interviews were done to make recommendations based on insights from military and academic professionals to develop an appropriate method to meet the requirements. Focused Groups (FGs) brought additional perspectives to the study to understand the tactical level of military involvement.

Data Collection

The data collection was conducted in two steps. In the first step, the data was collected by an extensive document analysis in which several documents were considered related to Aragalaya and its affiliated events. Secondly, the interviews and Focussed Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted and data related to events that occurred at the Aragalaya were gathered. All questions and discussions were designed, aligning with the research objectives and focus on the research questions. The data collected from the military personnel and experts in the same field were arranged methodically to analyse them. All data collected are relevant to the variables and moderators

indicated in the conceptual framework. These data were then analysed using thematic analysis to understand the similarities and to derive the themes related to the scope of the study.

Analysis Tools

The research used the assistance of the software, 'NVivo' for a better understanding of the themes and crosschecking their reliability with the narratives derived by the researcher with self-understanding.

Research Framework

The input, process, output and outcome framework were used to structure the study. The input includes all the data that has been gathered through a collaboration of primary and secondary data related to military power concerning Aragalaya. The process includes the thematic analysis which was conducted to understand the similar ideas within the collected data. The output is the countable success and failure cases that occurred during the Aragalaya which was derived through the analysis. The outcome represents the long-term recommendations to overcome the failures in the future and enhance the capabilities of the Army facing such cases:

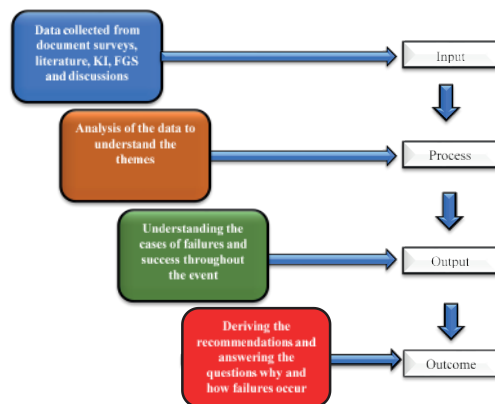


Figure 3.2: The Research Framework
Source: Designed by the researcher

Data Presentation and Analysis

The Aragalaya uprising in literature in National Security, globalized Notes from the local to the global is a case study and chapter four discusses the critical examination of the Aragalaya uprising and its implication in shaping intellection emanated from individual sanctuaries. This chapter identifies and analyzes recurring themes through responses to interviews, including radicalism, social media propaganda, information warfare, gray zone tactics, political instability and economic downfalls. Breaking down each theme and its significance in the uprising helps to give a well-rounded picture of how multifaceted this story is. We then conduct a thematic analysis of each interview question, a method that helps identify and interpret patterns and trends within qualitative data. Proper thematic analysis can lead to a better understanding of the exact nature and magnitude of social unrest, an unbiased assessment of the role the country's military plays in response to these events, and thus help craft strategies for the future. The chapter's objective is to provide an analysis of more theoretical, National Security considerations of social unrest or to better assist in creating strategies that contribute to reducing these types of threats.

Qualitative Analysis

To that end, this qualitative analysis examines the effects of the Aragalaya uprising on National Security through interviews with some experts. Reading and re-reading of interview transcripts over several weeks allowed identification of common themes. Phrases, keywords, or concepts were extracted from each response to be used as codes. The themes such as radicalism, social media propaganda, information warfare, gray zone tactics, political instability and economic downfall served as the bones of this narrative skeleton, which were then fleshed out to ensure they were crystal

clear from one another. These themes were then crafted into narratives using direct quotes from the interviews and analyzed in their context. Our thematic analysis is consistent with the objectives of the research and presents nuanced information about the problems caused by the social unrest period.

The Presentation of Data and Analysis of Research Question One

The first question confronted by the experts was whether it should be considered a National Security threat and how it affects the security dynamics of Sri Lanka. All the experts unanimously agreed that Aragalaya movement is the biggest threat to National Security, pointing out several important areas. Central to their responses were three key themes, the growth of radicalism driving extremist ideologies and behaviours, the extensive leveraging of social media propaganda quickly proliferating disinformation and the motivating swaths of protestors. Strategic measures were the focus of information warfare tactics used to manipulate public opinion and undermine trust in government. Gray zone tactics are used in ambiguous and unorthodox ways, obfuscating the state's response to the unrest. The researcher found the following themes shared by all answers:

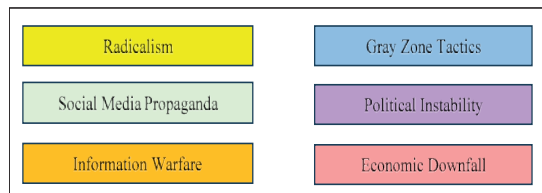


Figure 4.1: Themes shared by key informants
Source: Designed by the researcher

The Thematic Analysis of the Question One

Table 4.1: The Thematic Analysis Chart of Question One

Key Extractions (Coding)	Theme	Description of Theme	Narrative
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
"The Aragalaya was handled by an extremist group".	Radicalism.	Increased radical activities and ideologies during the Aragalaya.	The rise of radicalism during the Aragalaya movement amplified security concerns by
"Radical groups quickly joined the Aragalaya". "The extremist group behaved impulsively".			fostering extreme ideologies and actions that threatened national stability. These radical elements undermined trust in governmental institutions and increased the risk of violent confrontations.
"Social media has been propagating in a way that incites unrest". "Social media was misused to quickly organize public protests". "All social media campaigns supported the Aragalaya".	Social Media Propaganda.	Use of social media to spread misinformation and mobilize protests.	Social media played a crucial role in propagating misinformation and rallying people for the Aragalaya movement. The swift spread of biased or false information through these platforms exacerbated tensions and contributed to the scale and intensity of the protests.
"New methods such as cyber-attacks, inciting people through false information were successfully used here". "Instead of confronting us as we expected, they strategically addressed people and created misinformation". "Although the army did not attack in the way it was prepared for, the security forces broke away from the people in an unexpected way".	Gray Zone Tactics.	Ambiguous actions and non-traditional warfare methods that challenge state authority.	Gray zone tactics, including cyber operations and covert misinformation campaigns, complicated the government's response to the Aragalaya uprising. These non-traditional methods of warfare presented challenges in maintaining law and order without escalating conflicts.
"This movement spread directly criticizing the political structure of Sri Lanka". "Criticizing political figures and activities and propagating them became the basis of this movement". "As the Aragalaya directly threatened politics, it led to political instability".	Political Instability.	Disruption of governmental functions and erosion of public trust in political leadership.	The Aragalaya movement induced political instability by disrupting governmental operations and eroding public trust in political leadership. This instability compromised the government's ability to implement effective policies and maintain control, thus threatening National Security.

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
<p>"It appeared that the protesters aimed to disrupt Sri Lanka's economy".</p> <p>"One of the bases of the protests was that politics can be broken by breaking the economy".</p> <p>"Investors and businessmen were under pressure as the situation in the country worsened. With the collapse of their confidence, there was a severe pressure on the economy".</p>	Economic Downfall.	Negative impact on the country's economy due to prolonged unrest.	<p>The prolonged unrest during the Aragalaya movement had severe economic repercussions. Business disruptions and diminished investor confidence exacerbated the economic downturn, further straining the country's resources and compounding the National Security threat.</p>

Source: Designed by the researcher

The Presentation of Data and Analysis of Research Question Two

The next question was asked by the experts what were the deficiencies in the strategy of the Armed Forces and how did it contribute to not controlling this Aragalaya insurgency at inception and plugging gaps (lapses) in intelligence? Several red flags were identified by the experts. One of the key problems was the absence of knowledge and experience in coping with such an unpredictable scenario, which made the Armed Forces unprepared. Further, the government response to early warnings was found wanting, which meant that many pre-emptive steps if they were even contemplated did not take place. In this context, experts pointed out a lack of situational awareness efforts were focused on individual people rather than alleviating threat. Lack of proper authority and coordination among the intelligence agencies hampered their work, thus further weakening any response. Moreover, the absence of modern technology and cyber meant that intelligence operations were not as effective as expected. A combination of these gaps and lapses had cumulatively helped in not being able to arrest the birth of a monster like the Aragalaya movement, which drives home the point that consistency needs to be worked

upon (strategic as well as technical) Based on this, the research found common themes about what missing in Armed Forces strategy were:

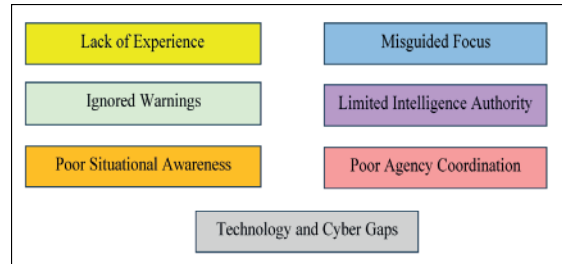


Figure 4.2: Themes shared by key informants

Source: Designed by the researcher

The Thematic Analysis of the Question Two

Table 4.2: The Thematic Analysis Chart of Question Two

Key Extractions (Coding)	Theme	Description of Theme	Narrative
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
<p>"The struggle turned into a massive and unprecedented protest".</p> <p>"We realized that we had no experience in handling such large protests".</p> <p>"Our opponents here were not terrorists, but the people of this country."</p>	Lack of Experience.	Insufficient experience handling large-scale uprisings.	The absence of experience in dealing with mass uprisings hindered the Armed Forces' ability to effectively respond to the Aragalaya movement. Lack of expertise meant inadequacy of standard protocols and strategies for addressing the scale and complexity of the unrest.
<p>"It was known on various occasions that such a large explosion could happen before it happened".</p>	Ignored Warnings.	Failure to act on early warnings.	The lack of appropriate government action in response to early warnings allowed the situation to escalate
<p>"Every time, there were protests from the people, the existing governments ignored them".</p> <p>Before the Aragalaya developed to this level, there was the possibility of preventing it at various levels, but due to the lack of action taken at that time, it reached to an uncontrollable situation."</p>			unchecked. This oversight prevented timely intervention, exacerbating the impact of the Aragalaya movement.

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
<p>"The real nature of the unrest was not properly understood at the time of need".</p> <p>"There was a significant gap in understanding the scope of these protests."</p> <p>"It is correct to say that the responsible parties were not able to fully understand the circumstances that were hidden behind the apparently open events".</p>	Poor Situational Awareness.	Inadequate understanding of the evolving situation.	The Armed Forces and government struggled with situational awareness, failing to grasp the full extent of the uprising. Lack of understanding led to ineffective responses and missed opportunities to mitigate the unrest early on.
<p>"It's a mistake to think that most of what happened here was done privately".</p> <p>"We did not pay attention to the message shown through these events".</p> <p>"Instead of looking for answers to the real problem, they tried to find personal culprits".</p> <p>"Intelligence agencies faced limits on their authority and operational scope."</p> <p>"This kind of situation arose because of the obstacles that the intelligence agencies had to carry out their work".</p> <p>"Weaknesses in the coordination between the intelligence agencies were clearly seen through this".</p> <p>"There was not a good relationship with the institutions responsible for state security".</p> <p>"This situation could have been controlled if there had been good coordination between intelligence agencies, government agencies and security agencies".</p> <p>"The young boys and girls involved in the Aragalaya used technology well for their purposes".</p> <p>"Much of the Aragalaya was organized using social media and cyber technology."</p> <p>"The lack of technical knowledge was the main reason why the Aragalaya could not be stopped".</p>	Misguided Focus.	Focus on individuals rather than addressing the broader threat.	<p>They were focusing on individual agitators rather than addressing the broader threat posed by the movement, the response efforts were fragmented and less effective. This misdirection allowed the unrest to grow uncontrollably.</p> <p>The intelligence agencies' limited authority and scope impeded their ability to effectively gather and act on critical information. This restriction weakened the overall response to the Aragalaya uprising.</p> <p>Poor coordination between various intelligence agencies led to fragmented and inefficient responses. The lack of a unified approach diminished the effectiveness of the efforts to address and manage the uprising.</p> <p>The shortage of advanced technology and cyber capabilities limited the ability of intelligence agencies to monitor and respond to the uprising. This technological gap hindered the effectiveness of the response and information gathering.</p>

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
<p>"It's a mistake to think that most of what happened here was done privately".</p> <p>"We did not pay attention to the message shown through these events".</p> <p>"Instead of looking for answers to the real problem, they tried to find personal culprits".</p> <p>"Intelligence agencies faced limits on their authority and operational scope."</p> <p>"This kind of situation arose because of the obstacles that the intelligence agencies had to carry out their work".</p> <p>"Weaknesses in the coordination between the intelligence agencies were clearly seen through this".</p> <p>"There was not a good relationship with the institutions responsible for state security".</p> <p>"This situation could have been controlled if there had been good coordination between intelligence agencies, government agencies and security agencies".</p> <p>"The young boys and girls involved in the Aragalaya used technology well for their purposes".</p> <p>"Much of the Aragalaya was organized using social media and cyber technology."</p> <p>"The lack of technical knowledge was the main reason why the Aragalaya could not be stopped".</p>	Misguided Focus.	Focus on individuals rather than addressing the broader threat.	<p>They were focusing on individual agitators rather than addressing the broader threat posed by the movement, the response efforts were fragmented and less effective. This misdirection allowed the unrest to grow uncontrollably.</p> <p>The intelligence agencies' limited authority and scope impeded their ability to effectively gather and act on critical information. This restriction weakened the overall response to the Aragalaya uprising.</p> <p>Poor coordination between various intelligence agencies led to fragmented and inefficient responses. The lack of a unified approach diminished the effectiveness of the efforts to address and manage the uprising.</p> <p>The shortage of advanced technology and cyber capabilities limited the ability of intelligence agencies to monitor and respond to the uprising. This technological gap hindered the effectiveness of the response and information gathering.</p>
<p>"Intelligence agencies faced limits on their authority and operational scope."</p> <p>"This kind of situation arose because of the obstacles that the intelligence agencies had to carry out their work".</p> <p>"Weaknesses in the coordination between the intelligence agencies were clearly seen through this".</p> <p>"There was not a good relationship with the institutions responsible for state security".</p> <p>"This situation could have been controlled if there had been good coordination between intelligence agencies, government agencies and security agencies".</p> <p>"The young boys and girls involved in the Aragalaya used technology well for their purposes".</p> <p>"Much of the Aragalaya was organized using social media and cyber technology."</p> <p>"The lack of technical knowledge was the main reason why the Aragalaya could not be stopped".</p>	Limited Intelligence Authority.	Restrictions on intelligence agency operations.	<p>The intelligence agencies' limited authority and scope impeded their ability to effectively gather and act on critical information. This restriction weakened the overall response to the Aragalaya uprising.</p> <p>Poor coordination between various intelligence agencies led to fragmented and inefficient responses. The lack of a unified approach diminished the effectiveness of the efforts to address and manage the uprising.</p> <p>The shortage of advanced technology and cyber capabilities limited the ability of intelligence agencies to monitor and respond to the uprising. This technological gap hindered the effectiveness of the response and information gathering.</p>
<p>"Intelligence agencies faced limits on their authority and operational scope."</p> <p>"This kind of situation arose because of the obstacles that the intelligence agencies had to carry out their work".</p> <p>"Weaknesses in the coordination between the intelligence agencies were clearly seen through this".</p> <p>"There was not a good relationship with the institutions responsible for state security".</p> <p>"This situation could have been controlled if there had been good coordination between intelligence agencies, government agencies and security agencies".</p> <p>"The young boys and girls involved in the Aragalaya used technology well for their purposes".</p> <p>"Much of the Aragalaya was organized using social media and cyber technology."</p> <p>"The lack of technical knowledge was the main reason why the Aragalaya could not be stopped".</p>	Poor Agency Coordination.	Lack of cooperation among intelligence agencies.	<p>Poor coordination between various intelligence agencies led to fragmented and inefficient responses. The lack of a unified approach diminished the effectiveness of the efforts to address and manage the uprising.</p> <p>The shortage of advanced technology and cyber capabilities limited the ability of intelligence agencies to monitor and respond to the uprising. This technological gap hindered the effectiveness of the response and information gathering.</p>
<p>"Intelligence agencies faced limits on their authority and operational scope."</p> <p>"This kind of situation arose because of the obstacles that the intelligence agencies had to carry out their work".</p> <p>"Weaknesses in the coordination between the intelligence agencies were clearly seen through this".</p> <p>"There was not a good relationship with the institutions responsible for state security".</p> <p>"This situation could have been controlled if there had been good coordination between intelligence agencies, government agencies and security agencies".</p> <p>"The young boys and girls involved in the Aragalaya used technology well for their purposes".</p> <p>"Much of the Aragalaya was organized using social media and cyber technology."</p> <p>"The lack of technical knowledge was the main reason why the Aragalaya could not be stopped".</p>	Technology and Cyber Gaps.	Insufficient technology and cyber capabilities.	<p>The shortage of advanced technology and cyber capabilities limited the ability of intelligence agencies to monitor and respond to the uprising. This technological gap hindered the effectiveness of the response and information gathering.</p>

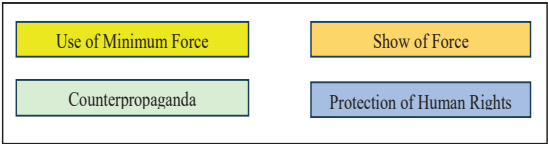
Source: Designed by the researcher

The Presentation of Data and Analysis of Research Question Three

The third question explored how best the Armed Forces utilized their authorities, powers and resources to overcome the Aragalaya

uprising. Experts identified several strategies employed by the forces. These included the use of necessary force to avoid escalating violence, implementing counterpropaganda measures to combat misinformation and demonstrating a show of force to assert control and deter further unrest. Additionally, protecting human rights was emphasized as a crucial aspect of their approach. This analysis will evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies and their impact on managing the uprising and maintaining National Security. The key themes identified are as follows:

Figure 4.3: Themes shared by key informants
Source: Designed by the researcher



4.3.1 The Thematic Analysis of the Question Three

Table 4.3: The Thematic Analysis Chart of Question Three

Key Extractions (Coding)	Theme	Description of Theme	Narrative
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
<p>"The army tried to manage the situation without causing further violence".</p> <p>"The protests were carried out by general public, so minimal force was used against them".</p> <p>"Because the people of the country were unarmed, it was not possible to use much force against them".</p>	Use of Minimum Force.	Employing minimal force to avoid escalation.	By using minimal force, the Armed Forces aimed to control the uprising while minimizing additional harm and preventing further escalation. This approach sought to balance effective management with restraint.
<p>"We have tried to spread the correct information to prevent the spread of false information".</p> <p>"People accepted misinformation more impulsively than correct information".</p>	Counterpropaganda.	Implementing measures to combat misinformation.	Counterpropaganda was employed to counteract the misinformation fuelling the uprising. These efforts aimed to clarify facts, reduce public confusion and diminish the impact of false narratives.

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
<p>"A considerable number of media assisted incounter-propaganda".</p> <p>"We thought that it would be possible to control the people by showing power".</p> <p>"We tried to establish the power of the army by showing power".</p>	Show of Force.	Demonstrating strength to assert control.	Demonstrating a strong presence helped the Armed Forces assert control and discourage further unrest. This strategy was intended to convey authority and stabilize the situation through visible strength.
<p>"Because the people of Sri Lanka were involved in this struggle, we did not have the wrong idea about them from the beginning".</p> <p>"We tried our best to protect the human rights of the people".</p> <p>"Due to trying to protect the rights of the people, we could not control the people in many cases".</p>	Protection of Human Rights.	Ensuring respect for human rights during operations.	The emphasis on human rights aimed to ensure that response measures did not violate legal and ethical standards. This focus sought to prevent abuses and maintain public trust amidst the unrest.

Source: Designed by the researcher

The Presentation of Data and Analysis of the Research Question Four

The fourth question sought recommendations for strategic measures that can be employed to prevent and mitigate similar occurrences to the Aragalaya uprising in the future. Experts provided insights into various strategies from other countries, focusing on political, legal, social, intelligence and community engagement measures. Recommendations included strengthening political frameworks to address grievances proactively, enhancing legal mechanisms to manage unrest, improving social cohesion through community engagement and advancing intelligence capabilities for early detection. These strategies aim to create a comprehensive approach to managing internal threats and maintaining National Security effectively. The key recommendations given are as follows:

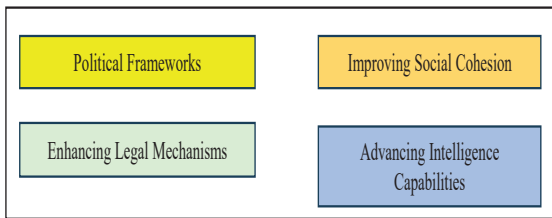


Figure 4.4: Themes shared by key informants
Source: Designed by the researcher

The Thematic Analysis of the Question Four

Table 4.4: The Thematic Analysis Chart of Question Four

Key Extractions (Coding) (a)	Theme (b)	Description of Theme (c)	Narrative (d)
<p>"Maintaining a stronger political structure will be important to prevent insurgencies".</p> <p>"It is important to remove the misconceptions of the people about the political structure".</p> <p>"Politicians who are elected by the people will be able to identify public protests easily by doing their work without distancing themselves from the people".</p>	Strengthening Political Frameworks.	Enhancing governance to address grievances.	Strengthening political frameworks involves creating responsive governance structures that address public grievances proactively, reducing the risk of unrest.
<p>"We have seen empirically that the existing law was not enough to control social unrest when it occurred".</p> <p>"If the legal framework had been stronger, it would have been possible to reduce even the damage to public property that occurred during the struggle".</p> <p>"It appears that laws should be created to control future arrests".</p>	Enhancing Legal Mechanisms.	Improving legal tools for managing unrest.	Enhancing legal mechanisms includes updating laws and regulations to better manage social unrest and provide clear guidelines for response, ensuring legality and effectiveness.

<p>"It is important to identify the misconceptions and misunderstandings that exist in society".</p> <p>"Many divisions can be controlled by developing harmony between the sections of the society".</p> <p>"Social harmony can control many acts of violence".</p>	Improving Social Cohesion.	Building stronger community relations.	Improving social cohesion through community programs and dialogue can address underlying tensions, reducing the likelihood of unrest by promoting unity and understanding.
<p>"It is important to develop intelligence services to identify potential threats in advance".</p> <p>"Not limited to the development of the intelligence service, the legal support necessary to maintain their</p>	Advancing Intelligence Capabilities.	Upgrading intelligence for early detection.	Advancing intelligence capabilities involves investing in technology and training to enhance the ability to detect and respond to emerging threats, enabling proactive measures to prevent unrest.
<p>freedom should be provided".</p> <p>"State security intelligence should not be used in political activities. They should not be relevant to political discussions."</p>			

Source: Designed by the researcher

Final Thematic Map of the Analysis



Figure 4.1: Final Thematic Map
Source: Designed by the researcher

Overall Narrative of the Analysis

Aralagaya is a notable event of social unrest in Sri Lanka which brought forth the Nation Security fragilities in different hues. The expert responses are thematically analysed to understand the multi-dimensional effects of the uprising and suggest recommendations for future prevention and management. This rebellion turned violent and this threatened National Security by damaging law enforcement services and instilling fear within many people. The first rates of casualties and damage were great from the violent clashes between protestors and security forces, emphasising a dire need for an effective tool to mitigate such escalations. The uprising also affected the stability of the government, questioning the right to rule and creating a power vacuum that further destabilised the country. Misinformation and propaganda helped to fan the flame by broadcasting fake news that perpetuated divisions and hampered efforts of oversight. The law and order declined during the demonstrations, which disintegrated societal and governance structures, bleeding over time into an inability to return stability or a steady hand to society.

In fact, such unrest and public opinion have been negatively reflecting on silent military personnel in an insidious manner thus leaving a detrimental mark on morale and loyalty making the effectiveness and motivation of the Armed Forces difficult to ensure. At the same time, the massive destruction of public and private property during the uprising became an economic burden and exacerbated the dilemma over security. The rebellion also affected military and police loyalty, tensions in the force weakened, making operations much less robust.

The analysis recommends a number of strategic steps for anticipating the future. This makes strengthening political frameworks

more vital to prevent grievances from becoming a powder keg for these elements. Improving legal remedies will ensure that operational intervention in situations of social disorder is manifested with clarity and effectiveness. Moreover, diminishing long-simmering tensions through community connection can create social cohesion against prevailing fissures that set neighbor against neighbor. Finally, improving intelligence will make it effective to recognize and respond to new threats early in the evolution of that threat. These recommendations aim to create levels of stability that will give the National Security apparatus an operating framework concerning the coming challenges.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of the thematic analysis lead the study towards understanding various reasons and the causes which the ultimate result of the Aragalaya ended up overthrowing the government and its leader. The narratives used by the social activist are closely examined to understand how the perception of people was affected. The chapter further aims to create an understanding of the factors that caused the success of the Aragalaya and the failures of the military in a broader view.

Findings of The Study

The radical elements of the society have created a clear path to build an ideology, especially among the youth of the country, narrating the corruption and the inability of the government. The radicalism was increasingly heightened during the Aragalaya period when it attracted more people who had no intention of joining the movement at its beginning. It is found that the propagation of radical ideas leads to threaten the traditional security measures and requires a review of measures to manage the threat to internal stability.

Social media has been a critical means to spread misinformation and propaganda among people. It is found that the major actors of Aragalaya have used social media as a critical aspect to spread their ideas, making the people believe it. Hence, it is found that a significant strategy must be established to monitor and control the information over social media without hindering the right of information by people.

The next significant finding of the analysis was the use of grey zone tactics. Most of the information shared on social media was anonymous and had no initiating end other than the receiving end. Hence, prevention was a problem for the government and police as they were unaware of the origin. Even some activists received money in their accounts without knowing a person or an organization that deposited the money. Hence, it is important to establish methods to withstand the use of grey zone tactics in such scenarios.

The disruptions occurred for businesses and diminishing investments had a greater impact on the national economy. Hence, the deprivation of stocks and values was critically affecting the whole economy and the trust among investors. Hence, it is found that business protection assurance must be a necessity to ensure the smooth functioning of the economy in the future.

The armed forces and police were inexperienced in handling a situation where the mass population violently marches towards the critical elements of the governing organization. Hence, it is found that the protocols must be established beforehand to face such situations and be activated during the time of disputes.

The findings exhibit that military intelligence has warned the government for several time about the developments where the government failed to address the issues timely.

Hence, it is required to practice and establish sound coordination between government organizations and military intelligence for better evaluation of developments.

The government or the military forces were unable to grasp the extent and the real depth of the Aragalaya and its structure. Hence, the government actions were made on the surface level where the real roots were lying beneath the surface. Hence, it is found that situational understanding and continuous evaluation are a must for ensuring stability internally and externally.

The government and its forces were responding to the actions of individuals rather than acting to diminish the roots of the Aragalaya. Hence, the Aragalaya gained more success and strength as the real elements were not addressed.

The limited authority and abilities of the intelligence agencies became a significant factor and the agencies were unable to take action once they had identified the developments. The government's reluctance to enhance the authority of the intelligence agencies has led to the rapid escalation of the situation.

The shortage of advanced technology and cyber capabilities of the intelligence agencies and the inability to analyse the situations through technology has a significant effect on the failures of the military forces. The limited access to data and information has allowed the social activist to overrun the intelligence agencies with their narratives.

However, the military forces and the police were using the minimum force against Aragalaya was significant in keeping the majority of citizens uninvolved. The Use of force against people would have led to more devastating situations such as in Bangladesh.

At the beginning of the Aragalaya, the strong presence of the military and police was critical in deterring further infiltration of the unrest. However, the government's failure to address the issues within time has loosened the grip of the military forces as they were unable to use force against their citizens.

The military forces and police actions in the Aragalaya period showcased that the lessons learned from the past have been adopted as they did not escalate to a level where the case of Rathupaswala incident reached. The armed forces were well disciplined and cohesive amidst the demoralizing events that occurred in their face.

Enhancement of legal mechanisms to support the legitimate actions of the police and military forces to manage the uprisings in a more systematic approach would be a solution for future events. In the meantime, educating the people about law and order and the consequences of illegal behaviours during such protests must be critical aspects.

Improving the social cohesion among the people is of utmost importance for the national security of the country. Providing social media literacy and the ability to understand the real facts will discourage them from following misinformation blindly. Hence, community engagement and education are a must for creating social resilience and cohesion, while protecting national security and interests.

The thematic analysis has led the research into several critical findings that address the root causes and reasons for the failures and successes of the military forces during the Aragalaya uprising. The findings can be divided into two main areas such as failures and successes. The failures were caused by inexperience, technology gaps and mis-coordination among the agencies. Further, it was caused by the government's reluctance

to act to early warning and its inability to act timely. The success includes the protection of human rights, learning from past experiences etc.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The present research has made an in-depth inquiry into the Aragalaya movement and its consequences for National Security in Sri Lanka. These results hint at the multifaceted threats that the movement represents, from radicalization and misinformation to political chaos and economic sabotage. The above challenges have also laid bare serious weaknesses in the nation's security architecture, governance systems and societal harmony, the effects of which require a thorough rethink of how we manage crises. A key lesson learned from this research is that radicalism plays a part in increased National Security threats. The Aragalaya movement saw an uptick in extremist ideologies which deepened the mistrust in government institutions and increased potential violence. The power of social media provided a razor-sharp catalyst in two ways: it brought the general public together and fed them lies on purpose. This more often than not consisted of platforms being used for malicious targeting; bias against falsehoods combined with rapid spread meant that protests received a strategic advantage in the number as well as intensity spirals, all of which indicated increased demand and significance for effective information management and counter-misinformation strategies.

The research also sheds light on the complications of gray zone tactics including cyber operations and covert misinformation campaigns. For the government, these were forms of warfare that did not resemble conventional battles with an identifiable enemy; handling such opposition made controlling disorderly groups more difficult without exciting them toward greater tensions. The

results indicate that strengthening the level of cyber security and strategic communication are necessary to deal with these underworld threats in preserving National Security, which was tested by such out-of-the-norm means. More recently, disruption of governmental functionality and the erosion of public trust, as a result, have been among issues posed to National Security by political instability, exemplified in the case of the Aragalaya movement. The blogs have attributed the incompetence of the government to enforce policies and to manage the unrest as quickly tangentially back to the necessity for institutional resilience. Law and order institutions do need to be strengthened, but at the same time, the trust of respondents in the public sector can be rebuilt by having transparency in governance.

The long-drawn-out unrest also took a heavy toll on the economy, causing business interruptions with reduced investors' confidence adding to the strain on the country's coffers. Restoring stability and maintaining long-term National Security requires to address these economic setbacks. The findings emphasize the need for an inclusive recovery approach that serves to stabilise and rebalance the economy, along with addressing deprivation in a broader sense while rebuilding investors' confidence to quickly shore up National Security.

There were also serious loopholes found in the capability of the Armed Forces and intelligence agencies to be ready for such an attack. The response to the Aragalaya movement lacked punch due to inexperience in dealing with such mass uprisings, no synergy among different departments and limited technological means. The results indicate the requirement for specialized training, better inter-agency coordination and technology investments to provide a higher level of situational awareness response during future crises. The findings also draw attention to the necessity of crisis management practices complying with legal and

ethical standards. Courtesy of the concessional force use method, a peace-supportive human rights approach was emphasized so that trust among the public remained undamaged and prevented further polarization.

In conclusion, this research has provided valuable insights into the factors influencing National Security and response strategies in the context of the Aragalaya movement. The findings underscore the need for adaptive governance, robust legal frameworks, enhanced social cohesion and modernized intelligence capabilities to effectively manage and mitigate unrest. By addressing these areas, Sri Lanka can strengthen its National Security infrastructure and better prepare for future challenges, ensuring a more stable and secure environment for its citizens.

Recommendations

A comprehensive de-radicalization programme to tackle the root cause of extreme ideology should be implemented by the government to combat radicalism which was experienced during the Aragalaya movement. Among these some of the most important types of programmes are community engagement initiatives, educational campaigns to foster tolerance but also dialogue platforms that would help restore faith and trust in government. Furthermore, the government must improve intelligence oversight to proactively predict radical trends and nip them in the bud. Together with civil society, law enforcement can develop better ways to deal with domestic dissent to uphold national unity:

Introduce a Counter Gray Zone Operation Security Model

The government should form a task force to monitor social media and counter false news since social media are so powerful

in amplifying misinformation during the Aragalaya movement. This can range from better fact-checking to working more closely with social media companies to highlight and take down harmful content quickly. There should be multiple public awareness campaigns to identify and report misinformation. In other areas, promoting digital literacy and critical thinking skills will equip the population to differentiate between credible and false sources of information, thereby minimizing the propagation of disinformation, as well as its impact on National Security. Therefore, here are the given security model, where we can combat gray zone attacks:

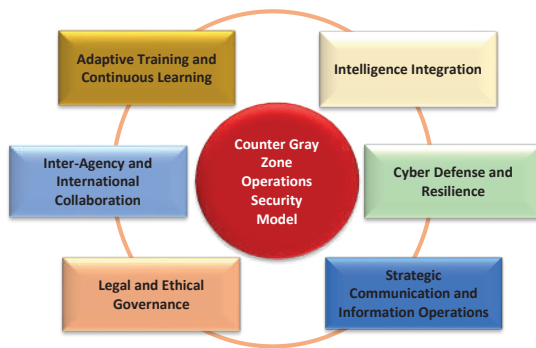


Figure 6.1: Counter Gray Zone Operation Security Model
Source: Designed by the researcher

Establish a National Resilience and Economic Recovery Committee

To address the political instability and economic consequences caused by the Aragalaya movement, it is recommended that a dedicated "National Resilience and Economic Recovery Committee" be established. This committee should develop and implement strategies to strengthen institutional resilience, restore public trust and stabilize the economy. The committee will assess the impact of the unrest, formulate recovery plans and ensure

coordinated efforts across government and non-government sectors. Hence, the following committee is suggested for better evaluations:

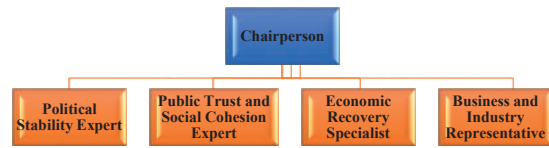


Figure 6.2: National Resilience and Economic Recovery Committee
Source: Designed by the researcher

Develop Specialized Training Programs

Development of specialized training programs for controlling up to mob-level violent uprisings and non-lethal methods to combat the same (with the local situation being volatile) for the Armed Forces. While these mock incidents can provide a unique training environment replicating significant large-scale events, they enable forces to prepare for potential real-world scenarios. The maturity level of these strategies maps out global best practices in civil unrest management from which lessons can be integrated. The establishment of a trained and specialized unit equipped to deal with civil disturbances and working with law enforcement agencies will ensure a unified response. The best way to achieve operational effectiveness in the face of future uprisings is continuous evaluation and updates to protocols that consider new threats and past experiences.

Establish a Crisis Intelligence and Response Coordination Branch

To prevent future growths of similar uprisings to the Aragalaya movement, it is recommended to establish a "Crisis Intelligence and Response Coordination Branch (CIRCB)." This special crisis management branch will focus on early detection, real-time intelligence analysis and coordinated response efforts while

providing early warning to relevant authorities. The CIRCB should include representatives from the following key agencies:

National Intelligence Service (Chairperson)

Lead intelligence gathering and analysis.

Ministry of Defence

Coordinate military responses.

Ministry of Public Security

Oversee law enforcement coordination.

Cybersecurity Authority

Monitor and address online threats.

Ministry of Information and Communication

Manage public communication strategies.

Civil Society Liaison

Ensure public trust and community engagement.



Figure 6.3: Crisis Intelligence and Response Coordination Branch

Source: Designed by the researcher

Establishing a National Intelligence Coordination Committee

To strengthen the ability of intelligence institutions in crisis management, it is suggested that authorities be increased while extending their power and investigating important reports based on it. To victimization from an inter-agency gee center, amendments to the National Intelligence Coordination Committee Act of 2007 are to be done, which will benefit multiple agencies' collaboration and integration. It should include representatives of the full range of intelligence and security agencies to integrate threat assessments and responses. This will be achieved by regular joint training exercises and information-sharing protocols. When working together, agencies contribute to their combined abilities in a complementary manner enhancing their effectiveness as a whole and forming an integrated response to complex security challenges.

Allocate Significant Resources Towards Modernizing Intelligence Infrastructure and Enhancing Cyber Capabilities

To combat the technological disparity afflicting many intelligence agencies, more resources should be devoted to overhauling the intelligence architecture and bolstering our capacity for cyber warfare. For instance, this means greater investment in sophisticated tools using data analytics, artificial intelligence and real-time surveillance platforms to improve the effectiveness of monitoring and response capabilities. In addition, cooperating with technology companies and universities can also help to transfer know-how and state-of-the-art solutions. Moreover, executing complete training sessions for staff on new mechanics will bolster efficiency. Security services can better target areas of improvement by investing in technology that provides them with real-time intelligence, improves their ability to detect threats and enables more rapid response.

Organizing Cultural Exchange Events and Community-Building Activities

To enhance social cohesion, it is essential to implement community engagement programs that promote dialogue among diverse groups. Establishing local forums for discussion can facilitate understanding and collaboration, addressing grievances before they escalate. Organizing cultural exchange events and community-building activities can strengthen relationships and foster a sense of belonging. Additionally, involving community leaders and civil society organizations in these initiatives will ensure inclusivity and promote trust, thereby reducing the likelihood of unrest and enhancing national stability:



Figure 6.4: Organizing Cultural Exchange Events and Community-Building Activities
Source: Designed by the researcher

Undertake a Comprehensive Review of Existing Laws and Regulations Governing Public Order and Protests

It is recommended that authorities review their laws and regulations related to public order management and protests as well to better manage the situation. It should instead serve to path lay clear but adaptable ground rules for how law enforcement must respond to different levels of unrest, irrespective of grievance to protect human rights. In addition, the creation of a politico-legal system with a focus on preventive measures such as mediation and conflict resolution will help to bring issues under control before they turn into violent groups. Training law enforcement to comply with modified legal standards and best practices in engagement with the community can provide them needed skills to conduct law and order effectively.

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ABSTRACT

Ancient war-like nations had well organized food supply systems, for example Greeks, Romans, Indians, Chinese, Mongolians, Japanese and Arabians had very well organized military food supply systems. Ancient Sri Lankans too had an organized food and military food supply system. According to Mahavamsa Princes Kuwana gave rice to the first King Vijaya to cook food. This article critically analyzes the military food supply system of ancient Sri Lankans. The library referencing method is used as a key research method in this research article. According to history from Anuradhapura period to Mahanuvara period the Sri Lankans had reorganized the military food supply system. According to Mahavamsa Prince Saddhatissa cultivated rice for King Dutugemunu's anti-Elara war operation. In the medieval era, the Sri Lankan King Parakramabahu sent food for fighting Sinhala soldiers in Operation Burma. From Anuradhapura era to Mahanuvara era Sri Lankans ate rice, kurakkan, tala, udu, banana,

and mango and to keep fit soldiers ate animal meat such as wild boar, deer, gaur and fish. Ships, horses and elephants were used to supply food for native soldiers. Finally, old Sri Lankan war-like people had a well organized military food supply system.

KEYWORDS: *Digamadulla, Dutugamunu, Food supply System, Mahavamsa, Rice.*

INTRODUCTION

හැඳින්වීම

හෝමෝ සේපියන් මානවයා ශිෂ්ටාචාරගත වූ දා සිට වර්තමානය දක්වා වූ දීර්ඝතර කාල පරිච්ඡේදය තුළ, ලෝකයේ බිහි වූ බලකාමී, රණකාමී අධිරාජ්‍යයන්, රාජ්‍යයන්, සමූහාණ්ඩු මෙන්ම නූතන දේශපාලන කියවීම්වලට අනුව බිහි වූ නූතන රාජ්‍යයන්ද ස්වකීය ආරක්ෂක හමුදා කාර්යක්ෂමව පවත්වාගෙන යාම සඳහා දියුණු ආහාර සහ ආහාර සැපයුම් ක්‍රියාවලීන් සංවිධානය කළහ. යම් හෙයකින් කිසියම් රාජ්‍යයක ආරක්ෂක අංශ අරබයා දියුණු ආහාර සැපයුම් ක්‍රියාවලියක් නොමැති වුවහොත් එම රාජ්‍යයේ බාහිර සහ අභ්‍යන්තර ආරක්ෂක විෂයය කටයුතු පළුදු වී,

සන්නද්ධ හමුදා කැරළි ඇතිවීමට ඉඩ ඇත. ආහාර පාන සැපයුම් ක්‍රියාවලියක ඇති වැදගත්කම ප්‍රංශ අධිරාජ්‍ය නැපෝලියන් බොනපාට්ගේ පහත දැක්වෙන ප්‍රකාශයෙන් මනාවට තහවුරු වෙයි.

“.... යුද්ධ භටයාගේ ඇති තුවක්කුව ක්‍රියාකරන්නේ ඔහුගේ බඩේ ඇති පාන් පෙත්ත නිසාය...” (පෙරේරා, 2015 : 31).

ස්වකීය සෙබළුන්ට හොඳින් ආහාර පාන ලබාදීමේ ඇති වැදගත්කමත්, ඒ මත ඔවුන්ගේ විවිධ විෂයක ආරක්ෂක රාජකාරි කටයුතු සතුටුදායක ලෙස සිදුකළ හැකි බව නැපෝලියන්ගේ උක්ත ප්‍රකාශයෙන් මනාව තහවුරු වෙයි. ක්‍රි.පූ. 6 වීනයේ බිහි වූ උසස් ආරක්ෂක විශේෂඥයෙකු වන සන්සුගේ (Sun Tzu) යුද කලාව (Art of War) නම් කෘතියට අනුවද කුසගින්න සහ ජල පිපාසයෙන් සිටින සතුරු සෙබළුන් හඳුනා ගැනීමේ උපක්‍රම දක්වා ඇත. ඒවා නම් පහත දැක්වෙයි.

“.... සොල්දාදුවන් සිය හෙලිවලට හේත්තු වී සිටගෙන සිටිත් නම් ඔවුන් කුසගින්නෙන් දුබලව සිටින බවට ලකුණකි....” (යුධ කලාව, 2018 :92).

“.... දිය රැගෙන ඒමට යොදවන ලද පිරිස, පළමුව දිය බොන්නේ නම්, හමුදාව පිපාසයෙන් පෙළෙන බවට සලකුණකි...” (යුධ කලාව, 2018 : 92).

මෙයාකාරයට කිසියම් රාජ්‍යයක පැවැත්මේ කොඳුනාරටිය වන ආරක්ෂක හමුදා මනාව පවත්වාගෙන යාම සඳහා කාර්යක්ෂම ආහාර සැපයුම් ක්‍රියාවලියක් අත්‍යවශ්‍ය බව සඳහන් කළ හැකිය. ඇතැම්විට නියමිත ආහාර සැපයුම් ක්‍රියාවලිය ආසාර්ථක වුවහොත් එකී ආරක්ෂක හමුදා විනයෙන් පිරිහී කිරිසනුන් පමණක් නොව මිනීමස් කෑමට පවා පෙළඹුන බව සිතාමතර රාජධානියේ වැටලීම් හේතුවෙන් ක්‍රි.ව. 16 වන සියවසේ කොළඹ පෘතුගීසී බලකොටුවේ හුන් පෘතුගීසීන්ට පැණනැඟුණු ආහාර හිඟතාවට පිළියම් වශයෙන් ගත් ක්‍රියාමාර්ග වලින් පෙනේ. රිබෙයිරෝ මෙසේ දක්වයි.

“.... සතුරන් දෙදාහක් පමණ මැරී ඇති බව දැනගත්තේය. සතුරන් නැවත වරක් පැමිණෙයි දැයි සැක කළ හෙතෙම පසුව ප්‍රයෝජනයට ගැනීම සඳහා මළමිනි ලුණු දමා තබා ගන්නා ලෙස අණ කළේ බලකොටුවේ ආහාර හිඟයක් තිබූ නිසාය. මෙසේ තරබාරු මළමිනි ගොඩු ගැසූ නමුත්, එක් හේතුවක් මිනියක් කපා, එහි හෘදය වස්තුව ගෙන තම්බා කැකල්හි පූජකවරයෙක් එය දැක ක්‍රිස්තු ධර්මයට අනුව මිනීමස් කෑම තහනම් කර තිබෙන හෙයින් වහාම එම ක්‍රියාව නවත්වන ලෙස අයැද සිටියේ ය...” (රිබෙයිරෝගේ ලංකා ඉතිහාසය, 2002 : 55).

අරමුණ සහ පර්යේෂණ ක්‍රමවේදය

මෙම ලිපිය මගින් ඉපැරණි සිංහල ආරක්ෂක සංවිධාන කටයුතුවලදී භාවිතයට ගත් ආහාර සහ ආහාර සැපයුම් ක්‍රියාවලිය පිළිබඳව ඓතිහාසික විමර්ශනයක් කිරීමට අපේක්ෂිතය. මෙහිදී පර්යේෂණ ක්‍රමවේදය වශයෙන් පුස්තකාල ගවේෂණ ක්‍රමය භාවිතා කෙරුණි. ඒ අනුව දත්ත ලබා ගැනීම වංශකථා, අටුවාකථා, හටන් කාව්‍ය කෘති මෙන්ම රිබෙයිරෝ හා හෙන්රි මාර්ෂල් වැනි යුරෝපීයානු වාර්තාකරුවන්ගේ කෘති පරිශීලනය අතර එකී දත්ත මනාව විශ්ලේෂණය කොට නිගමනවලට එළැඹිණි.

සාකච්ඡාව

ඉපැරණි සිංහල ආරක්ෂක සංවිධාන කටයුතුවල සෙබළුන් ආහාරයට ගත් ආහාර වර්ග අධ්‍යයන පහසුව තකා කොටස් දෙකකට බෙදා දැක්විය හැකිය. එනම්,

- * ශාකමය ආහාරපාන
- * සත්වමය ආහාරපාන

ශාකමය ආහාරපාන

පුරාතන ලංකාවේ ආරක්ෂක අංශ අනුභව කළ ශාකමය ආහාර වර්ග අතර ධාන්‍යමය ආහාරවන වී ආශ්‍රිත ආහාර වර්ගවලට ප්‍රමුඛස්ථානයක් හිමිවන

බව ඓතිහාසික මූලාශ්‍රවලට අනුව පෙනේ. විජය කුමරු ඇතුළු 700ක පිරිස ලංකාවට ගොඩබැස්ස අවස්ථාවේ කුවේණිය නම් ස්වදේශික කාන්තාව එම පිරිසට කුසගින්න නිවා ගැනීම සඳහා ආහාර පිස ගැනීම පිණිස සහල් ලබා දී ඇත. ඇය විසින් ලබාදුන් සහල් බත් සහ සුප වර්ග උයා විජය ඇතුළු පිරිස අනුභව කොට ඇත (මහාවංශය, 2015 : පරි 7 : ගාථා 24 - 25). මෙය ලංකාවේ සන්නද්ධ අංශයකට ආහාර වශයෙන් කුමන හෝ ශාකමය ද්‍රව්‍යයක් ලබාදුන් ප්‍රථම ඓතිහාසික ප්‍රවාක්තිය වෙයි. මීළඟට මහාවංශයේ පණ්ඩුකාභය කුමරු ඇතුළු 1200 පමණ වූ සන්නද්ධ අයවලුන්ට, ස්වර්ණපාලි කුමරිය විසින් පිසූ බත් ලබා දී ඇත (මහාවංශය, 2015 : පරි 7 : ගාථා 31 - 33). මීට අමතරව එළාරට එරෙහිව ක්‍රි.පූ. 2 සියවසේදී කාවන්තිස්ස හා දුටුගැමුණු ගෙන ගිය ලංකාව එක්සත් කිරීමේ යුද්ධ ව්‍යාපාරයට අවශ්‍ය වන ආහාර නිෂ්පාදනය කිරීම සඳහා (විශේෂයෙන් වී) සද්ධාතිස්ස කුමාරයා දිගා මඩුල්ලට යැවූ අතර දුටුගැමුණු කුමාරයාද පොද්ගලිකවම වී ගොවිතැනේ නිරත වූ බව සද්ධර්මලංකාරය මෙසේ පෙන්වා දෙයි.

“...පළමු කොට රට බතින් සුභික්ෂ කොට තිස්ස කුමාරයන් දිගාමඩුලු යවා බොහෝ කොට ගොයම්කරවන්නට නියෝග කොට තුමු මාගමැ හිදි කුඹුරු කිරි තනවා බොහෝ ගොයම් තැනවුන. මෙසේ ගොයම් බත් කරවා රට බතින් සමෘද්ධි කොට...” (සද්ධර්මලංකාරය, 2010 : පි. 535).

සහලින් නිෂ්පාදිත බත්වලට අමතරව ඇඹුල් බත්, හබල පෙති වැනි කල්තබා ගත හැකි සහල් ආශ්‍රිත ආහාර ද ලංකාව එක්සත් කිරීමේ යෙදි සිටි තම සෙබලුන්ට ලබාදීමට පරක්‍රමබාහු රජතුමා ක්‍රියාකළේය. මෙම ආහාරවලින් ඔහුගේ සේනාව වඩාත් කාර්යක්ෂමවන්නට ඇත (මහාවංශය, 2015 : පරි. 68 : ගාථා 40 - 41). තවද පහළ බුරුමය හෙවත් ජේගු දේශය ආක්‍රමණය කිරීම සඳහා සුදානම් කරවූ සිංහල සේනාවන්ගේ පරිභෝජනය සඳහා පරාක්‍රමබාහු රජතුමාගේ නියමයෙන් වර්ෂයකට සෑහෙන්න සහල් නැව්වල ගබඩා කළ බව මහාවංශය පෙන්වා දෙයි. (මහාවංශය, 2015 : පරි. 76 : ගාථා 46 - 47). පුරාතනයේ බහුල වශයෙන් වගාකර ඇති වී වර්ග වන්නේ ඇල් වී , රත්ඇල්, සී නටි, සුවඳැල් සහ මා වී බව පෙනෙයි (සිරිවීර,

1993 : 123). පොදුවේ උක්ත වී වලින් නිපදවා ගන්නා ආහාර පරිභෝජනය කළ විට බහිශ්‍රාවිය ක්‍රියා මනාකොට සිදුවන අතර දියවැඩියාව, ක්ෂය රෝගය, ස්පුලභාවය, වැනි රෝග සෑදීමේ ප්‍රවණතාවය අඩුවෙයි. එසේම සර්ප විෂ නසා ශරීර ශක්තිය වර්ධනය වෙයි (ඉළක්කුඹුර 2010 : පිටු 60). කුරක්කන් හෙවත් කුරහන් ආශ්‍රිත රොට් වැනි ආහාර ද්‍රව්‍යයද පුරාතන සිංහල සෙබළුන්ට ලබා දී ඇත. මහනුවර යුගයේ රාජකීය පාලනාධිකාරිය පහළොස් දිනක යුද්ධ සේවය සඳහා උඩරට සෙබලෙකුට ලබාදුන් ආහාර වන්නේ කුරහන් පිටියෙන් කළ රොට් කිපයක්, හාල් ටිකක් සහ පොල් ගෙඩි කිපයකි. (සිංහලේ, 2004 : 34) කුරක්කන් ආහාර කෑ විට පරිභෝජකයන්ට ලැබෙන ප්‍රතිඵල රැසකි. එනම් දියවැඩියාව පාලනය වීම, තද කුසගින්න අඩුවීම, ශරීරයේ ස්පුලභාවය අඩුවීම, ඉස්ම ගලන කුෂ්ට රෝග අඩු වීම, සෙම අඩුවීම, පීනස, ඇදුම යන රෝග අඩුවීමට අමතරව ශරීර ශක්තිය වර්ධනය වෙයි. එබැවින් දීර්ඝකාලීන යුද්ධයක සිටින අතීත සෙබලුන් කුසගින්න අඩු කරන කුරහන් ආශ්‍රිත ආහාර වර්ග අනුභව කරන්නට ඇත. අනෙක අතීතයේ සිට අද දක්වාම බොහෝ හේන්වල බහුල ලෙස වී හා සමාන ලෙසට කුරක්කන් වගා කිරීම නිසාම විශාල සෙබල පිරිසකගේ ආහාර අවශ්‍යතාවය එමගින් පිරිමැසෙන්නට ඇත. එසේම වී සහ කුරක්කන් රොට්වලට අමතරව හම්බු හෙවත් කැඳ ලෙසට උක්ත සෙබළුන් භාවිතා කර තිබේ (විමලවංශ, 2016 :194). වී, කුරක්කන්වලට අමතරව උඳු ද, අතීතයේ මෙරට හදිසි යුද්ධ අවස්ථාවල භාවිතයට ගෙන ඇත. නිදසුන් ලෙස ක්‍රි.පූ. 2 සියවසේ රජරට එළාරට එරෙහිව සිංහලයන් දීර්ඝ සටනකට සුදානම් වූ අවස්ථාවේ ගෝඨයිම්බර යෝධයා හේතක උඳු වැපිරූ බවට වංශකතා පුවතකින් පැහැදිලි වෙයි.

“..... ගිරි නම් දනව්වෙහි නිසෙල්විටි නම් ගම මහානාග නම් තැනැත්තාගේ පින් දස ඇත් බව ඇතියෙක් විය. මිටි සිරුර ඇති බැවින් ‘ගෝඨක කම් වී දෙටු සබැයෝ ඔහුට කෙළි සිනා කරන්නාහ. ඔවුහු ගොස් උඳු වපුරන පිණිස මහ වනය කොටා උහුගේ භාගය තබා ගොස් උහුට දැන්වුහ. ඒ තෙමේ එකෙණෙහිම ගොස් කුඹුරු නම් ගස් උදුරා බිම සම කොට ගොස් දැන්වීය...”(මහාවංශය, 2015 : පරි. 23 : ගාථා 49 - 54).

උදු ඇති ගුණය වන්නේ මලබද්ධ දුරුවීම සහ දීර්ඝ වෙලාවක් කුසගින්නේ සිටීමට හැකියාව ලැබීම වෙයි. මේ නිසාම අතීතයේ ලාංකේය සෙබලුන් දීර්ඝ වෙලාවක් යුධ කාර්යයේ යෙදීම සඳහා උදු ආශ්‍රිත ආහාර පරිභෝජනය කරන්නට ඇත(අල්විස්, 2005 : 92 - 93). පුරාතන ශ්‍රී ලංකේය යුද්ධ ආහාර සංස්කෘතිය තුළ පොල් හා ඒ ආශ්‍රිත ආහාර පාන වර්ගවලට වැදගත් ස්ථානයක් හිමිවිය. මහාවංශයට අනුව යුද්ධ කාර්ය හා බැඳුණු පොල් ආශ්‍රිත ආහාරයක් පිළිබඳ ප්‍රථම වරට සඳහන් වන්නේ ගෝඨයිම්බර කථා වස්තුවේය. හෙතෙම සහවර පිරිසක් සමග පන්සලක පොල් වත්තකට පැන හොරෙන් කුරුම්බා පානය කළ බවත්, මෙය දැක අහය නම් විහාරවාසී භික්ෂුවක් අතින් (ථේරපුත්තාභය යෝධයාගේ පෙර පැවිදි සමය) ගෝඨයිම්බර යෝධයාට දඬුවම් ලැබුවේය. එසේම විජිතපුර සටනේදී ගෝඨයිම්බර යෝධයා පොල් ගසක් ගෙන සතුරන්ට පහරදුන් බව මහාවංශයේ අන්තර්ගත වෙයි (මහාවංශය, 2005 : 23 පරි: ගාථා 45 - 63). පොල් කිරි, පොල් තෙල්, කුරුම්බා වැනි පොල් ආශ්‍රිත කෑම වර්ග ආහාරයට ගැනීමෙන් වමනය, පිත්ත ජවය, වියළි කැස්ස, අතීසාරය සහ පිපාසය වැනි සංකූලතාවලින් වැළකීමට දීර්ඝකාලීනව සටන්වල නිරතව සිටින පුරාතන ස්වදේශික සෙබලුන් හැකිවිය. විශේෂයෙන්ම පොල් කිරි, පොල් තෙල් කැපුම්, කෙටුම් තුවාලවලට හදිසියේ යෙදීමට භාවිතා කරන සීතෝදක තෙලය මෙන්ම බඩේ තුවාල ඇති අයට සහ අමීල පිත්ත සහිත රෝගීන්ට සපයන 'නාරිකේල ක්ෂාරය' නම් බෙහෙත් සෑදීමට ද යොදා ගැනේ. පොල් ගසින් ලබාගන්නා පොල් රා ද විජයග්‍රාහී යුද්ධ සැමරුම් අවස්ථාවල භාවිතයට ගත් බව වංසකථාවල සඳහන් වෙයි. (මහාවංශය, 2005 : පරි 25 : ගාථා 24 - 29, අල්විස්, 2005 : 147). මීට අමතරව දුටුගැමුණු රජතුමා රුවන්වැලි මහා සෑයේ වැඩ කළ කම්කරුවන්ට වැල, වරකා, කුරුම්බා, කෙසෙල් ගෙඩි, මී පැණි, හකුරු, පුවක්, බුලත්, වැනි ආහාර වර්ග ද බත් මාළුවලට අමතරව ලබා දී තිබේ. මෙම ආහාර වට්ටෝරුව ස්වකීය සෙබළුන්ටත් සපයන්නට ඇති බවට සැලකීම සාධාරණය. (සිංහල ථූපවංශය, 2005 : 189). එහෙත් මෙම ආහාර වර්ග අතරින් පුරාතන යුගයේ සෙබලුන්ට ලබාදුන් බවට තහවුරු වී ඇති පලතුරක් වන්නේ කෙසෙල් පමණි (මහාවංශය, 2005 : පරි : 68 : ගාථා 11-12). ඊට හේතුවන්නට ඇත්තේ කෙසෙල් අනුභවය මගින් මතක ශක්තිය වර්ධනය වීම, රක්තභීතතාවය අවම

කිරීම, අස්ථි සවිමත් කිරීම, මානසික ආතතිය දුරලීම, හෘද රෝග අවධානය පහත වැටීම, අධි රුධිර පීඩන අවධානම අඩු කිරීම, මදුරු දෂ්ඨනය නිසා ඇතිවන කැසීම් අඩු කිරීම, මලබද්ධය දුරලීම සහ ආහාර ක්‍රමාකූලතාව විධිමත් කිරීම වැනි ලෙඩ රෝගවලට පිළියම් ලැබෙන හෙයින් (ඉළක්කුමුර, 2010 : පිටු 49 -50). නෙළුම් දැලි හෙවත් නෙළුම් දඬු ද පුරාතනයේ මෙරට සෙබළුන් පරිභෝජනය කළ බව පෙනෙන්නේ විජයගේ අනුගාමිකයෙකු කුවේණිය අසල පිහිටි පොකුණකින් නෙළුම් දළ කඩාගත් බවට වංශකථාගත පුවතින් පැහැදිලිවන බැවින් (මහාවංශය ,2005 :පරි. 7: ගාථා :10 - 15). මෙම ස්වභාවික ආහාරය බලකාරක ලේ දොස් නසන ඇඟට සිසිල දෙන ගුණදායක ආහාරයකි. මෙය දීර්ඝ කාලයක් එළිමහන් ආවරණයක් නොමැති ස්ථානවල සේවය කරන සෙබළුන්ට ගුණදායක ආහාරයකි (අල්විස්, 2005 :50). මීට අමතරව දින ගණනක් පුරාවට විඩාවක් නොමැතිව නිරාහාරව ප්‍රබෝධමත්ව සටන් කිරීම සඳහා මහනුවර යුගයේදී සෙබළුන්ට කාංසා නැතහොත් ගංජා සුළු ප්‍රමාණයක් ලබා දී තිබේ (රාජමාන්ත ,2011 : 83).

සත්ත්වමය ආහාර

ශාකමය ආහාරවලට අමතරව පැරණි සිංහල සෙබළුන්ගේ පරිභෝජනය කිරීම සඳහා විවිධ සත්ව ආහාර ලබා දී තිබේ. වංශකථාවන්ට අනුව සන්නද්ධ අයෙකුට කිසියම් සත්ව ආහාරයක් ලබා දුන් බවට සඳහන් වන්නේ මහාවංශ කථා පුවතෙනි. එහි මහා විහාරයට කළවිතාශයට එරෙහිව රජුගේ මේඝවණ්ණාභය නම් යහළු ඇමතිවරයෙකු මධ්‍යම කඳුකරයේ කැරැල්ලක් ඇතිකොට ඇත. පසුව පස මිතුරු දෙපාර්ශවයම කඳවුරු ගැසූ අවස්ථාවේ මේඝවණ්ණාභය ඇමති මහසෙන් රජු හමුවට පැමිණ මිහිරි පානයක් සහ මාංශයක් පිළිගත්වා ඇත. එම මාංශය කුමන වර්ගයේ මාංශයක්ද යන්න මූලාශ්‍රවල ඇතුළත් නොවේ (මහාවංශය, 2005 : පරි : 37 , ගාථා 17 -21). තවද වංශකථා, අටුවා මූලාශ්‍රවලට අනුව අතීත රජ දරුවන්, ප්‍රභූ කොටස් ආහාර පිණිස හෝ විනෝදය පිණිස වල් උරන්, මුවන්, ගෝතන්, මොණරුන්, වලසා, හාවා, ගවරුන්, වළි කුකුළන් වැනි සතුන් දඩයම් කොට තිබේ (සුමංගල විලාසිතිය, 1921 : 386). නිදසුන් ලෙස මිහිදු හිමියන් මිහින්තලයට වැඩම කළ අවස්ථාවේ තිස්ස රජතුමා 40000 පිරිසක් මුව

දඩයම සඳහා සහායාගී වූ බවට කරන සඳහන අතීතයෝක්තියක් වුවද, එකල සන්නද්ධ හමුදා සඳහා දඩමස් ලබාදෙන්නට ඇත. රෝහල්ගතව සිටින සෙබළුන්ට සහ රෝගීන්ට බිත්තර, කුකුළු මස්, එළු මස්, හරක් මස්, ගෝන මස්, ලබා දී තිබේ (විමලවංශ, 2010 : 194). මෙම සන්නිවාහාර ලබාදෙන්නට ඇත්තේ රෝගීන්ට ඉක්මන් සුවය ලබාදීම පිණිස බව සැලකීම සාධාරණය. කරදිය සහ මිරිදිය මත්ස්‍යාහාරද පැරණි ලාංකේය සෙබළුන්ට පරිභෝජනය කොට තිබේ. මාළු ඇල්ලීම සඳහා කරක්ගෙඩි, බිලි කටු, කෙමන් සහ මාළු දැල් වැනි ධීවර උපකරණ හා මහා පරිමාණයෙන් ජලාශවල මාළු ඇල්ලීම සඳහා මදනවල නම් විෂ සහිත ගෙඩි විශේෂයක් තලා ජලයට මුසු කොට මසුන් මත් කොට අල්ලා ගැනීමේ උපක්‍රම පිළිබඳව සමන්තපාසාදිකාවේ අන්තර්ගතය (Samantapasadikawa 1927 : 239). ඒ අතර කුඩමස්සා, වලයා වැනි මත්ස්‍ය විශේෂ ලංකාවේ පමණක් නොව බුරුමයේද දක්නට ඇත. පොකුණුවිල විෂ නැසීම අවශ්‍ය ඖෂධ වර්ග බුරුමය බලාගිය සිංහල සේනාවලට ලබාදෙන්නට ඇත්තේ කරදරයක් නොමැතිව උක්ත මත්ස්‍ය විශේෂ මහා පරිමාණ පරිභෝජනය සඳහා අල්ලා ගැනීමට විය යුතුය. ගවයින්ගේ ලබාගත් පස්ගෝරස සෙබළුන්ටත් විවිධ ආහාර අවශ්‍යතා සඳහා භාවිතා කරන්නට ඇත. පොදුවේ සත්ත්ව ආහාර හරහා සෙබළුන්ගේ ප්‍රෝටීන්, කැල්සියම්, සහ බනිජ ලවන වැනි ශරීරය වර්ධනය, අස්ථි ශක්තිමත් කිරීම, වැනි පෝෂ්‍යදායී ගුණාංග ලැබෙන ඇති බවට සඳහන් කිරීම සාධාරණය. එහෙත් මෙම මාංශමය ආහාර අධික වශයෙන් සෙබළුන්ට ලබා නොදෙන්නට ඇති අතර ඒවා ඔවුන්ගේ දෛනික ආහාරවල සුළු වශයෙන් ලබාදෙන්නටය ඇත. එහෙත් ඔවුහු ගවයින්ගේ ලබාගන්නා පස්ගෝරස වැනි නිර්මාංශ ආහාර බහුල වශයෙන් භාවිතා කොට තිබේ (උදේපාල, 2013 : 88 - 89). විශේෂයෙන්ම මාංශමය ආහාර අධිකව සෙබළුන්ට ලබාදුනහොත් ස්ථුලභාවය, හෘදරෝග, අධික රුධිර පීඩනය වැනි රෝගාබාධ වැළඳෙන බැවින් එම ආහාර සීමා කෙරුණි.

හමුදා ආහාර සැපයුම් ක්‍රියාවලිය

පැරණි ලක්දිව යුද්ධ ආහාර සැපයුම් ක්‍රියාවලිය රජුගේ සෘජු අධිකරණ යටතේ විෂයකහාර ප්‍රභූවරුන් හරහා සංවිධානය වූ බව

පෙනේ. එහෙත් බටහිර හමුදා හා මහනුවර යුගයේ උඩරට හමුදාවන්හි සංවිධානය සංසන්දනය කරන ගැස්ටන් පෙරේරා වැනි උගතුන් ස්වකීය මතය මෙසේ දක්වයි.

“.... සෙබළුන්ට හොඳින් ආහාර ලබාදීමේ ඇති වැදගත්කමක් ඒ මත ඔවුන්ගේ සංග්‍රාම දක්ෂතා තීරණය වන බවත් කියවෙන නැපොලියන් කී බව පැවසෙන කියමනක් තිබේ. උඩුරට ආරක්ෂක සංවිධානය මේ සංකල්පය පිළිබඳව දැන සිටියත් - නොසිටියත් අදාළ අංශය ගැන දැක්වූයේ අඩු අවධානයකි. හමුදාවට ආහාරපාන සපයන කොමසාරිස් වරයකු ඇතුළත් දෙපාර්තමේන්තුවක් හෝ ක්වාටර්මාස්ටර් ජනරාල්වරයකු හෝ උඩරට හමුදාවේ නොවීය. තමන්ට අවශ්‍ය ආහාර සෙබළුන් විසින්ම රැගෙන ආ යුතු විය. මේ තත්ත්වය තවත් බරපතල වූයේ ඒ ආහාර ඔවුන් විසින්ම උයා පිහා ගත යුතුවීම නිසාය. නොක්ස් පවසන පරිදි සෙබළුන් ඔවුන්ගේ ආහාරපාන හා ඒවා ඉවීම සඳහා අවශ්‍ය බඳුන් රැගෙන ආ යුතුවිය...” (පෙරේරා, 2015 : 31).

උක්ත ප්‍රකාශයේ කිසියම් සත්‍යාංශවක් පැවතියද පෙර සඳහන් කළ ආකාරයට පුරාතනයේ සිට මහනුවර යුගය දක්වා වූ දීර්ඝ කාලය තුළ කිසියම් සතුටුදායක හමුදා ආහාර සැපයුම් ක්‍රියාවලිය පැවති බවට සාධක හමුවෙයි. ඒ සඳහා පෙන්වාදිය හැකි පැරණිතම සාධකය හමුවන්නේ මහාවංශයේ දුටුගැමුණු රජතුමාගේ කථා ප්‍රවාක්ති අන්තර්ගත 22 සහ 25 පරිච්ඡේදවලය. එහි එළාරට එරෙහිව දීර්ඝකාලීන සටන් ව්‍යාපාරයක් සඳහා අවශ්‍ය ආහාර සංචිත පවත්වා ගැනීම සඳහා කාවන්තිස්ස හා දුටුගැමුණු රජවරුන්ගේ උපදෙස් පරිදි සද්ධාතිස්ස කුමාරයා දිගාමඩුල්ල ප්‍රදේශය අස්වද්දා ආහාරවලින් ස්වයංපෝෂිත කළේය. ස්වකීය සහෝදරයාගේ සැපයුම් වල සහයෙන් දුටුගැමුණු රජතුමා දීර්ඝ යුද්ධ ව්‍යාපාරයක් හරහා එළාර රජුගේ ආක්‍රමණික සේනා පරාජයට පත් කළේය. ක්‍රි.ව. 11 සියවසේ ශ්‍රී ලංකාව එක්සේසත් කොට බුරුමය වැනි විදේශ රාජ්‍යයන් ආක්‍රමණය

කිරීමට සහභාගි වන දහස් ගණනක් සෙබළුන්ගේ දෛනික ආහාර අවශ්‍යතාවය සම්පූර්ණ කිරීම සඳහා පරාක්‍රමබාහු රජුගේ නියමයෙන් දැවුරු ඔය සංවර්ධනය, පස් යොදුන් රට සංවර්ධනය වැනි කෘෂි ව්‍යාපෘති හරහා දීර්ඝකාලීන දේශීය - විදේශීය යුද්ධ ව්‍යාපාරයකට අවශ්‍ය කරන ආහාරවලින් රට ස්වයංපෝෂිත කළේය. නිතර ස්වකීය සේනාවට අවශ්‍ය ධෛර්ය ලබාදීම පිණිස සටන්බිමේ සිටින සෙබළුන්ට අවශ්‍ය වූ ජලයත් ආහාරපාන ලබා දීමට කටයුතු කළ පරාක්‍රමබාහු රජතුමා සෙබළුන් බොහෝ දෙනෙකුට ජලය බීමට හැකිවන පරිදි එක් සිදුරක් කොට දියෙන් පුරවා වසන ලද ‘එකදික හුණු දඬු හෙවත් එක් කොනක් සිදුරු කර තැනූ උණ බම්බු පුරුක්’ දහස් ගණනක්ද, ඇඹුල් බත්, කෙසෙල් සහ හබල පෙති වැනි ආහාර සමඟ යුධ බීමට යවා ඇත (වෙත්තමුණි, 2008 : 143). එසේම බුරුමයට එරෙහි සටනේදී රජතුමාගේ නියමයෙන් අවුරුද්දකට සැහෙන්න සහලින් යුධ නැව් සප්තකොට දීර්ඝකාලීන යුද්ධයකට අවශ්‍ය ආහාර ප්‍රශ්නය විසඳ ඇත. මහනුවර යුගයේ හමුදා ආහාර සැපයුම් ක්‍රියාවලිය දෙයාකාර විය. එනම් පඩිකාර පේරුව හෙවත් වැටුප් ලබන මැලේ, ජා, සිපයි, නිග්‍රෝ, මලබාර යන සෙබළුන්ට මහා ගබඩාවෙන් ආහාර සැපයූ අතර ගම්කාර පේරුව හෙවත් වැඩවසම් ක්‍රමයට අනුව සේවය කළ ස්වකීය ස්වාමියා හෙවත් දිසාව, රටේ මහත්වරුන්, කෝරාල, අතුකෝරාල, ආරච්චි ගම්ප්‍රධානීන්ගේ නායකත්වයෙන් ඒ ඒ පරිපාලන ඒකකවරුන් පැමිණ සෙබළුන්ට තමන්ගේම ඉඩමෙන් හෝ ප්‍රාදේශීය වශයෙන් පැවති ආහාර ගබඩා මගින් ආහාර සැපයූ බව හෙත්ටි මාර්ෂල්ගේ පහත දැක්වෙන ප්‍රකාශයෙන්ම මනාවට පැහැදිලි වෙයි.

“..... සිංහලේ රාජ්‍යයේ හෙවත් උඩරට යුද්ධ ආරක්ෂා සංවිධානය සම්බන්ධයෙහිලා නිලමේවරු තම ඉඩම් සේවා භුක්තිය රජුට සහාය වූ බවත් සඳහන් කිරීම වැදගත්ය. එක් එක් නිලකාරයාට හෙවත් හේවයාට තුවක්කුවක්, පසළොස් දිනකට සැහෙන ආහාර ද්‍රව්‍යය හා බත් පිසීම පිණිස කුඩා මැටි බඳුනක් බැගින් සපයනු ලැබේ. දිවයිනේ නැගෙනහිර දෙසින් පැමිණි නිලකාරයෝ නිතරම දුනු හි ගෙන සිටියහ. පසළොස් දිනක යුද්ධ සේවය සඳහා උඩරට

හේවායෙකුට සැපයුණු මුළු ආහාර තොගය කුරහන් පිටියෙන් කළ රොටි කීපයක්, හාල් ටිකක්, පොල් ගෙඩි කිහිපයක් යන මෙයට සීමාවිය. මේ කාල සීමාවෙන් පසුව තවත් මිනිසුන් කණ්ඩායමක් මුල් කණ්ඩායමේ තැන ගනී.” (සිංහලේ, 2004 : 34).

විශේෂයෙන් දිසාවන් 12 සහ රටවල් 9 යන උඩරට රාජධානියේ පාලන එකකවල ප්‍රධානිත්‍ව තම බල ප්‍රදේශය ඇතිවන ආරක්ෂාව සම්බන්ධයෙන් කුමන හෝ කරුණකදී ස්වකීය ආහාර ගබඩාව යාවත්කාලීන කිරීම සඳහා සුළු නිලධාරීන්ද පිරිවරා බල ප්‍රදේශය පුරා සංචාරය කරමින් ආහාර පාන එක්රැස් කළේය. එසේ එක්රැස් කළද්‍රව්‍යවලින් කොටසක් රජුගේ මහ ගබඩාවට යැවුණු අතර ඉතිරිය හදිසි යුද්ධ තත්ත්වයට මුහුණදීමේදී ඇතිවන ආහාර අවශ්‍යතා පිරිමසා ගැනීමටත් පවුලටත්, කාර්යය මණ්ඩලයෙහි පරිභෝජනය සඳහා තම බල ප්‍රදේශයේ පිහිටි ගබඩාවල තැන්පත් කරණ ලදී. ස්වකීය ප්‍රධානියා විසින් ලබාදුන් ඉඩම් කට්ටිවල හෝග වගාකළ ගොවිත්‍ව රාජකාරි ක්‍රමයට අනුව යුද්ධ සේවයට යාම සිදුවුණු නිසාම උඩරැටියන්ගේ නිවෙස්වල දොර අසල බත් මුලක් බැඳි තිබූ බව ජනප්‍රවාදවල එයි (හේරත්, 2016 :62). පැරණි ලංකාවේ හමුදා ආරක්ෂක සැපයුම් ක්‍රමය හා බැඳුණු නිලබල ක්‍රමය පිළිබඳව පරීක්ෂා කිරීමේදී රාජකීය මුළුතැන්ගෙය හා බැඳුණු ප්‍රභූ ආරක්ෂක සේවයක් පැවති බවට පෙනෙන අතර පාක ශාලාව, මධ්‍යෙපල්ලියේ නමින් හඳුන්වන රාජකීය මුද්‍රතැනගෙය ප්‍රධානියා වූයේ මුද්‍රතැන්රාල හෙවත් මඩප්පු නිලමේය. මොහු යටතේ මඩප්පුරාලලා සහ මුද්‍රතැන්රාලලා යන සුළු නිලධාරීන් විසින් මුකවාඩම් බැඳි ආහාර පිළියෙල කොට රාජකීය භෝජනාගාරයේ රජුට අනුභව පිණිස තැන්පත් කරන ලදී. විශේෂයෙන්ම රාජකීය ආහාරය රජු ගැනීමට පෙර අගු බලන්නා නම් නිලධාරියක විසින් එම කැමවල විස තිබේදැයි පරීක්ෂා කරන ලදී. මෙවැනි සුළු නිලධාරීන් අධිකාරම්, දිසාපති, රටේ මහත්වරුන් වැනි නිලධාරීන් සතුටු සිටින්නට ඇත. මීට අමතරව යුද්ධ හමුදාවෙන්, පාලනාධිකාරියෙන්, පූජක පක්ෂයෙන්, සාමාන්‍ය ජනතාවගෙන්, පරිභෝජනය සඳහා අවශ්‍ය වන ආහාර නිපදවීමට අවශ්‍ය හව හෝග දියුණු කිරීම සඳහා වේලැයුක් පස්දෙනා, වේලායුත් සම්දරුවන් හා කෘෂි නිලධාරීන් සේවය කළහ. ඔවුන්ගෙන් සමන්විත ශස්‍ය වර්ධන

මණ්ඩලය නම් ආයතනයක් මගින් ගොවීන්ට ඉහළ අස්වැන්නක් ලබාදීම සඳහා උපදෙස් ලබාදෙන ලදී. අතීතයේ රාජකීය හෝජනාගාර ප්‍රධානියා හඳුන්වා දී ඇත්තේ බත ගු යන නමිනි. වර්තමානය මෙන්ම අතීතයේදී යුද්ධ හමුදා කඳවුරු ආශ්‍රිතව මුළුතැන්ගෙවල් හා සෙබළුන් ආහාර ගැනීමට අවශ්‍ය වන හෝජනාගාර පවත්වන්නට ඇත. ඇතැම්විට දිවයින පුරා විහිදි ගිය මාර්ග ජාලය සහ ජල මාර්ග හරහා කරත්ත තවලම් ඔරු සහ නැව් මගින් යුද්ධ හමුදා කඳවුරුවලට ආහාර සැපයුන බව සිතිය හැකිය (ආරියපාල 2014 :333).

නිගමනය

පුරාතනයේ සිට වර්තමානය දක්වා වු දීර්ඝ කාලයක් තුළ ලෝකයේ බිහිවු රාජ්‍යයන්වල සිටි සන්නද්ධ හමුදා මනාව පවත්වාගෙන යාම සඳහා කාර්යක්ෂම ආහාර සහ ආහාර සැපයුම් ක්‍රියාවලියක් පවත්වාගෙන ගියහ. පුරාතන ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ ආරක්ෂක අංශවලට පෝෂ්‍යදායී ශාකමය සහ සත්වාහාර දුන් අතර යුද්ධ ආහාර සැපයුම් ක්‍රියාවලිය ක්‍රමානුකූලව පවත්වාගෙන යාම සඳහා ක්‍රමවත් නිලබල ක්‍රමයක් පැවති බවට මෙම ලිපියෙන් නිගමනය කළ හැකිය.

ආශ්‍රිත ග්‍රන්ථ නාමාවලිය

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURAL AND OPERATIONAL LESSONS FOR SRI LANKA FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM'S INTELLIGENCE FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT

Intelligence organizations in democracies are required to maintain a balance between the imperative of national security and the principles of accountability, lawfulness, and civil liberties. In the case of Sri Lanka, however, ministerial discretion, ad hoc executive orders, and confidential circulars have been relied upon as the principal sources of guidance for its intelligence service, which is predominantly operated outside the bounds of statute law. Within this legal void, politicization, ethnic profiling, and operational fragmentation have been enabled, producing distinct consequences for compliance with human rights and efforts toward post-war reconciliation. The Easter Sunday attacks of 2019 are best understood not merely as an intelligence failure but as an indication of a broader institutional crisis, one rooted in administrative overreach and the absence of legal clarity. This paper is primarily concerned with exploring how Sri Lanka might establish an intelligence governance

structure that is both functionally effective and democratically accountable. The study aims to identify systemic deficiencies within Sri Lanka's intelligence framework and to propose actionable reforms inspired by the United Kingdom's (UK) legally grounded model. By employing a doctrinal legal methodology and conducting a comparative institutional analysis, the research evaluates statutory instruments such as the UK's Intelligence Services Act 1994, Investigatory Powers Act 2016, and Human Rights Act 1998. It also draws upon international legal standards, including the Siracusa Principles and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The findings reveal that the absence of a National Intelligence Act, judicial pre-authorization mechanisms, and independent oversight has fostered a culture of legal impunity and operational inefficiency in Sri Lanka. In contrast, the UK exemplifies how robust intelligence performance can be sustained through multi-tiered oversight and clearly articulated legal obligations. Accordingly, the study recommends five

sequential reforms: the enactment of a National Intelligence Act, the establishment of parliamentary and judicial oversight bodies, the incorporation of human rights protections, the professionalization of intelligence recruitment, and the conferral of legal authority upon the Chief of National Intelligence (CNI). Reforming Sri Lanka's intelligence apparatus, therefore, is not only a matter of operational efficacy but a constitutional necessity.

KEYWORDS: *Accountability, Governance, Intelligence, Reform, Rule Of Law.*

INTRODUCTION

Intelligence agencies play a unique dual role in democratic states: while they are crucial for maintaining national security, their secret missions and extraordinary powers can threaten civil liberties and constitutional governance if left unchecked. This inherent tension between accountability and secrecy in democratic intelligence work is captured in Michael Herman's (1996) observation that "intelligence power is at once indispensable and dangerous." Scholarly interest in this conflict has grown, particularly in post-authoritarian and transitional nations where security institutions often advance faster than legal reform (Gill, 2016; Lowenthal, 2017).

In Sri Lanka, this conflict is not just theoretical, it is serious and systemic. The nation lacks a thorough legal framework to regulate the conduct, oversight, and accountability of its intelligence agencies (Jayaratne, 2024), despite the crucial role intelligence plays in counterinsurgency and anti-terrorism operations, particularly during and after the separatist war fought between the Liberation

Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)¹ and the government of Sri Lanka. Instead of operating under statutory mandates, the State Intelligence Service (SIS), the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI), and other intelligence organizations are subject to ministerial orders and ad hoc executive powers. There is no specific judicial process for examining invasive intelligence practices, no parliamentary oversight body, and no National Intelligence Act. Unchecked surveillance, politicized intelligence collection, and ethnic profiling enabled by this legal vacuum and primarily targeting the Tamil and Muslim communities have raised serious constitutional concerns under Articles 12² to 14³ of the Sri Lankan Constitution and international obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

According to the UK Home Office (2022), "*Tamil asylum seekers in the UK were called by Sri Lankan intelligence agents in Sri Lanka and asked to pass on passwords for private Zoom meetings,*" highlighting Sri Lanka's transnational surveillance practices and the urgent need for reform.

1 The LTTE was established in 1976 by Velupillai Prabhakaran as the successor to an organization he had formed earlier in the 1970s. The LTTE grew to become one of the world's most sophisticated and tightly organized insurgent groups. During the 1970s the organization carried out a number of guerrilla attacks. In 1983, after the killing of 13 soldiers by Tamil guerrillas and retaliatory attacks by the Sri Lankan military, large-scale violence erupted between the government and the LTTE. (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Tamil-Tigers>)

2 Article 12 of the Sri Lankan Constitution guarantees the right to equality before the law and the equal protection of the law for all citizens

3 Article 13 of the Sri Lankan Constitution guarantees the right to freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention, and punishment, and prohibits retrospective penal legislation and Article 14 guarantees fundamental freedoms, including freedom of speech and expression, assembly, association, occupation, and movement

The catastrophic Easter Sunday attacks of 2019⁴ illustrate the heavy operational costs of this failure in governance. Sri Lanka's disorganized and unclear intelligence architecture failed to coordinate an effective response, despite reliable preemptive warnings from both foreign and internal intelligence sources. According to the Report of the Select Committee of Parliament to look into and report to Parliament on the terrorist attacks that took place in different places in Sri Lanka on 21st April 2019⁵, this failure resulted more from institutional dysfunction due to the absence of legal requirements, interagency coordination, and oversight than from technical shortcomings alone (Shaffer & Ashraf, 2025).

The United Kingdom (UK), on the other hand, has a strong statutory framework for intelligence governance that meticulously balances the rule of law and national security interests. The Human Rights Act of 1998 incorporates the rights of the European Convention into domestic intelligence operations; the Investigatory Powers Act of 2016 establishes a "double-lock" authorization system that requires both ministerial and judicial approval for surveillance; and the Intelligence Services Act of 1994 sets legal mandates for MI5, MI6, and GCHQ (Leigh & Born, 2007).

4 On Easter Sunday 2019, Sri Lankan citizens who pledged allegiance to ISIS inspired local extremist group called National Thaw heed Jamaat (NTJ) detonated backpack suicide bombs in four hotels and three churches in the greater Colombo area and Batticaloa, killing more than 260 local individuals, including five Americans. (Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Sri Lanka (<https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/srilanka/#:~:text=2019%20Terrorist%20Incidents%3A,260%20people%2C%20including%20five%20Americans.>))

5 Former President Gotabaya Rajapaksha appointed a Presidential Commission of Inquiry (PCoI) into the Easter Sunday attacks and the final report was submitted to the former President on 1st February 2024. One of the recommendations of the 'Final Report of The Commission of Inquiry to Investigate and Inquire into and Report or Take Necessary Action on the Bomb Attacks on the 21st April 2019' was based on the national intelligence of Sri Lanka. Refer page 445 – 447.

These legal tools are supported by two independent oversight bodies the Investigatory Powers Tribunal and the Parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee making the UK one of the most accessible and rights-aware intelligence governance systems in the world.

This study explores how Sri Lanka could adopt key elements of the UK model to reform its intelligence system, drawing on doctrinal legal methods and comparative institutional analysis. The article makes the case for context sensitive legal reform, integrating statutory mandates, judicial safeguards, and independent scrutiny within a distinctively Sri Lankan framework, rather than advocating for a complete transplant.

Problem Statement

Intelligence services are indispensable to the national security architecture of any sovereign state. However, without a strong legal foundation, the use of intelligence capabilities can quickly deviate from democratic ideals and turn into instruments of political consolidation rather than national defense. In Sri Lanka, where intelligence services function under unofficial, executive led processes with little to no statutory supervision, this dilemma is particularly evident. The nation's intelligence apparatus, which includes the SIS, military intelligence units, and special police divisions, operates under the authority of ministerial directives, presidential discretion, and hidden circulars, rather than being governed by any comprehensive legislation. Critical security failures, such as the 2019 Easter Sunday explosions, have resulted from the regular politicization, selective targeting, and operational fragmentation of intelligence operations. In contrast, countries such as the UK have institutionalized intelligence within a well-organized legal framework that balances democratic responsibility with security concerns. Every step of the intelligence cycle

incorporates oversight, judicial authority, and rights protections, due to laws including the Human Rights Act of 1998, the Investigatory Powers Act of 2016, and the Intelligence Services Act of 1994. These procedures establish a transparent environment in which intelligence is both constitutionally permissible and effective. This raises a crucial legal and governance issue: Is it possible for Sri Lanka to restructure its intelligence community using a legislative framework that guarantees both operational effectiveness and democratic accountability? If so, what particular institutional, legal, and rights-based frameworks based on comparative intelligence governance models such as the UK are needed to establish an efficient, accessible, and constitutionally compatible intelligence system in Sri Lanka?

Research Questions

- What structural and legal flaws exist in Sri Lanka's intelligence governance system?
- How are supervision, legality, and transparency in intelligence operations established by UK law?
- What particular institutional and legal changes may Sri Lanka implement based on the UK model?

Objectives

- To critically assess the existing legal and institutional gaps in Sri Lanka's intelligence system.
- To analyze the UK's legislative framework as a comparative model of accountable intelligence governance.
- To develop legally grounded, contextually appropriate reform proposals for Sri Lanka.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This paper evaluates Sri Lanka's intelligence governance structure and identifies possible improvements modeled after the UK model using a qualitative doctrinal legal methodology and comparative legal analysis. The study examines legislative frameworks, constitutional norms, case law, and oversight mechanisms in two states with an emphasis on legal gaps, accountability systems, and reform options. By offering a standard by which Sri Lanka's shortcomings may be evaluated, the comparative component enables lessons to be learned from the UK's established legal-intelligence system.

In order to assess Sri Lanka's reorganization of its intelligence apparatus in conformity with democratic norms, the rule of law, and comparative legal best practices, the study employs a normative and analytical research design. In contrast to field-based intelligence operations, it is a forward looking, prescriptive, and reform-oriented study that focuses on law, governance institutions, and constitutional principles.

The research process was comprised with three interconnected phases:

The study looks at the institutional and legal architecture of Sri Lanka's intelligence system, including executive directives, constitutional rules, statutory laws, and practices as the first step. The intelligence governance system in the UK, which is founded on judicial review, parliamentary oversight, and explicit missions, is also contrasted. Establishing a baseline of facts and law in both countries is the goal.

At the second stage, the study compares Sri Lanka's intelligence governance framework to the UK model using comparative legal reasoning. It assesses important governance factors such as judicial authorization procedures, legislative monitoring, human rights integration, honesty, and statutory responsibilities. When comparing Sri Lanka's current governance to the UK model, the research identifies both its advantages and disadvantages.

The third stage, based on the shortcomings found throughout the descriptive and analytical phases, the report makes reform recommendations for Sri Lanka that take into account the country's institutional culture, constitutional background, and international human rights commitments. From "what is" to "what should be," the prescriptive stage offers legally supported suggestions for an intelligence system that is more responsible, efficient, and respectful of human rights.

Comparative Method

The study evaluates how various legal systems handle governance issues using a functional comparative legal method, emphasizing the harmony between rights protection, accountability, and intelligence efficacy. Because of its institutional similarity, maturity, and transitional relevance, the UK was selected as the comparative. The comparison is organized according to five functional criteria, legislative supervision, judicial review and authorization procedures, human rights compliance, transparency and accountability, and the legal foundation of intelligence agencies. Sri Lanka can learn a lot from the UK's transitional relevance as it moves away from discretionary practices.

The research uses five functional criteria to compare the intelligence governance of the UK and Sri Lanka. The legal foundation of intelligence services, the extent of

parliamentary supervision, the degree of legal review and authorization, the degree of human rights compliance, and transparency and accountability are some of these requirements. The comparison entails determining how each criterion is handled in the Sri Lankan context, looking at how the same criterion is handled by UK institutions and law, and assessing the shortcomings, strengths, and gaps found by this cross jurisdictional assessment.

Sources of Data

To ensure legal accuracy and a thorough understanding of Sri Lankan intelligence operations, this study draws on both primary and secondary sources. The first statutory references to intelligence functions are found in the Sri Lanka Army Act No. 14 of 1949 and the Police Ordinance of 1865, even though they are out of date and have a narrow focus. Unregulated intelligence practices frequently threaten fundamental rights guaranteed by the Sri Lankan Constitution, including as freedom of expression, equality before the law, and freedom from arbitrary detention. The 2019 Easter Sunday Attacks Parliamentary Select Committee Report sheds light on governance flaws and institutional shortcomings. The Human Rights Act of 1998, which incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into domestic law, the Investigatory Powers Act of 2016, which established a comprehensive surveillance oversight regime, and the Intelligence Services Act of 1994, which laid the foundation for MI5, MI6, and GCHQ, are all part of the UK's legal framework. These laws are supported by court rulings such as *Liberty v. United Kingdom* (2008) and *Privacy International v. Investigatory Powers Tribunal* (2019). Transparency and assessment information on the use of intelligence powers are provided by oversight reports, such as the yearly reports from the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office and investigations by the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament.

In order to determine whether Sri Lanka's intelligence practices comply with internationally acknowledged human rights obligations, the study compares them to international legal norms, such as the Siracusa Principles (1985) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Primary material about Sri Lanka's intelligence apparatus is supplemented and interpreted by secondary sources, including policy papers, academic studies, and peer-reviewed literature. These resources offer the framework required to assess the intelligence system and develop reform suggestions based on the UK model.

Operationalization of Concepts

By looking at the statutory foundations, powers, and restrictions of intelligence agencies, the study evaluates their legal standing. It assesses the performance of official mechanisms such as judicial commissioners and parliamentary committees. It assesses adherence to human rights in relation to international commitments including the ICCPR and European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) as well as constitutional protections. Assessing transparency involves figuring out whether legal remedies or public reporting are required by statute. The analysis relates lessons learned from the UK experience to the shortcomings of Sri Lanka's system. The absence of actual research with intelligence professionals, the hidden nature of operations, and the requirement for legislative reports and international assessments are some of the constraints of the study on Sri Lanka's intelligence operations. Notwithstanding this, the methodology is appropriate for evaluating Sri Lanka's legal system and offering a democratically grounded comparative reform path.

Analytical Framework

This paper examines the intelligence governance systems in Sri Lanka and the UK using a structured analytical methodology drawn from intelligence governance research and international human rights norms. The framework creates useful standards for the methodical assessment of institutional advantages, disadvantages, and reform opportunities.

Six criteria are used in the study to compare the intelligence services of Sri Lanka and the UK, interagency collaboration, human rights compliance, judicial review and authorization, legislative oversight, legal foundation, and transparency and accountability. The framework points out shortcomings in Sri Lanka's intelligence system and emphasizes the UK's operational feasibility and legal foundation. Along with the establishment of institutional procedures to guarantee interagency cooperation, it also emphasizes the necessity of accountability and openness in intelligence governance. This strategy emphasizes how intelligence governance needs options that are both operationally and legally feasible.

Table 1: Analytical Framework for Comparative Evaluation

Criteria	Key Questions	Indicators
Legal Basis	Are agencies established and governed by laws?	Existence of statutory instructions, extent of authority, and legal restrictions.
Parliamentary Oversight	Does Parliament adequately examine intelligence?	Standing committees, reporting duties and access to classified information.
Judicial Review	Do judges have the authority to authorize and evaluate invasive powers?	Judicial commissioners, tribunals, and prior authorization procedures are all in place.
Human Rights Compliance	Do rights safeguards apply to intelligence operations?	Conformity to case law, constitutional protections, and the ICCPR/ECHR.
Transparency	Do agencies make their operations and oversight results available to the public?	Publication of statistics, annual reports, and citizen complaint channels.
Coordination	Does interagency cooperation have a centralized mechanism?	The efficiency of information sharing and the legal duty of the coordinating authority.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Several significant results are drawn from the comparison of Sri Lanka and the UK based on the six analytical criteria.

Legal Basis

Sri Lanka - Without a legal basis, intelligence organizations such as the DMI and the SIS operate. Administrative circulars, presidential orders, and ministerial directives are the sources of their authority. Section 56 of the Police Ordinance of 1865 is the only statutory provision that requires the police to gather intelligence “affecting public peace,” yet it is vague and offers no protections (Shaffer, 2023).

UK - The law firmly establishes intelligence agencies. While the Investigatory authorities Act of 2016 establishes surveillance authorities and incorporates authorization protections, the Intelligence Services Act of 1994 establishes mandates for MI5, MI6, and GCHQ (Leigh & Lustgarten, 1994; Goodwin, 2018).

Parliamentary Oversight

Sri Lanka - Ad hoc and ineffective oversight persists. Despite examining intelligence failures, the Parliamentary Select Committee on the 2019 Easter Sunday Attacks lacks formal jurisdiction and continuity (Parliament of Sri Lanka, 2019). There is not a permanent legislative oversight body.

UK - The Justice and Security Act of 2013 established the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC), which institutionalizes oversight. Every year, the ISC

reports to the Prime Minister and Parliament on intelligence strategy, funding, and specific operations (Wills, 2010).

Judicial Review and Authorization

Sri Lanka - Intelligence operations are not authorized by the courts. *Singharasa v. Attorney General* (2006) demonstrates the courts’ hesitancy to apply constitutional safeguards to intelligence-related cases.

UK - Under the Investigatory Powers Act of 2016, warrants must be approved by the minister and reviewed by the judicial commissioner under a “double lock” authorization mechanism. According to *Privacy International v. Investigatory Powers Tribunal* (2019), the Investigatory Powers Tribunal offers remedies for illegal surveillance, and its rulings are still susceptible to judicial review.

Human Rights Compliance

Sri Lanka - Articles 12–14 of the Constitution provides fundamental rights, but they are unenforceable against intelligence services. There have been reports of arbitrary detentions, ethnic profiling, and journalist surveillance that violate Sri Lanka’s ICCPR responsibilities (Uyangoda, 2011; UNHRC, 2015).

UK - The ECHR is incorporated into the Human Rights Act 1998, which limits intelligence capabilities. The European Court of Human Rights ruled in *Liberty v. United Kingdom* (2008) that ambiguous surveillance clauses infringed upon the right to privacy guaranteed by Article 8.

Transparency and Accountability

Sri Lanka - Intelligence agencies are not required by law to publish reports or reveal oversight findings. The 2019 PSC Report emphasized how secrecy hampered collaboration and that budgets and activities are still kept under wraps (Parliament of Sri Lanka, 2019).

UK - Reporting procedures incorporate transparency. While the ISC releases redacted public reports on warrant approvals and refusals, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) releases annual reports on the subject (Office of the IPCO, 2024).

Interagency Coordination

Sri Lanka - The intelligence breakdown during the Easter Sunday attack was caused in part by a lack of cooperation between SIS, DMI, and police; the Chief of National Intelligence (CNI), established by executive order in 2006, lacks independent resources and legislative authority (CPA, 2019).

UK - To provide uniform threat assessments and minimize duplication, the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), housed in the Cabinet Office, makes sure that MI5, MI6, and GCHQ coordinate (Leigh, 2007).

Discussion/ Analysis

The findings are explained below in relation to the research questions of the study.

Question 1 - What structural and legal flaws exist in Sri Lanka's intelligence governance system?

A lack of a formal foundation, inadequate parliamentary and judicial supervision, "zones

of impunity," disregard for human rights protections, and shortcomings in interagency coordination are among the fundamental flaws in Sri Lanka's intelligence governance that the report identifies. These flaws jeopardize the operational effectiveness and democratic legitimacy of the intelligence services, leaving them open to executive capture and jeopardizing national security.

Question 2 - How are supervision, legality, and transparency in intelligence operations established by UK law?

Legislation serves as the foundation for the UK's intelligence capabilities, which are subject to checks and balances from the judiciary, Parliament, and administration. These abilities are limited by human rights safeguards and rulings such as *Liberty v. United Kingdom*. In spite of privacy, public trust is increased by transparency through reporting mechanisms like IPCO and ISC.

Question 3 - What particular institutional and legal changes may Sri Lanka implement based on the UK model?

Enacting a National Intelligence Act, establishing a permanent parliamentary oversight committee, establishing judicial authorization mechanisms for surveillance warrants, codifying human rights compliance within intelligence legislation, and enhancing interagency coordination are the five main reforms that the study suggests for the National Intelligence Act. The objectives of these reforms are to increase operational efficacy, decrease abuse, and strengthen democratic legitimacy.

Reforming Sri Lanka's Intelligence Apparatus

The comparable results demonstrate how urgently Sri Lanka's intelligence governance

needs institutional and legal reforms. The following recommendations are arranged based on the six analytical criteria, taking inspiration from the UK and adhering to international human rights norms.

To give its intelligence agencies a legal basis, Sri Lanka requires to pass a comprehensive National Intelligence Act. In order to lower the dangers of politicization and irrational executive control, this statute should specify agency mandates, the extent of powers, and legal constraints (Shaffer, 2023). The act should forbid illegal activity and set separate missions for domestic and international intelligence, following the UK model set by the Intelligence Services Act 1994.

In accordance with the UK's Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC), a permanent Parliamentary Committee on Intelligence and Security needs to be created by law. This committee should examine agency budgets, provide yearly reports to Parliament, and have access to confidential material (Wills, 2010). Limiting executive monopolization of intelligence and ensuring bipartisan representation and reporting requirements will improve democratic accountability.

For intrusive intelligence operations, Sri Lanka needs to implement judicial authorization procedures. Surveillance warrants might be reviewed and approved by a panel of specially chosen judges, following the UK's "double lock" model established by the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (Goodwin, 2018). Additionally, to ensure constitutional and ICCPR compliance, a specialized tribunal based on the UK's Investigatory Powers Tribunal needs to be established to offer citizens redress against illegal surveillance.

In order to ensure that surveillance and detention procedures adhere to Sri Lanka's constitutional guarantees (Articles

12–14) and international commitments under the ICCPR, intelligence legislation should include clear human rights protections. Intelligence capabilities should be used in a way that is necessary, reasonable, and subject to independent review, according to the UK's Human Rights Act of 1998 and case law notably *Liberty v. United Kingdom* (2008) (UNHRC, 2015). Integrating these protections will increase credibility and public confidence.

Sri Lanka needs to enact legislation requiring intelligence agencies to report. Annual reports detailing the quantity of warrants granted, oversight operations, and non-compliance cases should be published by an independent oversight commissioner, similar to the UK's Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) (Office of the IPCO, 2024). Reports that are made publicly available would strike a balance between accountability and secrecy and aid in averting operational lapses such to those revealed in the 2019 Easter Sunday assaults (Parliament of Sri Lanka, 2019).

The CNI role should be reinforced by independent resources, statutory authority, and specific cross-agency coordination powers. The fragmentation that led to the Easter Sunday disasters would be addressed by this reform (CPA, 2019). Centralized assessments increase efficiency, eliminate redundancy, and guarantee sensible national security strategies, as shown by the UK's JIC (Leigh, 2007).

Implementation Strategy and Challenges

Implementing structural reform of Sri Lanka's intelligence agencies will require a politically sensitive and institutionally contested transformation, rather than a simple linear or technical exercise. One of the greatest challenges lies in executive resistance to relinquishing control over intelligence services. In hybrid democracies such as Sri

Lanka, intelligence agencies often function as instruments of executive convenience rather than as impartial guardians of national security, as Phythian (2007) explains. The persistent absence of judicial and legislative oversight has entrenched a culture of ambiguity and personal command, making reform politically risky for those in power.

Significant institutional resistance also arises from Sri Lanka's military-dominated intelligence culture. Roles such as the CNI, along with agencies notably the DMI, were developed during counterinsurgency operations and are structurally rooted in secrecy and rigid hierarchies. Intelligence cultures shaped by protracted internal conflicts often view oversight reforms as threats to operational effectiveness, as Michael Herman (2001) argues. In Sri Lanka, this resistance is intensified by deep-seated mistrust of civilian control, particularly among defense officials accustomed to operating without accountability (Pavey and Smith, 2009).

To overcome these obstacles, a phased, multi-actor implementation strategy is essential. The first phase must focus on internal cultural reorientation. This includes cross-institutional legal audits to evaluate whether informal intelligence practices violate international law and constitutional principles, along with awareness initiatives to promote democratic governance within intelligence institutions. Born and Wills (2010) propose that intelligence reform must begin with a mapping phase "that establishes institutional, legal, and cultural baselines" before any legislative steps are taken.

The second phase should involve enacting a comprehensive National Intelligence Act with a staged implementation timeline. A gradual approach allows intelligence agencies to adjust to new legal standards without disrupting ongoing operations. Johnson (2010) stresses that intelligence reform requires "incremental

democratization," especially in politically fragile environments where rushed reforms risk provoking institutional resistance or resulting in symbolic change without meaningful transformation.

The third phase should focus on building both normative and technical partnerships. Transitional states have benefited significantly from the guidance and resources provided by entities such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), and even national services such as GCHQ (UK) and CSIS (Canada), which assist in designing and auditing oversight frameworks (Born & Leigh, 2005). These partnerships offer access to digital governance tools, training resources, and comparative models that support reform.

Crucially, external support must be accompanied by the cultivation of internal legitimacy. If reform is perceived as elite-driven or externally imposed, it is unlikely to succeed. It is therefore vital to engage academic experts, former intelligence professionals, civil society organizations, and members of the legal community. As Loch Johnson (2013) emphasizes, effective oversight "emerges from embedded democratic norms, public pressure, and political will." Thus, reform must be transparent, inclusive, and institutionalized through participatory regulatory processes.

Without adopting a methodical and context-sensitive approach, Sri Lanka risks replicating the same conditions legal uncertainty, politicization, and institutional non-transparency that have historically undermined its democratic development and national security.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the study was to bring Sri Lanka's intelligence governance into compliance with the rule of law and democratic ideals. By contrasting the nation's intelligence system with that of the UK, it was discovered that the agencies function in a legal void devoid of statutory underpinnings, ongoing supervision procedures, court permission procedures, and transparency requirements. Ineffective coordination compromises operational efficacy, endangering public confidence, national security, and Sri Lanka's constitutional and international human rights obligations.

A right based, legally based framework that strikes a balance between operational requirements and democratic accountability is the UK's model of intelligence governance. A multi-tiered system of oversight, comprising the judiciary, Parliament, and independent commissioners, is part of the UK model. The shortcomings of Sri Lanka's intelligence administration are highlighted and contrasted with the rights-based system in the UK. Adopting a National Intelligence Act, creating permanent oversight, integrating human rights protections, instituting transparency requirements, and enhancing interagency collaboration are all part of the reform agenda recommended by the study.

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