

SKP/01

**EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF VNF OFFICERS IN SLN**

**Introduction**

1. An officer is a member of an armed force or uniformed service who holds a position of authority. Commissioned officers derive authority directly from a sovereign power and hold a commission charging them with the duties and responsibilities of a specific office or position. Skilled professionals and intellectuals are the most important entity within the organization. Sri Lanka Navy recruits and absorbs skilled professionals to the Officer cadre who are having a Degree from a recognized University or Higher National Diploma to meet organizational goals. Further enlisting and training of officer cadets are not feasible and practical due to high cost and act of delay.

2. Hence, this study requirement is to study the volunteer officers in Sri Lanka should be utilized in order to existing system for the future requirement of Sri Lanka Navy and if the same opportunities provided to VNF Officers it may be benefited both their personal life as well as to the Navy.

**Aim**

3. The aim of this paper is to study the effective utilization of VNF officers in Sri Lanka Navy.

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### **History**

4. In January, 1938 the Ceylon Naval Volunteer Force was created with Commander W. G. Beauchamp as Commanding Officer. On 31 August 1939, the CNVF was mobilized for war duties, three years later, the CNVF was offered to, and accepted by the Royal Navy as a Volunteer Reserve, the Ceylon Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, or CRNVR. It continued under Royal Navy operational and administrative command until March 1946, with the end of the war, it reverted to Ceylon Government Control. After Independence from British rule in 1948, the Government of Ceylon selected a core cadre of 100 servicemen and officers from the CRNVR to form a more regular arm of its military, and established the CRNVR as the Royal Ceylon Volunteer Naval Force (RCVNF) on 9 January 1951, alongside the Royal Ceylon Navy to which the 100 servicemen were transferred. Officers and seamen of the CRNVR not on active service on this date formed the core of the RCVNF, with a strength of 12 officers and 121 men. To keep the port H.M.Cy.S. TISSA safe, Port Commission Officers were commissioned as a separate division of the VNF, with Captain M. Chandrasoma as Commanding Officer; this Division was disbanded in 1956. In 1972 when Sri Lanka became a republic the, Royal Ceylon Volunteer Naval Force became the Sri Lanka Volunteer Naval Force (SLVNF).<sup>1</sup>

5. After the colonial rule in Sri Lanka, government of Sri Lanka gave lot of responsibilities to the Navy. The securing the national integrity, securing on territorial waters are the some of major tasks given by the government to the Navy. To suit to the tasks Navy gradually developed till late 70's. With the outbreak of the war against LTTE ceremonial Navy concept was changed in to the operational navy in mid 80's. The expansions were done in large scales to meet the operational requirements and officers and sailors were enlisted in order to enhance fighting capability.

6. In 90's the shore duties were assigned to the Navy due to poor respond to enlist to the Sri Lanka Army. To overcome the problem the patrolmen branch was enlisted and carder of volunteer force was expanded rapidly in 1989 and after that. Due to the sudden requirement personnel enlistment was not plan for the long time and officers were enlisted as a solution for

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<sup>1</sup> [www.navy.lk](http://www.navy.lk)

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the situation. Since then officers and sailors of the SLVNF have taken part in many operation carried out by the Sri Lanka Navy during Sri Lanka's War Against LTTE.

### **Enlistment**

7. During the war era most of the people have joined the armed Forces due to the high appreciation in civil society. Especially for Officers trend made by the media and the government. The personnel who serving as officers should have required educational and other required qualifications in order to achieve the organizational goals. There are several ways that enlisting officers to fulfil the officer carder in SLN. Those are Cadet entry, KDU entry, Direct entry and Service entry .However due to the war which was existed for last three decades in Sri Lanka, The Sri Lanka Navy has enlisted volunteer officers who have professional qualification for Administrative works, engineering and medical etc with high educational qualifications. Apart from that graduates having competitive job market when they come out from university and joined Navy was benefited for them rather than wasting their time going behind the political party or organising protests.

### **Training**

8. It is understood that the skilled professionals who have done short courses will not be able to meet the requirements of the SLN. However After the enlistment of these professionals SLN is providing the general awareness program about six months period which is not sufficient enough to learn about this organization and its sub culture and mainly the administrative system which is unique and very much different from the other organizations. During the war most of the Officers have been attached various duties and they were not given proper on the job training period for familiar with the duties and environment. Therefore, they started to work without knowing administration procedures and other relevant regulations.

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**Role and duties of VNF officers**

9. The mission statement of SLVNF is “to supplement and to provide the Regular Naval Force with the required assistance in the execution of the role and tasks of the Navy, drawing expertise from diverse fields in the civilian strata”. Based on this statement we can say SLVNF acts as supporting role for the SLRNF. Sri Lanka Navy is a non profitable organization, it means we give only service for the nation and we not earn money for the country. The role of the Sri Lanka Navy is to conduct operations at sea for the defense of the nationit’s interests and sustainable combat operations at sea in accordance with the national policies. Clearly define task of the Navy so we must use our human resources to achieve our role for the nation.

**Present scenario and Impact to the organization**

10. There are 500 officers consist the Volunteer Naval Force and among them Navy has enlisted 147 officers who have professional qualifications for particular branch and 353 officer enlisted for administrative works. Detail statistics is shown in below.

Officers	Amount
Medical officer	15
Dental officer	07
Counseling officer	18
English Instructor	27
Engineering officer	02
Civil Engineer officer	01
Legal officer	01
IT officer	01
Band Master	02
Executive officer	353

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11. VNF officers who enlisted executive branch most of officers have different kind of degree from university and some are having higher national diploma. Most of the officers(75%-80%) having degree of Art ,few of officers(10%-15%) having degree of Management and others having (15%-10%)degree of Science. Officers who are having degree of Management presently holding related administrative works as manager the Malima Hospitality Service, some are working as administrative officer of fund project(RNBF and VNBF)and rest of officers working as administrative officers of establishment. Officers who are having degree of Art or higher national diploma presently working as administrative officer of establishment without having job opportunities related to their educational background.

12. When they perform general duties, they have to do their duties by practices. When they are also appointed to another place as an additional officer, they have to take over duties depending on Commanding Officer's wish and with requirement because he is not specified to any field. As an example a VNF Officer may be performing his duties as a technical officer, OIC of detachment, barrack officer duties etc. Some commanding officers not given responsibilities to him when comparing regular officer.

12. After the war navy has returned to the traditional naval role of defending nation's maritime interests from internal and external threats. The main focus has been on having effective and efficient maritime and coastal surveillance. To meet these objectives the SLN will focus on infrastructure and training to improve its capabilities and create a professional force of officers and sailors that can spearhead the next generation of naval development. Furthermore, the SLN wants more modern naval simulators to prepare their next generation of officers and sailors. Therefore navy enlist officers who have professional qualification as volunteer officer and who have high educational qualifications as cadet officer in order to achieve the future goals.

13. According to the these requirements all branches take actions and introducing new methods for the better outcome but as a Regular officer I see Volunteer Naval Force members are lack of introducing new concepts on the other hand I feel they are in the behind comparing with the members of the Regular Naval Force members in the organization, that kind of situations can create lot of bad feedback for the organization and it directly effect to the efficiency of the organization.

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14. The other factor is SLVNF officers not performing key role in the organization so they unable to play key role in the organization so they are not performing decision making role in the organization and that thing also let them down in the organization. On the other hand they feel unhappy about their participating in the organization so it lead job dissatisfaction among the volunteers. It is the main reason for lot of talented volunteer officers leave the organization and it badly effect in two ways to the organization first thing is Navy unable to get service of the talented officers other one is professionals willingness to join the navy as volunteer officers is going down.

### **Possibility of Utilizing duties**

15. **Logistic branch for account duties** Most of the supply officers in SLN having only theoretical knowledge of account matters and Volunteer officers who are qualified degree of Management having good theoretical knowledge and practical experience of account field. Therefore , Volunteer officers who are having degree of Management they can be absorbed to Logistic branch for account duties.

16. **Supervising officer of wardroom dining and wine account** Presently every wardroom dining and bar account handled by the sailors. As a practice in charge of these account appointed from Engineering officer, Electrical officer or Executive officer and they do not have sufficient knowledge on that. Therefore we can utilize Volunteer officers who are having degree of Management for every SLN wardrooms.

17. **Instructor of Advance Sailors Training** Volunteer officers who are having degree of Art under the Archaeology and History they can utilize as a instructor to conduct classes for advance sailors training institute.

18. **Intelligence branch** With the expansion of Naval Intelligence branch the navy has to expend much money for the newly joined officers training but as another step of maintaining manpower of the navy it is suitable absorb officers from Volunteer branch who are having degree of Criminology.

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### **Conclusion**

19. This paper was mainly focused on the evaluation of utilization of VNF officers in Sri Lanka Navy. Sri Lanka Navy recruits and absorbs skilled professionals to the Officer carder who are having a Degree from a recognized University or Higher National Diploma to meet organizational goals. 500 officers consist the Volunteer Naval Force and among them Navy has enlisted 147 officers who have professional qualifications for particular branch and 353 officer enlisted executive branch for administrative works.

20. Among the VNF officers who enlisted executive branch few officers having degree of management/Economic presently holding administrative works related to their professional background and others who are having degree of Art /higher diploma presently working as administrative officer of establishment without having job opportunities related to their educational background.

21. The role of Sri Lanka Navy always vital as it is the golden fence around this Island. Playing these roles is not an easy task and manpower is a very important factor to achieve goal . Skilled professional are the most important entity with in the manpower are the main work force in any military organization. This work force should be guided and trained to obtain maximum outcome.

### **Recommendations**

22. It is recommended that the following action to be taken in order to utilize of VNF officers.

- a. Direct entry enlistment policies and recruiting criteria are to be amended in order to meet the future challenges of the Sri Lanka Navy. When enlist direct entry volunteer officers for executive branch qualification must be a degree of Science same as direct entry regular officer.

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b. Recommended officers who are having degree of Management or degree of Economic, attach to the supply branch duties and degree of Criminology officers attach to the Intelligence branch.

c.. Training policies are to be amended in order to obtain a good productivity from the direct entry officers and arrange refresh courses to enhance knowledge officers who belongs to direct entry volunteer executive branch relevant to the General Admin duties.

SKP Kumara

Lieutenant Commander

Student officer

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