

A Sociological Study of the Potential Role of Retired Soldiers in the Post War Development and Reconstruction in Sri Lanka

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Abstract : The security forces can be described as a workforce that goes beyond the role of ensuring the national security and contributes to the development process of the country. Soldiers are following combatant training courses during their tenure, they are equipped with a variety of vocational training courses to satisfy the needs of the army, to equip them with vocational training capabilities to achieve the development and reconstruction goals of the country as well as for the betterment of society in the event of emergencies. But with retirement, their relationship with the military is severed, and they are responsible for the future of their lives. The main purpose of this study was to examine how such professional capabilities can contribute to the development of the country, the current socio-economic status of the retired soldiers, and the current application of the vocational training skills they have mastered in the army to develop and rebuild the country in an effective manner. After analyzing the available research literature related to this field, a conceptual framework was developed and according to qualitative research methodology, and data obtained from Case studies and interviews are analyzed by using thematic analysis. Factors influencing early retirement include a lack of understanding of benefits, delays in promotions, not being properly evaluated for work, getting married on hasty decisions, and not having enough time to spend on family and household chores. Most of the soldiers are not aware about various programs and benefits available to retirees. They do not have a satisfactory attitude towards the retirement guidance they receive from the army at the time of retirement. Also, due to the lack of understanding about how to use their vocational capabilities successfully pursue their retirement life, the majority of people are employed in temporary jobs, and some are successful in post-retirement life due to their successful use of training received. Some live on pensions without engaging in any income-generating activities, and those who retire after 12 years of service are facing severe economic hardships as they do not get pensions. Although they have received training in various fields, they do not use them for their benefit due to lack of proper guidance. Although the government implements programs, they are not clearly aware of them. Barriers to utilization of training include an absence of a system to identify the professional skills of retired soldiers, interest in civil society affairs, exploration of opportunities in the civil and private sectors, and politicization of services. If they are given the opportunity, they will be able to contribute to the development and reconstruction process. The findings of the study further show that it has many social, economic, political, and psychological benefits not only for individuals but also for a country. Entrepreneurship training for all retired soldiers, improving officers' understanding, streamlining existing mechanisms, creating new mechanisms, setting up a separate unit for retirees, and adapting them to civil society, private and non-governmental contributions, and training courses can be identified as potential means to improve the current situation.

Keywords : development, reconstruction, retired soldiers, vocational capabilities

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