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ABSTRACT

The majority numbers of middle and lower level leaders in Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) is represented by Non Commissioned Officers (NCOs). Being the Senior Non Commissioned Officers' (SNCOs) of section, formation and flights, they need to take correct and timely decision during peace and war. Taking a worthy and timely decision can solve many problems at an early stage. However, many a times NCOs are found dependent on their superior officers to get decision even for routine matters. This phenomenon cause unnecessary delay to reach a decision down to the chain of command and often adversely affects the morale of troops. The superior officers are also equally responsible as they want to remain in picture of every issue. Though the decision making capability of NCOs is far away from the workable standard, they have enormous potential to reach the benchmark. Several detrimental factors were also identified that hinder spontaneous delegation and decentralization in various unit affairs. Spontaneous delegation and decentralization by superior officer can make a responsible, dutiful and confident lot of NCOs, which is very much necessary for the SLAF as an armed force. While pursuing a decentralized command and control arrangement, there is no alternative of delegation and decentralization of authority to the subordinates as far as possible. Specially, the battlefield demands a decentralized command and control structure. Changing the overall mind set, motivation to increase sense of belongingness and responsibility among the NCOs, adequate training, reward, and punishment should go side by side to implement this structure. The NCOs should be given with some flexibility while doing their jobs. At the same time, the officers should grow a habit to correct them than to look for their faults. As the NCOs become confident and dutiful, their capability of making decision would also develop sequentially.

Key Words: NCOs, Decision Making, Delegation, Decentralization, Superior Officer, Responsible.