

**AN EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL  
SYSTEM OF THE SRI LANKA ADMINISTRATIVE  
SERVICE (SLAS) OFFICERS IN PUBLIC SECTOR  
ORGANIZATION IN THE EASTERN PROVINCE**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study explores the existing performance appraisal system (PAS) in the public sector organisations in Eastern Province to determine the effectiveness of the PAS.

Eastern Province is taken as a case for analysis. The sample consists all SLAS officers in the Eastern Province coming under Provincial, Divisional and other government institutions which are functioning in the administrative structure of the Sri Lankan Government and the data for this research was collected through self-administered questionnaires and then by conducting personal interviews with SLAS officers in this Province. The effectiveness of the existing PAS was quantitatively measured using SPSS.

The study suggests that existing PAS is ineffective. However, the application of the present system at the divisional level is marginally effective than the provincial and other government institutions. The study concludes with suggestions to improve the design and the application of existing performance appraisal system to become an effective performance appraisal tool to improve the individual performance of SLAS officers in the public sector organisation in the Eastern Province

**Key words:** Performance Appraisal system, Organisational performance

## INTRODUCTION

Socio-economic development of a country depends heavily on the productivity of all Organizations. Among the resources that enhance productivity, human resource is very significant and an organization can increase productivity by improving performance of its human resource.

Performance Appraisal measures an individual's performance having control over him/her towards achieving organizational objectives. Jude, and Ferris,( 1993; 80) There is not a more important human resources system in an organization other than performance appraisal / evaluation.

The Public sector plays an important role in the development of the country. For which the role of the SLAS and their performance must be evaluated and rewarded accordingly.

SLAS represent people who and take decisions on behalf of the government to the nation's development. The productivity of any organization is a function of human resources, capital and technology. Human resource is very significant and it plays a key role among the other resources. But many organizations in Sri Lanka have not sought to increase productivity by improving/ increasing the performance of their human resources.

Eastern Province is all communities with three districts in Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampara. The Provincial Council of the North & East also is located in the Trincomalee. Most of the SLAS officers in the province are Tamil speaking people all political parties in the region have influenced their role. The Performance appraisal system is unable to implement in a proper way due to the prevailing civil war. The officers also feel that they have been prohibited for the proper performance appraisal system.

## Statement of the Problem

Primary aim of performance management is to help managers to obtain improved performance from their subordinates who will be rewarded accordingly. The performance appraisal system is used to assess the performance of individuals/groups and should be linked with a reward system to enhance productivity.

The research has a view that staff officers of the Public sectors organizations seem to have *a lack of knowledge in performance appraisal because they practice it as an ad hoc way of appraising one's performance every year.* Further, they do not keep the awareness of having proper performance appraisal system in their organizations. *The existing performance appraisal system of the staff officers is not appropriately implemented to bring about the real outcomes from the job done.* The system is implemented only for the annual increment of their salary as in ad hoc manner.

The performance expected from the staff officers is much more than what they really perform now. The reason for this state of affairs is that there is neither motivation nor incentive in proportion though they produce an expected performance.

## The Objectives of the Study

- a). To evaluate the degree of employees' attitudes towards Performance Appraisal system
- b). To determine the degree of effectiveness of PA practices used by Public Sectors Organizations in Sri Lanka.

- c). To identify the strategies and suggest to develop a suitable Staff performance appraisal systems to the Sri Lanka administrative Service (SLAS)

### Significance of the Study

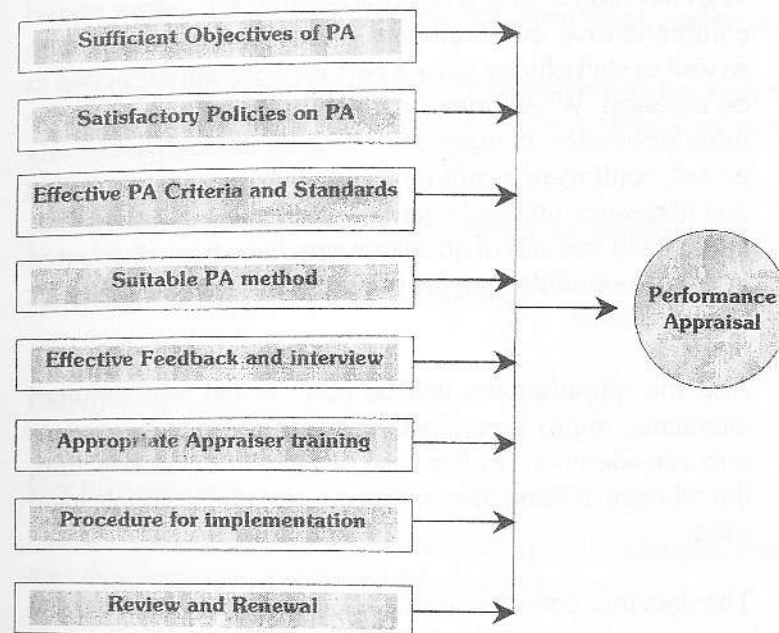
It has a view that, an introduction of a performance based appraisal system in order to enhance the staff officers' performance effectively and efficiently becomes inevitable. This research can pave ways to fill the gap identified in the staff officers' performance.

It is generally accepted that lack of proper consideration is given to the relationship between the organization productivity and their employee' performances. Introduction of a proper performance appraisal system is not a burden to the organizational budget. Therefore, why are they not interested in experiencing multiple results by introducing healthy performance appraisal system? It is interesting to find out the reasons for this also.

The study explores the performance appraisal system in the public sector organizations and will help to find out the reasons for its ineffectiveness. The findings of this study would be used as the guidelines for its improvement which helps Public Service Organisations to be effective and make them productivity employees.

### Conceptual Framework

In order to proceed with this the suggested framework below has been considered which includes the following dimensions.



### Methodology

The sample consists of 71 SLAS officers who perform different functions in Divisional Secretary, Provincial council other governmental Organisations.

- a. Staff officers who are working under the central Government such as Divisional Secretary (DS)
- b. The staff officers who are working under the Provincial Council and
- c. The staff officers who are working under the central government other than Divisional Secretary such as Asst. Commissioner for Election, Asst. Director for Local Government etc.

The collection of data was done through self-administered comprehensive questionnaires and direct interviews with as well as staff officers whose performance are supposed to be assessed. Where ever possible, an effort was made to introduce variety of questionnaire formats (such as closed-ended, contingency, matrix) so that they remain interesting and necessary data had been gathered as much as possible. Particularly, two sets of questionnaires have been distributed to the respondents, one for the appraiser and the other for the appraisees.

Also the questionnaire will be pilot-tested and required alterations/ improvements will be made taking the responses into consideration. In the case of passive data collection, the relevant existing forms, procedures, and manuals were used.

The data thus collected will be analyzed by using univariate analysis techniques using SPSS. The degree of effectiveness of the PA systems will be measured by using a quantitative framework developed by the researcher

The present PA objectives are rated poor, but the PA policy though rated poor is better than the objectives. The PA criteria, standards, and PA methods are as rated poor. Appraisal feedback interview and PA appraiser training are also poor position. Performance appraisal implementation and review and renewal are also in the same position.

So, it is very necessary to change the existing Performance appraisal system in order to adopt the suitable present situation as well as to measure the individual performance of the staff.

## Objectives of Performance appraisal systems

The annual increment is only implemented through this system, all other administrative and development objectives were ignored totally in the existing system.

All the staff is dissatisfied with the existing objectives

Referring to the preferences of objectives

Promotion	2.53	1st
Salary increment	2.74	2 <sup>nd</sup>

## Recommendations

Prepare and adopt the system including both administrative and development objectives of the development.

Therefore, in order to maintain a perfect administration and development uses in the public sector, the appropriate action should be taken based on the information received and also make the staff to realize the reasons for these measure.

## Policies on appraisal

### When is evaluation done?

The fixed time year end approach

### How often is appraisal done?

The existing system appraises the staff's performance annually. No evaluator maintains a diary by jotting down the performance of the staff during the year.

Higher frequency of PA will provide more feedback to the employees regarding their performance.

The data seem to suggest that the officers have low satisfaction

### Who should evaluate the employee?

The immediate superior is wholly responsible for the appraisal

One of the most important drawbacks is rater bias

The rater uses only the word unsatisfactory/satisfactory, above average.

The total mean value about the PA polices indicates very low satisfaction about the existing PA polices.

### Recommendation

The fixed time is better but it must be done quarterly (March, June, September and December)

Introduce arbitrary approach with the existing one. Because, if fixed time approach only is in use, employees very attentive in showing themselves as effective perform when evaluation date comes closer.

In order to avoid the recent performance reflected during the evaluation on the performance documents must adopt quarterly appraising policy.

- March - - Introduction (Supervision, Approval, made agreement between appraisee and appraiser)
- June - Assessment (Progress)
- September - Reassessment (Submit proposal for the next budget (Budget October) and check work performance of the officers because most of the work done during this period.
- December - Final Evaluation/ appraisal. (last 15 days)

Committee Appraisal including immediate superior (03 members)

Self peer; group appraisal also can be introduced.

### PA Criteria and Standards

The existing system does not have adequate criteria or standards in order to measure the performance of individual officers

The appraiser of Public Sector organizations does not have any predetermined criteria or standards, which only determined by them.

The existing system does not have any standard or weightage to measure or determine appraiser's evaluation.

This system can be influenced by rater's opinion. This system does not have measurement tools to measure the quality of work, productivity, cost savings, numbers of projects initiated as well as achieved, Numbers of beneficiaries, amount of investment numbers of diplomacy action and some special number of complaints from customers or co-workers etc.,

Definition for each criterion had not been given in the appraisal forms

All these qualitative and subjective information are used only for determining annual increments. Even these criteria are not properly measured

They have indicates low satisfaction with their existing PA criteria.

### Recommendations

- ❖ First conduct the job analysis and prepare job specification and employee specification job standards, then develop subjective and objective criteria on the basis of the job concerned and standard against the each criterion. Those criteria must be adequate, objectives and clear definition it must be clearly communicated to the appraisee and the appraisers. Determined an appropriate standard separately to the subjective and objectives on the legate scale Number

of criteria including objectives as well as subjective should be increased to evaluate in order to obtain more information for uses to ensure the PA system is effective. Criteria, which included into the PA form, should consist of clear definition and explanation.

It is also better to provide a copy of evaluate form to each officer Hence, making the appraisal more informative regarding their own as well as to the sectors.

### **Methods of Performance Appraisal**

The existing system or any training programs regarding the employee appraisals do not mention about what method of PA used.

Many of the appraisers also do not know about the available appraisal methods.

Appraiser's personal judgment is the end results appertaining in the appraisal forms.

The data suggest that all officers are dissatisfied with the existing appraisal methods

### **Recommendations**

It is appropriate to use critical incident method or BARS along with the existing agreement system. In critical incident method evaluation has punctuality and accuracy, which leads to the development of the staff. In this method regency can be eliminated because the evaluator keep records during the evaluation period. Using BARS can minimize the weaknesses of the subjective criteria.

### **Appraisal Interview Feedback**

Feedback interview is a discussion with appraisees regarding the performance, which they made.

There are no reports on discussions made about with the staff appraised.

This has been ignored completely in the existing system

The absence of appraisal interview feedback gives no chance to staff to correct his/her deficiencies and to set objectives for the upcoming appraisal period. Less commitment of superior staff and their cultural thoughts also do not permit them to engage in two-way communication.

This indicates the low state of action about feedback appraisal interview.

### **Recommendations**

In order to have an effective PAS the following valuable suggestions should be adopted in the system.

1. The system must encourage two ways communication between the appraisee and the appraiser (Evaluator). Staffs are allowed to talk freely their ideas and views.
2. The government must insist the feedback interview once the PA has been completed. i.e. the components of feedback interview practice should be including into the evaluators' training guide too.
3. Mutually understanding should amicably solve non – agreeable items in the evaluation by both appraiser and appraisee.
4. Evaluator should encourage employees to take part in the discussion and to contribute excellently in order to avoid the mistake in the future.
5. Evaluator should identify the specific actions that can be taken by the appraisal to improve performance on his/ her own.

### **Appraiser Training**

Regarding the SLAS staff appraisers were not given any type of training in appraising performance of employees effectively.

There is no manual or guide for the appraisers. All the staffs feel that refresher training in performance appraisal and appraisal interviewing should be provided to them.

### **Recommendations**

Prepare and distribute the well-constructed manual that would be an informative guide to the evaluators. This must include objectives of the appraisal, the way of preparation of performance reports, reporting periods, evaluation periods, way of records keeping, definition of some important criteria and the importance of the implementation of the systems etc.

The Ministry or Respective departments must arrange workshops and seminars, particularly lectures and case study methods of training. These are useful for evaluator to clear their doubts and other related problems faced by evaluators during their evaluation time. Case study is the appropriate technique to minimize personal problems. This training Programme must be arranged at least one times every two years.

### **Procedures for Ensuring Accurate Implementation**

In the existing appraisal system there are no effective procedures to implement it. There is only one set of forms for various categories of staff.

The individual provinces or departments have no power to alter those forms. And due to the prevailing poor administration at ministerial level the evaluation forms also remain the same for

the whole staff grade officers in government organizations in Sri Lanka.

The effectiveness of the appraisal system more or less depends on a well-designed performance appraisal form. The existing appraisal form fails to fulfil the above objectives. The staffs are dissatisfied with their existing PA implementation.

### **Recommendations**

Main reason for the failure of the system is that the evaluator or concerned ministry does not give importance to this report. Because of this, the evaluators as well as appraisal do not take as a serious issue. Another reason is, our culture does not allow to have proper appraisal, most of the officers work as a ethical manner, they normally do not wish/ prefer to effect any person likewise do not prefer to express the excellent of the officers. Because of these reason the officer's involvement and commitments are very poor.

The proper implementation and follow up are necessary. The introduction of the system and its follow up should not be seen as a once- and- for- all task, but should allow for constant monitoring and improvement to ensure continuing reliability, validity and overall acceptability.

### **Review and Renewal**

There is no continuous review and renewal process. The data seem to suggest that only one or two times the existing appraisal system was renewed during the last 10 years.

Top management does not make any decisions by using performance appraisal information. The basic reason for all the above drawbacks is the mismanagement, malpractice, corruption, political influences and poor administration of government machinery.

Another important reason is less commitment in all levels of staff. And also they are not ready to work hard and to change their traditional and cultural thoughts and policies.

But it is happy to see that all staff is ready to accept the change (100%).

### Recommendations

The existing system must be reviewed and renewal. After that this review process may be assigned to a particular staff or to the particular unit.

### Implication of the Research

- ❖ The Findings of this study could be used as the guidelines to improve the other related services, which implement the same PAS.
- ❖ The findings will be helpful not only to the public sector private sector organisations to understand current trend in employee appraisal system

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