

Abstract

The Sri Lanka Navy was first established in 1937 as the Ceylon Naval Volunteer Force (CNVF) and was functioning with some other names until it changed into the present name as the Sri Lanka Navy in 1972. Being an island nation, the Sri Lanka Navy has to play a vital role in protecting the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the country. Time to time the Navy's role was focused on different direction with the changing security situation in the country. Though, it was shaping out to be a "Large Ship Navy" in 1960s, oriented to be a "Small Craft Navy" with the beginning of the Eelam wars in 1980s. However, with the elimination of LTTE in May 1999, the Navy again will have to focus more on her traditional and classical roles mainly protecting the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the country.

Apart from the main role, the Navy has to perform other roles such as politico diplomatic, constabulary, benign, counter maritime terrorism, protecting of the strategic sea lane and search and rescue etc. However, when analyzing the sea area that the Navy has to guard against the resources the Navy possesses, it is found that the resources the SLN has are very much insufficient to guard such a big area. The analysis revealed that, even the regional Navies are also comparatively in a better position than SLN. Further, a sea area of three times more than the present EEZ will be available for Sri Lanka in the near future when delimitation of continental shelf is completed and the burden of protecting the wealth of resources in that also will be rested on the Navy. Hence, the Navy has to be ready in all aspects to accept that challenges and the development of the Navy to do such a big task has to be thought and started now itself before being too late.