

# ENDURING MILITANCY: THE SOURCES OF LTTE'S STRENGTH

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# *Preface*

Ending militancy is the most challenging task of many nation-states. Since militancy in most cases is linked with ethnicity, the causes for its rise are inherent in the society. Every ethnic group tries to preserve and protect its identity but conflict arises when a group feels threatened by the behaviour of other groups. Persistent discrimination of a particular ethnic group in the socio-economic and political realms creates fear complex and a sense of deprivation. If peaceful and democratic expressions of their grievances are suppressed and ignored by the State, ethnic groups resort to violence. Many of the militant movements today emerged in this manner and demand for redress of their grievances, by employing violent methods.

Militancy and its causes have gained more attention in the literature than the factors which sustain a group's violence or its decline. There is a close relationship between the factors which give rise to militancy and conditions for its sustainability. Militant movements, which result from ethnic conflicts, have longer durability. They face lot of setbacks and are also subjected to internal divisions. But, in contrast to other militant groups, they constantly thrive on nationalistic tendencies and the support of masses. Militancy is sustained by a combination of factors. Principally, they are related to structure of the group, its resources and its international network.

The basis for formation of militant groups in Sri Lanka is ethno nationalism. A sense of relative deprivation and discrimination lies at the bottom of Tamil ethnic movement. In Sri Lanka, the State has become an instrument in protecting the majority Sinhalese at the cost of the minority interests. It is biased in its policies and practices.

The Tamil United Liberation Front [TULF] was involved in mobilization of people against discrimination. The Sri Lankan State failed to redress the grievances of the Sri Lankan Tamils. They first demanded a federal constitution and equal linguistic rights. When the government did not pay heed to their demand, the goal became a separate State. In the 1950's and the 1960's, Tamils did not resort to violence. Peaceful and democratic expression of grievances by the Tamil political parties were

suppressed and ignored by the State. The TULF's failure to achieve the Tamil rights created a space for the emergence of militancy. With the formation of LTTE in 1976, the approach became violent and goal was to achieve the right to self-determination.

In the mid-1980's, as many as 37 militant groups were formed in Sri Lanka. Many of them were active in the beginning, but gradually faded due to the problems of leadership, manpower, finance or internal rivalry. Competition among them for absolute power also led to their extinction. The LTTE, a supreme militant outfit, remained in-exhaustive over the decades in its fight for a separate State.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of this study is to examine various factors which have helped the LTTE to sustain itself. Some of the specific objectives are:

1. To analyse the conditions under which the LTTE has risen to become a prominent militant group.
2. To examine the structural factors that contributed to strengthening of the LTTE.
3. To evaluate the role of diaspora in the success of the LTTE.
4. To explain the significance of LTTE's international network in its survival.

## **HYPOTHESES**

The study will test the following hypotheses:

1. The greater the centralized structure of a militant organization, the greater the chances for its survival.
2. A centralized militant organization with a strong ideological background cannot easily be brought to the political mainstream.
3. Militancy having its source from ethnicity thrives for a longer duration.
4. Structural factors coupled with modern facilities help a militant group to sustain its armed movement.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted both descriptive and analytical methods. Data is collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are government and LTTE documents. Secondary data is collected from books, journals, magazines and related websites.

## **CHAPTERISATION**

The study is divided into five chapters

1. In the first chapter, 'Sustaining Militant Movement: An Analytical Framework', besides defining the term 'militancy' and elaborating the causes of rise of militancy, an attempt will be made to construct a theoretical framework on the factor which sustain militant organizations. This will be done by taking ethnicity as a source of militancy.
2. The second chapter, 'Rise of LTTE: An Overview', will explain the rise of LTTE as a militant organization in Sri Lanka. Along with the historical background of the ethnic conflict, and analysis of the conditions under which militancy has taken roots in Sri Lanka will be made.
3. The third chapter, 'Structural Factors for the LTTE's Survival', will extensively elaborate the important structural components of the militant organization. They are: leadership, ideological basis, operational methods, nature of cadres, etc.
4. The fourth chapter, 'The LTTE's Internal Resource Base and its International Network', will examine the resource mobilization capacity of the LTTE. Its method of accumulation of enormous financial resources through extortion, taxing etc will be discussed. The international support infrastructure of LTTE, which carries the activities of propaganda, fund raising, training, procurement of weapons, will be widely discussed. The LTTE's links with other international militant organizations will also be studied.
5. The last chapter, 'Conclusion' will summarise the arguments and make an assessment of the LTTE's survival as a dominant force.

# *Chapter 1*

## *Sustaining Militant Movement: An Analytical Framework*

Militancy is not a new phenomenon. The use of violence by the groups to achieve their goals is an ancient tactic.

History has seen endless conflicts throughout the world. These conflicts became part of the human experience. Contemporary militancy is linked to these conflicts. As long as the conditions that breed these conflicts remain, the militancy will also remain. The sources of militancy are ethnic class, religious and racial conflicts.

A militant campaign must keep moving forward, no matter how slowly, or it will die. Some categories of militant groups have better chances of survival than others. Historically, religious movements were sustained for centuries, but in modern times ethno nationalist/separatist militant groups have lasted longest and been the most successful.<sup>1</sup>

Though 'terrorism' and 'militancy' sound synonymous, there does lie a variation. Militancy cannot easily be distinguished from terrorism. This is because the practice of terrorism is so diverse. Very thin line separates militancy from terrorism.

Militants are defined as "those who wish to change the existing order, wish to bring about reform, revolutionary change within the existing order like the naxalites [Maoist rebels] in India, and those who completely wish to opt out of the existing system, like the Tamils in Sri Lanka."<sup>2</sup> Militant doesn't hesitate to use violence to realise his goal.

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<sup>1</sup> Pamala L. Griset, Sue Mahan, *Terrorism in Perspective* [London, New Delhi, 2003], pp.191-192.

<sup>2</sup> Sudha Ramachandran, *Tamil Militancy in Sri Lanka- a study of the evolution and growth of the LTTE*, Ph.D. thesis [JNU, 1995], p.2.



The definition of terrorism adopted by the US State Department, Department of Defense, and Central Intelligence Agency is: “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.”<sup>3</sup>

Terrorists try to bring about changes by spreading fear. Terrorists reject all moral constraints and are involved in barbarous cruelties. For terrorists, violence, destruction, and death are part of everyday life. In the words of Benzion Netanyahu,

The terrorist represents a new breed of man which takes humanity back to prehistoric times, to the times when morality was not yet born- divested of any moral principle, he has no moral sense, no moral controls and is therefore, capable of committing any crime, like a killing machine, without shame or remorse.<sup>4</sup>

But, a militant’s method of struggle and his legitimate cause makes him different from the brutal terrorist.

Militants wear uniform and are usually involved in armed struggle with the government forces. Militants fight with small numbers and often do fight according to conventions of war. The central element of ‘terrorism’ is the deliberate killing of innocent civilians. They do not wear uniform that distinguishes them as members of a fighting force. Terrorists cannot be regarded as soldiers. Guevara believed terrorism to be “a measure that is generally indiscriminate and ineffective in its results, since it often makes victims of innocent people and destroys a large number of lives that would be valuable to the revolution.”<sup>5</sup> “Terrorists implicitly deny recognition of all rules and conventions of war. It refuses to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants”. “To the terrorist: No one is innocent.”<sup>6</sup> Terrorism comes from ‘terror’ and the goal of the terrorist attacks is to create fear, panic, unrest, paranoia, and other psychological emotions.

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<sup>3</sup> Chris E. Stout, ed., The Psychology of Terrorism, Volume-3-Theoretical Understandings and Perspectives [London,2002],p.32.

<sup>4</sup> Peter. C. Sederberg, Terrorist Myths: Illusions, Rhetoric and Reality [New Jersey, 1989], p.28

<sup>5</sup> William Gutteridge, ed., Contemporary Terrorism[Oxford, 1986], p.5

<sup>6</sup> Paul Wilkinson, Terrorism and the Liberal State [London, 1977], p.53.

Militants claim to have a righteous cause for their movement and they fight to redress the grievances of their community. They rise genuinely out of oppressed conditions. The terrorists also have a cause but that may be illegitimate and just limited to few selfish groups. They don't enjoy the public support for their movement as the militants do. Militants target specific persons who are directly responsible for their grievances or who try to hinder their militant activities. Terrorism is targeted against groups and not against specific individuals. The terrorists involve in massive murders of innocent people [civilians who are not involved in the confrontation]. Terrorists place no limits on means employed and frequently resort to widespread assassination. They wage general terror upon the indigenous civilian population.

Although many militants have employed terrorism or have been supported by terrorist cells and factions, terrorism cannot be equated with militancy in general. Terrorism is a special mode of violence which has at least three basic elements: the terrorist aims of its perpetrators, their modus operandi in deploying particular forms of violence to achieve those aims, and the psychological effects of terrorist violence upon the victims and the target audience.<sup>7</sup>

### **Causes of Militancy**

What stimulates the young people to incline towards devastation of social institutions? What makes them to justify using violence? What are reasons for their alienation from democratic values? What motivates them to lead such solitary lives away from the society, family and friends?

One of the important sources of militancy is the nationalist demand of ethnic minorities. Nationalism has been regarded as one of the strongest forces of the past twenty years. This served as the power, which fuelled many militant groups. It attributes to the rise of seventy percent of the armed campaigns.<sup>8</sup> When injustice and inequality persist and when domestic rule is based on constraints rather than on consensus, internal conflicts sprout up. The deprived population protests against the

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.52.

<sup>8</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, "Asia Pacific-Organised Crime and International Terrorist Networks", in K.P.S. Gill, Ajai Sahni, eds., The Global Threat of Terror [New Delhi, 2002], p.244.

economic and political discrimination. These protests escalate in to internal war as a result of negative sanctions on the part of the government.

Social identity theory is concerned with the relations between social groups, especially groups that have unequal power. Sense of relative deprivation lie at the roots of many militant movements. This feeling of deprivation among the groups results in inter group conflicts. The resultant violence takes the form of militancy.

The major assumption underlying this theory is that individuals are motivated to maintain or achieve a positive, more inclusive self-definition. According to the theory, individuals define themselves partly by their group membership, which fulfills several psychological needs, including “belongingness, distinctiveness, respect, understanding and agency.”<sup>9</sup>

In addition to categorizing the social environment in to groups and identifying themselves by groups to which they belong [i.e.ingroups], individuals make social comparisons between groups. Specifically, they compare characteristics of the ingroup to other groups in order to determine the extent to which the ingroup offers them a distinct and positive identity. Less favourable evaluations relative to another group contribute to the formation of a negative identity and dissatisfaction. This relative deprivation makes the ingroup to prompt efforts to improve the relative status of the ingroup. The strategies they adopt to fill this gap depend upon the ingroup’s perception of its status vis-à-vis the outgroup. <sup>10</sup>

Social identity theory also says that in an inter group conflict, the members are more aware of their shared grievances. In such conditions, social components of self-concept become more prominent than individual components. Ingroup is viewed as coherent and homogenous. Many studies show that when they are in conflict groups, they become more “prejudiced attitudinally” and “aggressive behaviourally” than do individuals. <sup>11</sup> The nationalists resort to violent methods to achieve political recognition and the right of self-government.

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<sup>9</sup> Stout, n.3, p.44.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.45.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Many groups look at militancy as an effective strategy for achieving their aims. Desperation is the underlying factor for groups and individuals to turn to militancy. When their cause is not paid attention, then they resort to violent methods to force the State to pay attention to their sufferings. When the government is oppressive and treats some unfairly, militants dedicate themselves to get separated from the government and create their own nation to protect their language, customs or religion.

Militants feel that only through violence their cause and their political aims can be attained. Highly idealistic and deeply motivated young people opt for militancy when they are faced with unresolved grievances and when there is no other way of registering protest and effecting change. They are not for personal gain and they always oppose the status quo.<sup>12</sup>

Militancy has occurred with increasing frequencies in societies in which peaceful change is not possible. Grievances always exist, but in certain cases oppression has been the reason behind choosing militant path.

### **Factors helping the militant movement to sustain**

Many conditions exist for the militancy to thrive as a mode of conflict for a longer time. Not only the basic causes like ethnic conflicts, there are many exacerbating factors which makes militancy more attractive and convincing method of struggle in the present day world.

Paul Wilkinson talks of some conditions, which are conducive to extremism<sup>13</sup>:

- ◆ Conditions for that improvement are created by the easy availability of information about techniques, tactics and weaponry. Mass media and extremist literature provide this information.

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<sup>12</sup> Walter Laqueur, Terrorism [London, 1977], p.133.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Wilkinson, "Terrorism versus Liberal Democracy: The problems of Response", in William Gutteridge, ed., Contemporary Terrorism [New York, 1986], p.7.

- ◆ Some foreign governments supporting extremism increased the flow of cash, weaponry, and training facilities to the extremist movements.
- ◆ Militant became more mobile and dangerous with the revolution in the communication.
- ◆ Mass media, which is developed worldwide, gave an opportunity for the extremists to get much publicity.

As such, militancy is sustained by a combination of factors. Principally, they are related to structure of the group, its resources and its international network.

### **STRUCTURAL FACTORS:**

Strong structural conditions are very important for survival of a militant organisation. Any organisation based on ethnicity creates a structure, which is powerful and rigid. Such an organisation cannot be easily diverted from its war mentality. The important components of organisational structure are its leadership, ideology, and nature of its cadres, its organisational methods and its military capabilities.

#### **Leadership**

It is very crucial for the success and functioning of a militant group. Strong leadership makes the movement strong. Effective leadership adopts right strategies and lead their followers along the determined path. In an ethnic conflict, leaders often exhibit personal commitment to the cause and strong determination. It provides motivation to the cadres who commit themselves to continuing violence.

When larger section of people accepts the leader, his position is consolidated. The popular support sustains the leadership. The larger social movement encourages the leaders to believe that their anger is caused by an external enemy and that they are justified in engaging in militancy against that enemy.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Chris E. Stout, The Psychology of Terrorism, Volume 1, A Public Understanding [London, 2002], p.109.

In some cases, leader is equated to God. What he commands is carried out instantly and whatever he does is accepted as legitimate. This holy relationship between the leader and the followers can easily allow the movement to sustain.

Leader with a tight hold over the structure of the organisation always keep it on the right path. Many organisations have survived over the years mainly because of strong leadership.

## **Ideology**

Also the ideological basis of a militant movement is a strong source for its success.

Ideology can be defined as beliefs, values, principles, and objectives however ill defined by which a group defines its distinctive political identities and aims, and justifies its actions.<sup>15</sup>

A militant group with innate righteousness of their cause itself assures success. If the militants consider their goals and objectives to be principled, then they justify their methods. "They feel a powerful, immoral, and evil enemy is arrayed against them. The enemy is considered to be adept at betrayal, exploitation, violence, and repression against the championed group."<sup>16</sup>This thinking will make them legitimate in fighting against it. History is identified and interpreted as being the source of the group's modern problems. In later generations, native people who shared this history interpret it as the part of an ongoing pattern in contemporary times. They develop strong resentment against their perceived oppressor. Liela Khaled wrote in her biography, "We shall win because we represent the wave of the future...because mankind is on our side and above all because we are determined to achieve victory."<sup>17</sup>

Generally, militancy driven by ethnic conflict possesses nationalist ideology. A group's national consciousness tends to rise when ethnic discrimination becomes

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<sup>15</sup> C. J.M Drake, Terrorists' Target Selection [Great Britain, 1998], p.16.

<sup>16</sup> Gus Martin, Understanding Terrorism- Challenges, Perspectives, and Issues[New Delhi, 2003], p.57.

<sup>17</sup> Bruce Hoffman, Inside Terrorism [New York, 1998], p.169.

widespread. This creates tendency for revenge against all those who inflicted severe hardships on the minority.

Many militant groups consider national oppression as the cause for their struggle. The oppression of a big nation [majority] against a small nation [minority] within the State becomes an important component for theoretical and political strategy.

Generally, Marxist and Socialist philosophies form the ideological basis for many militant groups. Lenin inter-relates the national struggle with proletariat class struggle. Many militant groups adopt his theories on “bankruptcy of bourgeois democracy” and the “extreme bourgeois nationalism”.<sup>18</sup>

Lenin’s concept of self-determination forms the basis for many groups’ ideology for secession. It may be designed to achieve attention, acknowledgement, or even sympathy and support for the militants’ cause. A goal of militant violence is also to take recognition of their rights and of their organisation. According to Lenin,

Right of nations to self-determination is a realistic, revolutionary theory which upholds the universal socialist principle of the fundamental right of a nation to secede and form a state of its own, a principle aimed to protect a small nation from the oppression generating from the national chauvinism of a big nation, a principle designed to preserve a nation’s cultural and ethnic identity, a principle if adhered to truly and fairly, can only create the necessary conditions for proletarian internationalism.<sup>19</sup>

This principle is a limitation on any alleged right of self-determination. Self-determination must play some part in allowing a group a right to Statehood.

A minority cannot claim a right to Statehood if it occupies an area, which is either “culturally, economically or militarily essential to the existing State” or “which has a disproportionately high share of the economic resources of the existing State.”<sup>20</sup> If many of its members show strong antagonism towards living together with others in

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<sup>18</sup> Towards Liberation, The LTTE, Political Committee, 1984, p.64.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in A.S.Balasingham, Liberation Tigers and Tamil Eelam Freedom Struggle, Political committee, LTTE, 1983, p.3.

<sup>20</sup> Paul Gilbert, Terrorism, Security and Nationality [London, 1994] p.122.

the group, then decent life is not possible. Preparedness to live together with others under common rules is more basic than formal self-determination.

A militant group, which overcomes the above limitations, finds it more legitimate to demand for secession.

The comparative success of many ethno-nationalist militant groups is possible because of this clarity of goal i.e. the establishment of a national homeland after seceding from the existing country. "The articulation of so concrete and comprehensible a goal is by far the most potent and persuasive rallying cry".<sup>21</sup>

### **Nature of Cadres**

A militant group based on ethno nationalism has the advantage of acquiring automatic support from the community they are representing. They get steady stream of recruits from the community they are representing. When the community feels threatened, they get bounded against the common adversary. The militants fighting against that threat are seen as protectors and willfully join the militant movement. In some cases, even the militant group forces the people to join to sustain their violence. If the State uses indiscriminate violence against the community in the name of combating militancy, coercion of the State automatically makes them incline towards the militants. In militant's mind, violence is defensive and is justified in the name of justice.

Usually, in the militancy drawn from ethnicity, militants are fanatically devoted to their cause. One reason for the endurance of a militant organisation is attributed to the unlimited resources. The greatest strength of militants is their readiness to die.<sup>22</sup>

Discipline among the cadres is also an important structural factor. They are usually devoid of bad habits and are determined to achieve their goal. Achievement of the goal constantly lingers in their mind. Discipline is an admirable concept, which

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<sup>21</sup> Hoffman, n.17, p.171.

<sup>22</sup> Walter Laqueur, The Terrorism Reader-A Historical Anthology [London, 1978], p.73.



the cadres always exercise to maintain support in a community. The nature of cadres and the method of struggle determine the success of organisation. In the present day world, even children and women are not left out of the militant groups in order to sustain. Militancy can easily survive because of this wide human resource base.

### **Child Soldiers**

The most dreadful trend in the contemporary conflicts is the active participation of children in the armed struggles as soldiers. The concerns about children in traditional times were different. They were considered as the victims of war. But now the intensification of ethnic conflict has changed the scenario. In the contemporary armed struggle, children have become important factor in sustaining the struggle.

A child soldier is defined as “any child-boy or girl under the age of 18 who is compulsorily, forcibly, or voluntarily recruited or otherwise used in hostilities by armed forces, paramilitaries/ civil defence or other armed groups.”<sup>23</sup> International conventions like Geneva Convention, 1948[2 amendments made in 1997] considers the participation of children below 15years in armed conflicts [even voluntarily] as an offence. These rules couldn't stop the recruitment of children by the militants.

When there are more casualties and result in decrease of adult members, militant movement started sustaining by recruiting children. This is a global phenomenon. The number of child soldiers participating in various armed conflicts around the world is estimated to be around 300,000. Some soldiers are as young as seven years.<sup>24</sup>

There are various reasons for the children to join the militant group. Economic conditions force the children to join voluntarily. Sometimes, even they join to revenge the suffering or death of a family member in the hands of the enemy. Militants even

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<sup>23</sup> Rachel J Stoht, Under the Gun: Children and Small Arms, African Security Review, Vol.11, no.3, 2002,p.21.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/shrilanka/terroristoutfits/childsoldiers.htm>.

indoctrinate them through lectures at schools, screening of films, inculcate hatred in to the minds of children and attract children in to the movement.

Many young children have parents who are militants. Some grow up in militant camps and among a cult of extremism. They may have seen their fathers or mothers brutally killed. Most of the children remember the gruesome scenes they experienced. But, very few know what their parents fought for or why they were gunned down. Isolation and hopelessness are common in these children.<sup>25</sup> Militants also force the families of the similar ethnic community to abandon their children for their struggle. They even are involved in forceful abductions.

The technological advancements have resulted in light and automatic weapons. It is easy for children to handle the weapons. Another benefit in recruiting the children is their staunch obedience. Generally, children don't disobey orders and can easily be made to take up daring assignments.

Child soldiers are involved in variety of jobs. Young combatants participate in all aspects of contemporary militant strife. They carry AK-47s and M-16s on the front lines of combat. They act as spies and messengers. They serve as human mine detectors, carry supplies and also participate in suicide missions. In Sierra Leone, at present, children forced to take part in atrocities are often given drugs to overcome their fear or reluctance to fight.<sup>26</sup>

Because of their immaturity and lack of experience, child soldiers suffer higher casualties than adults. In 1999, some two million child soldiers were estimated to be killed in various conflicts all round the world.

### **Women combatants**

Now, the armed struggle has taken a new form with women combatants also getting involved. The militant organisation now has the additional potential of women cadres. This characteristic of the militant movement is a new development. Women

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<sup>25</sup> Griset, Mahan, n.1, pp.193-194.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.193.

are in no way inferior to men. They are equally fierce, disciplined and show extraordinary skill in their military tactics.

Their ideology deal with gender related issues. Countries where women are employed in the militant movements have a record of human rights abuses like disappearances, murders, rapes, and torture. Women have become involved in violence in response to crimes of domination and repression on the part of their national governments. The female cadres of the GAM [Free Aceh Movement] separatist movement in Indonesia are an example.<sup>27</sup>

The female cadres of the GAM in Indonesia are often widows. They were intensively inducted in to military operations and intelligence gathering along with ideology, law and Islamic culture. After training, they return to their places ready to defend their people. The GAM has trained thousands of women in military tactics. One indication of how the conflict has sustained is the widely feared and elusive “widows battalion” of the GAM.

Women are also highly represented in suicide bombing. Women can be very deceptively used, as they are easily not suspected. The women cadres as pregnant women in disguise can avoid high security. Their fighting capability and fearlessness adds strength to the militant movement. This participation of women has grave security implications.

Women perform various and significant activities which help the militancy to thrive. There are female sympathisers who provide access to resources and the ability to carry on a clandestine life in the midst of warfare. Supportive women provide food and hiding places. These women might be called on only once at irregular intervals to give shelter, donations, weapons, or time and effort to the rebel cause. The roles of these sympathisers are crucial to successful militant attacks.

In other groups, women are more active in the struggle. They play the role of decoys, messengers, intelligence gatherers, and spies. At the next level are women

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.157.

who are actively recruited by militant groups. Here, women act as warriors, using weapons and devices. They take part in the battles on par with men. Women also form dominant forces within militant groups. They are not only recruited but also actively involved.<sup>28</sup>

### **Operational methods, Strategies and Tactics:**

Militants use guerilla tactics and employ violent methods to sustain the movement. After gaining success in short-term objectives, it gives them confidence to improve further. Strategy involves planning by taking into account one's own goals and resources and with a shrewd estimate of the enemy's objectives, intentions, likely moves and resources. The militants keep changing their strategies according to the changing times. Tactics are the feasible steps to meet the goals outlined in the strategy. Tactics have up possibilities and limitations. They will determine the methods that are feasible.<sup>29</sup>

### **Guerilla Warfare**

Militants generally employ guerilla tactics. This form of warfare is as old as mankind, certainly older than conventional war. Guerilla is a diffuse type of war, fought in relatively small formations, against a stronger enemy. In numerous instances guerilla warfare has merely served as an auxiliary form of fighting, especially behind enemy lines, whereas the main military effort takes a form of conventional war.

At least for some time, guerilla war was the main form of struggle in many insurrections. Guerillas avoid direct confrontation. They opt for protracted struggle, which includes many small clashes. In some guerilla doctrines, final victory is expected to result from wearing out the enemy. Other doctrines insist that guerilla is only an interim phase of the struggle. This was intended to enable the militants to build a regular army, which will, eventually win through conventional warfare.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.159

<sup>29</sup> David J. Whittaker, Terrorists and Terrorism [London, 2004], p.76.

<sup>30</sup> Conor Gearty, ed., Terrorism [USA, 1996] p.222.

Guerillas are inferior in manpower, arms and equipment to the government forces. But still they sustain. They cough up their subordinate position by a very flexible style of warfare, based on hit-and-run operations. To carry out this warfare, they use the terrain to their advantage, immerse in the population or, sometimes, launch their attacks from neighbouring countries. In order to survive, they apply this principle i.e. preventing the government forces from employing its full potential. Tactically, however, guerillas conduct warfare in a manner similar to conventional armies. When guerillas stage an ambush or attack a village, they do it in the same way that a regular infantry unit would.

Abraham Guillier made a significant contribution to guerilla ideals 20 years after the Second World War. The guerilla must operate with three basic principles in mind, according to him. First, even in democracy, the chain of protest that works through meetings, demonstrations, propaganda and industrial strikes will inevitably engulf everybody in 'total war'. For that one must be ready. Second, the essence of guerilla success would be to bring in the whole community not as passive lookers but as active co-participants. One must not terrorise them. It must be "all for one and one for all" in an engagement that was not coercion. Third, no military victory in itself would guarantee lasting improvements for a society. Guerilla efforts have to be politically convincing to the widest of constituencies.<sup>31</sup> Militants involved in guerilla warfare with such satisfying ideals and method of struggle can easily become closer to the people. Their operations are supported by larger community and are sustained by them.

Tactics employed by the revolutionary guerillas are below<sup>32</sup>:

- ◆ Bomb attacks against police stations.
- ◆ Bombing of police vehicles.
- ◆ The setting of ambushes.
- ◆ Expropriations, that is, where extremist commit a robbery, burglary, or other crime for the purpose of obtaining funds for revolutionary purpose.

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<sup>31</sup> Whittaker, n.29, p.77.

<sup>32</sup> Naunihal Singh, The World of Terrorism [New Delhi, 1989], pp.49-50

- ◆ Theft of weapons from government arsenals.
- ◆ Revolutionary kidnappings.
- ◆ Threat of assassination
- ◆ Receipt of guerrilla type training involving the handling of weapons.

Whether guerilla warfare alone can be successful is another matter. In many cases, it has been necessary to combine guerilla warfare with other forms of violence or to make a transition into conventional warfare to achieve success.<sup>33</sup> Ann G. Gaines, in her book 'Terrorism', wrote that guerillas throw a government by organising a fighting force that will grow in to an army, gain control of progressively layer areas of the countryside, and ultimately win a military victory over government forces. Guerilla movements some times use terrorism as a tactic, nevertheless, the thrust of their activities is the achievement of a military victory.

### **Violence**

Violence is the essential tactic of militancy. It may be designed to achieve attention, acknowledgement, or even sympathy and support for the militants' cause. A goal of militant violence might also be to achieve recognition to their rights and of their organisation. Their intention may be to take complete control of the national government, their separate homeland.

Frantz Fanon<sup>34</sup>, a psychiatrist had a major influence on contemporary extremist ideology. According to him, violence is useful and productive. He brings forth reasons for violence that are constructive for oppressed people. It mobilises the oppressed people and binds them together. The benefits of violence appeared to have convinced many groups. It resulted in increasing acceptability of the strategy of violence.

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<sup>33</sup> Bard E. O'Neill, Insurgency and Terrorism [Washington, 1990], p.26.

<sup>34</sup> He served with the FLN in Algeria. He wrote a book called '*The wretched of the Earth*'. There was a significant circulation of this work among the militant groups.[Ernest Evans, Calling A Truce To Terror [ England, 1979] p,16.

J. Bourger Bell gives another reason for the adoption of violence by the groups. He calls it “the myth of the Guerilla”.<sup>35</sup> It states that any movement that adopts the strategy of guerilla warfare and or violence is assured of success. This belief has originated because of the success of many guerilla movements after the Second World War. Bell says that this inevitability of success is encouraging many groups to take up violence in recent decades. Adoption of this strategy requires a valid cause that can mobilise militants and at the same time get mass support. Active public support is not necessary but toleration is enough. This toleration requires sufficient degree of legitimacy of cause in the public eye.

Groups using the weapon of violence regard themselves as the ‘freedom fighters’ struggling against oppression to establish a legitimate and desirable political goal.<sup>36</sup> The paradoxical use of violence is justified by the militants. Margaret O. Hyde and Eli in their book ‘Terrorism’, say that the militants justify the means by the ends. They are able to kill because they see their victims not as people but as objects and symbols of system which need to be destroyed.

### **Suicide Bombing**

An organisation that promotes self-sacrifice and martyrdom is powerful to carry on its militant movement against its adversary. Internationally, suicide bombing is driven not only by religious fundamentalism but also by ethnic nationalism.

This phenomenon of suicide attacks is not new. This was seen among the Jewish Sicaris in the first Century, among the Moslem Hashishiyuh in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and among the Asians in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>37</sup> The perpetrators of these attacks used to take chance to survive. But the modern day suicide bombers are unique. For about decades, suicide attacks have been carried out by one or more persons. They are totally aware of themselves as the “human time-bombs”<sup>38</sup> Modern suicide bombings were introduced by the Shi’ite terrorist organisation, Hizballah in 1983 in Lebanon.

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<sup>35</sup> Gutteridge, n.13, p.18.

<sup>36</sup> Edgar O’ Ballance, *Terrorism in the 1980’s*[London, 1989], p.10.

<sup>37</sup> Yoram Schweitzer, *Suicide Bombings, The Ultimate weapon?* 7 August 2001.

<http://www.ict.org.il/articles/articledet.efm?articleid+373>

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

The group became a symbol of sacrifice and a source of inspiration for many extremist groups. In Sri Lanka, Turkey, Egypt, Chechenya etc., militants have adopted and even improved the original version of the operations.

The suicide bomber carries the explosives on his body or in a vehicle driven by him. He approaches a previously chosen target and blows himself up. So, modern suicide attack is defined as “a violent politically motivated attack carried out in a deliberate state of awareness by a person who blows himself up together with his chosen target.”<sup>39</sup>

The suicide bomber is selected and trained. The aim of the “psychologically and physically war trained “ militant is to give life while destroying the chosen target.<sup>40</sup>The death of the perpetrator is the key to the success of the attack and he /she knows in advance that success depends entirely on his/her death. He begins to occupy a different place in society [as a martyr, a living dead man, a hero who will carry out a vital task for the community]. His sense of helplessness disappears. He acquires power, prestige and respectability.

For most of the militant groups, the driving reason for opting this method is the assurance of success in causing mass destruction and damage to the public morale. Militants choose this as it can be easily put in to practice. It is also materially cheap to execute. It also damages the enemy’s morale. This became a favourite choice for the organisations as it is easy to operate and economically cheap to execute. Like all other methods, suicide attacks by the militants are aimed at gaining publicity and inflate their image. The intelligence apparently is efficient in carrying out these attacks.

Negligence on the part of the governments to the suicide attacks in the battlefield leads to the gaining of the strength of the militant group. By hampering the strategic and logistical units of the security forces, operational efficiency of the militants is enhanced. This affects the morale of the army and loses public confidence.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Frontline, February 18, 2000.



Because of all these benefits, suicide killing has become a winning strategy for the militant groups.

### **Public Support**

The support of the community is vital for the militant group. According to the Maoist paradigm, if the militants are fish, then they survive only in the water of supporters. Gurr observes, "If and when active support [of the community] dries up, the group finds it increasingly difficult to attract new recruits, to get material resources, to find refuge among reliable sympathisers..."<sup>41</sup>

In an ethnic conflict, militant groups have the advantage of obtaining automatic support from the ethnic community by claiming that their fight is for the welfare of the entire community. The nationalist groups can make a strong emotional appeal to their community. Often, it is not easy to be reluctant to join the struggle. Fear of being seen as a traitor to the movement compels them to join the group. They put forward a clear aim i.e. the creation of an independent nation. They draw inspiration from many other national groups which have achieved their independence through armed struggle.<sup>42</sup>

Sympathisers also extend their support. Many individuals involve themselves in militant acts, and harbour militants by providing them food, clothing, shelter etc. They ignore their involvement in crime and are seen as the "romantic rebels", "courageous men and women fighting for a strong cause".<sup>43</sup>

Reliable information is also required about the targets to be attacked and the movement of the victims to be killed in order to be successful in its operations. Usually, the militants for gathering intelligence use sympathisers.

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<sup>41</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, "Terrorism in Democracies: Its social and Political Bases", p.95 in Walter Reich, ed, The origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, ideologies, theologies, states of mind [Cambridge, 1990]

<sup>42</sup> Charles Freeman, Terrorists or Freedom fighters? [London, 1990], p.11.

<sup>43</sup> Singh, n.32, p.51.

Militant groups employ some short-term tactics like the use of violence to get weapons, destroying dangerous opponents to maintain its struggle. Militants provoke government by their actions. The resultant heavy handedness and over reaction by the government and security forces make them hostile to public. In this way, the militant groups inspire and mobilise followers or potential sympathisers who turn in to militants. Thus, the militant movement nourishes by their support.

Walter Laqueur describes an extremist group as immortal as “its way of struggle becomes a tradition and part of people’s lives”.<sup>44</sup> Individual members of an organisation may get destroyed in the process of their operations against the State. This is only temporary as the gaps are filled by the new elements in society that are hostile to government. They will continue to work for the cause.

### **Threat Elimination**

One strategy of the militants, which they employ to survive, is eliminating the threat. They eliminate people and organisations, which pose direct threat to the militants. This strategy will make it easier for militants to concentrate upon achieving other strategic objectives and ultimately their political goals.<sup>45</sup>

### **RESOURCES AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORK:**

Apart from having a proper cause and a degree of popular support, militant groups need certain financial resources to operate successfully. Exceptional advances in modern technology have materially facilitated the growth of militant movement. With the advent of improvements in weapons, communications, transport and electronics, it is easy for the militant group to sustain. Innovations in communication and transport enhance their strength. This help them to expand internationally and survive. Their links with other militant groups increase their efficiency.

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<sup>44</sup> Laqueur, n.22, p.73.

<sup>45</sup> Drake, n.15, pp.39-40.

## Finance

The survival of militant groups can also be achieved by a good financial planning. Militancy is a costly business and requires a lot of finance and equipment to carry out the desired campaign. James Adams has provided a valuable insight on the modern financing of extremist activities. According to him, the survival of some militant groups is a consequence of good financial planning.<sup>46</sup>

Militants need steady flow of money to live and operate. Violence is not the only method to extract finance. A group's requirements are met by funds collected from the people or through criminal acts such as drug trafficking and money laundering. Investment is also means of getting finance.<sup>47</sup>

Funds are collected from the people in the domestic country. This can be made at individual or corporate level, which can be voluntary or involuntary. They even employ threat of force or use force. Co-ethnic contributions are made by the members of the same ethnic group. Even the sympathetic foreign governments also provide funds to the militant organisation.

Contributions from diaspora constitute an important source. Militant groups based on ethnicity have the advantage of getting resources from the diaspora. When the intensity of a conflict is high at home, it leads to mass internal displacement. Refugees who migrate to different countries form the "politicized diaspora".<sup>48</sup> The diasporic communities are mobilised by the militants for funds and propaganda. They help the militant groups to develop international support infrastructure, which not only help in propaganda and fund raising but also training, weapons procurement and shipping.

One significant source of revenue to the militant movement is trade in narcotics. Most of the extremist groups are involved in cultivating, refining and

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<sup>46</sup> Davidson Smith, Combating Terrorism [London, 1990], p.16.

<sup>47</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, Transnational Terrorism, Support Networks and Trends, Faultlines, Vol.7, November 2000, p.6.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp.5-6.

trafficking in heroin or Cocaine. They even tax narcotic traders. Even in some places, narcotics smugglers provide arms, ammunition, equipment and funding to militants on their assurance of providing protection. As South Asia is moving more towards liberalisation, this helps the organised crime to become strong. Militant groups and groups involved in organised crime can operate together. This reduce their dependence on State sponsors and domestic or international supporters.

Money laundering is another source of finance to the militants. It means generating clear money through investment in order to loosen the dirty track. However, many militant groups of today engage in this to produce profits in safe ventures. Extremist groups also invest in Stock Exchange, trade and enterprise. Today, many foreign militant groups own printing presses, gas stations, supermarket, transportation companies, travel agencies, security forces etc. in countries like UK, Canada, Switzerland etc. Some groups are even engaged in unauthorised foreign exchange transactions.<sup>49</sup>

Other than through the above measures, some militant groups lobby against international aid, trade, tourism and investment.

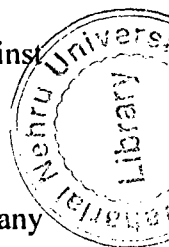
Transnational support structure is an important character of many contemporary militant groups. Their infrastructure in their home country can be easily detected and disrupted. But as the present day militants operate internationally, it is difficult for the concerned governments to destroy their international network.

The international political environment in the past is different from the present. Due to disparity in national laws and the lack of international cooperation, militant groups operate across borders and sustain. With the emergence of globalisation, it has become very easy for the militants to generate support and gain additional leverage.

According to Rohan Gunaratna, "unconstrained by national jurisdiction, these terrorist infrastructure, disseminate propaganda, lobby foreign governments and potential supporters, raise funds, invest funds in trade or businesses, procure weapons

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p.9



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and hire expertise, recruit and train personnel, and transfer personnel, weapons and other supplies to the theatre of conflict.”<sup>50</sup>

## **Weapons**

The militant’s capacity to create panic is enhanced with the augmentation of sophisticated weapons. Modern day extremists have some advantageous characteristic, which help them to stay for long when compared to militants of the past. The nature of threat posed by the militants has undergone a radical change with the society relying more on technology. Innovations in technology have made even the small band of extremists, great potent force. They can create more damage to the society at comparatively less cost.

Militants use wide range of weaponry. Their arsenal has variety of sophisticated weapons. In the past, the choice of weapons for the extremists included “the dagger, the noose, the sword and the poison elixir”.<sup>51</sup> But, now the efficiency of militants to kill has increased with the introduction of the bomb and the pistol and more recently the machine gun and plastic explosives.

Militant’s weapons and equipment include, automatic pistols, AK-47 type assault rifles, machine guns, grenades and grenade launchers etc. Even they make use of conventional weapons. They keep abreast of the new technologies. They even possess night vision equipment, bulletproof vests etc. They employ sophisticated technologies like remote controlled triggering devices for bombs. They can effectively attack an aircraft because of the technologies like radar systems, X-rays, and time and barometric controls.<sup>52</sup>

With the technological developments in the field of small arms design, militants could easily conceal them and they are more accurate and reliable. Wide range of guidance systems has been developed. They include lasers, infrared heat

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.5.

<sup>51</sup> Alan M. Dershowitz, Why Terrorism works? [London, 2002]p.7.

<sup>52</sup> Smith, n.46, p.125.

seeking wire control, portable precision-guided munitions [PGM] which poses a lot of danger.<sup>53</sup> The militants can simply carry them in a suit case.

Along with their traditional methods, utilisation of such sophisticated technologies has led to consolidation of the strength of militants and made them to stay for long.

### **Sources of Weapons**

Acquisition of weapons has become an easy task. Militants can easily get wide range of sophisticated weapons in the international black market. Militant organisations like the Palestine Liberation Organisation and African National Congress have developed “dummy front companies” to carry out the sales in the past.<sup>54</sup>

Commercially produced weapons, equipment and explosives and many other things designed for police and security forces can fall in to militants hands. Militants and their supporters even steal weapons and other equipment from military or security forces whenever it is possible. Explosives, detonators became suitable for the militants also.

With the end of the cold war, the international arms market became saturated. The economic decline of former Soviet countries compelled them to sell weapons. The security aspect is not taken in to consideration. It is easy for the extremist groups in the Pacific region to gain access to the automatic weapons, explosives etc at competitive prices.<sup>55</sup>

State sponsorship is one major method through which the militants can obtain weapons. During the cold war , the Soviet Union, member states of Warsaw Pact, and also North Korea, Syria, Libya, Iran, Iraq and Cuba gave training, provided weapons

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<sup>53</sup> Paul Wilkinson, ed., Technology and Terrorism[London,1993], p.19

<sup>54</sup> Smith, n.46, p.126.

<sup>55</sup> Gunaratna, n.8, p.242.

to militant groups.<sup>56</sup> Militants can also easily get support from a sympathetic regime or from a better equipped terrorist organisations. They are relatively easy to transport and hide. Large number of guns and grenades could reach the militant's hands because of the wide proliferation of conventional weapons through the international arm market, in particular to the third world countries.

The use of conventional weapons with intense planning and some innovation has made the militant movements deadly and difficult to erase.

### **Innovations in the Communication**

Militant groups have harnessed the advances in technology in the areas of transportation. Lot of opportunities are provided to the militants by the developments in the international air transport. The air travel has led to international network of contacts among various militant groups. Militants can easily travel with forged passports and visas.

Not only the cheap international travel but also the proliferation of information technologies like satellite TV, internet, fax, mobile phones has increased the command, control, communication and intelligence capabilities of the militants.

Development in the communication like television and radio has made easy for the militants to get propaganda of their actions. Publicity has become an ideal weapon for militant groups to project their cause to the world attention. People have become aware not only the cause but also the group fighting for it. Many journalists and television reporters compete against each other in reporting the events in a dramatic manner. All this works to the advantage of militants. It attracts new recruits or help in obtaining logistic assistance.

According to Fairclough, the three important tasks of media discourse are “to make representations, set up identities and formulate relations.”<sup>57</sup> Communities have

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<sup>56</sup> Smith, n.45, p.125.

<sup>57</sup> Maya Ranganathan, Nurturing a Nation on the Net: The case of Tamil Eelam, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol.8, no.2, Summer 2002, p52.

always used different media of communication to establish and maintain contacts, of which the Internet is the latest. Internet has become a perfect tool to construct national identity.

## **Internet**

Much reliance on computers in this modern life has created new vulnerabilities. Some militant groups have developed access to the Internet. It is an ideal device to instil and reinforce distinct political identities among ethnonational diasporas. Internet lends itself most evidently to the perpetuation of nationalism among ethnonational stateless diasporas. For the members of stateless ethnonational diasporas, who have left their homelands due to an uncertain political climate, the internet provides the most effective way to maintain cultural and emotional ties with the nation.<sup>58</sup>

Internet provides for the identification of common interests, the sharing of information and the creation of awareness and mobilisation. Militants use the Internet to contact colleagues, disseminate their views to a wider audience, and tap new sources of financial support.

Internet is not hindered by the geographical boundaries and provides fast means of mass communication across borders. Militants can freely carry out their activities through Internet as it provides anonymity. Launching a website is much simpler compared to the complexities of publishing a newspaper, or setting up a radio or television station. The Internet combines within itself features of a newspaper, radio and television.

The Internet also provides an abundance of detailed instruction for anyone interested in making bombs, rockets, flamethrowers, and dozens of other lethal weapons and poisons.<sup>59</sup> Technical details and up-to-date intelligence about strategic targets are also available. With information on the militant strategies and tactics widely accessible, a militant group can easily and successfully direct its struggle.

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p.54.

<sup>59</sup> Griset, Mahan, n.l, p.230.



A militant group can disrupt the government websites and create commotion. Militants can easily manage to intercept the conversations of authorities or can move in to the banking system.

As the militants continue to use scientific and technological developments, it has become hard on the part of the security to check them. Their actions involve element of surprise. Militants can utilise the freedom in a democratic society and can easily attack and disrupt.

### **Cooperation among the groups**

Militancy has become tough to handle because of the inter-links between different militant groups.<sup>60</sup> The environment in which the contemporary militants operate is much different from their predecessors. The significant difference is the modern transnational flow of information. This provides cooperation among the organisations of different political, ethnic and geographical backgrounds in the fields of training, procurement of weapons and documentation. They share “technology, personnel and intelligence”.<sup>61</sup> They are more aware of other groups problems, ideologies and tactics. This solidarity among the militants of the world is posing enormous threat to the international security. This reliability on each other has added their strength and given new impetus to the militants to carry out their operations. Organisation of joint actions by the militant groups of the world has become a regular feature of the militant threat.

Even some state sponsors help militants in enhancing their efficiency. Militants happen to learn many of the techniques in the camps provided by the state sponsors.

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<sup>60</sup> Paul Wilkinson refers to this in his article “Terrorism Vs Liberal Democracy: The problems of Response” in William Gutteridge, ed., Contemporary Terrorism [New York, 1986], p.38. He traces the origin of this cooperation to the conference of the members of the embryonic “Terrorist International” of the Afro-Asian-Latin American people’s solidarity organisations in Havana. Later, it got strengthened in different meetings in 1972, where they agreed to supply each other with arms and information to carry out operations on behalf of each other.

<sup>61</sup> Gunaratna, n.8, p.243.

Libya was engaged in the training of maritime and underwater specialists. Training of use of weapons was provided in the various camps of Bekaa valley.<sup>62</sup>

## **Conclusion**

A well-organised group, which is convinced of the rightness of its cause, can sustain further with the help of all the above advantages. Mobility of militants, along with greater sophistication in militants weapons and methods in combination, make militancy easy to survive. Any subsidence in the military or political capabilities weakens the militant campaign. Possession of both capacities enhances their position to the peak. In such situations, the militant groups sustain themselves by continuing their violence.

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<sup>62</sup> Smith, n.43, p.126.

## *Chapter 2*

### *The Rise of LTTE: An Overview*

The LTTE is the manifestation of the aggravation of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. The discriminatory legislative and administrative acts of successive Sinhalese majority governments since independence marginalised the minority communities in Sri Lanka. Persistent injustice and repression frustrated the Tamil youth. In these circumstances, the LTTE has taken its roots by believing in violence as an instrument to redress the Tamil grievances.

The LTTE has forged ahead of other militant movements and taken control of the liberation struggle. Slowly and steadily, it has grown in to a military institution. The LTTE is the most committed organisation to secession. It is militarily the most powerful guerilla organisation.

This chapter makes an attempt to analyse the causes of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and the conditions under which the LTTE has emerged as a militant organization.

#### **Causes of Ethnic conflict**

In an ethnic conflict, ethnic identity of groups is always a mobilising factor and is mostly based on language, culture, religion and territory. Language forms a major ingredient in ethnic conflicts. Even, religion brings differences among the groups and aggravates the ethnic conflict. For justifying ethnic identity, the group's identification with some territory becomes essential. The differences in their way of life are determined by their culture. Every ethnic group tries to preserve and protect its identity. Conflict situation arises when an ethnic group feels threatened by the behaviour of other groups. So, ethnic conflicts are "collective actions, not individual acts, initiated with a perceived divergence of interests or incompatibility of goals

among cultural groupings of people who develop competing interests and incompatible identities.”<sup>1</sup>

The origin of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka can be traced to the majoritarian attitude of the State which has made the minority Tamils to feel relatively deprived. According to the perceptions of Tamil minority, the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka is the result of discrimination dating back to the colonial era. The intensity of the conflict increased after independence.

The discriminatory citizenship acts and land colonization schemes of the Sri Lankan governments after independence affected the Tamils. The language and education policies also affected them. The declaration of Sinhalese as the official language in 1956 was directly responsible for the loss of their employment opportunities. The discrimination of the Tamil students manifested in the standardisation policy of 1970. Religious freedom is also restricted since the constitution gives a special treatment to Buddhism.

From the beginning of 1970s a feeling of sense of deprivation was seen in the Tamil community particularly in the youth. They were deprived in the areas of education, use of the Tamil language, land alienation and employment opportunities. Keeping the ingredients of ethnic identity in view, the issues in ethnic conflict can be discussed under the following heads:

1. The emergence of ethnic polarization
2. Language
3. Employment.
4. Education
5. Religion
6. Land

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<sup>1</sup> Marc Howard Ross, “Democracy as Joint Problem Solving: Addressing Interests and Identities in Divided Societies”, Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, Vol.4, no.4, winter 1998, p.20.

## 1. The emergence of ethnic polarisation

The relations between the Sri Lankan Tamils and Sinhalese have not always been antagonistic. With the advent of British colonial rule in Sri Lanka in 1796, the Sinhala and Tamil nations were brought together in 1833 for the sake of administrative convenience. The colonial plantation economy led to migration of Tamils from Southern India to Sri Lanka.

After the country gained independence in 1948, Sri Lanka adopted a Westminster model constitution with a unitary State structure. The constitution framed by the British proved useless in protecting the rights of the minorities. The first major contention immediately after the independence was related to the citizenship of people of Indian origin. 'Citizenship' was not defined in the Soulbury constitution. When the British left Sri Lanka, an assortment of various groups was exiting.<sup>2</sup>

The Ceylon Citizenship Act of 1948, combined with the Indian and Pakistani Resident (Citizenship) Act of 1949, allowed citizenship only by descent or by strict conditions of registration. Provision for citizenship by birth was not facilitated.<sup>3</sup>

By this act, one million Indian Tamils were disenfranchised. This act bolstered ethnic politics and reduced the electoral leverage of the Indian Tamils.

### Language

The traditional Tamil homeland (northern and eastern provinces of the island) is a dry zone, unlike the wet zone of the low country Sinhalese. This geographical contingency made them to rely on the government and professional services. And the Sinhalese turned to economic opportunities in trade and plantation.

During the British period, the network of missionary schools was well established in the Tamil homeland. This helped in the spread of English education

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<sup>2</sup> As per the 1981 census, the population of different communities in Sri Lanka is: Sinhalese-74%, Sri Lankan Tamils – 12.7%, Indian Tamils –5.5%, Muslims –7.1%, Burghers – 0.3%, Malays –0.3%, Various other small groups –0.2%

[inweb.worldbank.org/sar/sa.nsf/Attachments/LKASAPPI/\\$file/App1.pdf](http://inweb.worldbank.org/sar/sa.nsf/Attachments/LKASAPPI/$file/App1.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Citizenship by descent required a proof of three generations of paternal ancestry. Only in 1985, the registration of births was started. These reasons made it very difficult for the applicants to acquire citizenship and so became stateless. Mohan Ram, *Sri Lanka- The Fractured Island* (New Delhi, 1989), p.36.

among the Tamils. So, they were well equipped for government and professional jobs. There was no significant competition from the Sinhalese till the early twentieth century.

The emerging nationalist forces perceived that the Sri Lankan Tamils had access to a disproportionate share of power. This fear formed the basis for the politics of language. SWRD Bandaranaike came to power in 1956 with the election promise of adopting 'Sinhalese' as the only official language of the country. This promise was fulfilled by passing the Sinhala only bill (Official language Act, No. 33 of 1956)<sup>4</sup>. This didn't give any status of parity to the Tamil language. Pluralism, which is the essential feature of democratic political system, was eroded. The dangers involved in this were not understood then<sup>5</sup>.

Consciously or unconsciously, Sinhala nationalism got equated with Sri Lankan nationalism. This interchangeability of Sinhala nationalism with the larger Sri Lankan nationalism was not acceptable to the Tamils.

### **Employment**

The language policy of 1956 resulted in the closure of avenues to government employment to Tamils. They were forced to study and work in Sinhala. Tamil officers were given three years time to learn Sinhala language. If not, they were faced with the danger of dismissal. Security services, Public corporation and even the private sector were not left out of this policy.

The younger generation Tamils got alienated from the national mainstream. Sri Lanka, being the unitary state perpetuated this disadvantaged condition. The employment prospects for Tamils were further hindered through discriminatory education policies.

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<sup>4</sup> This act was brought in 1956, which was the year of the Buddha Jayanthi, which marked the 2500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Buddhist Nirvana. The year long celebrations aggravated the tension over language *ibid.*, p.39.

<sup>5</sup> The 'Sinhala only' legislature, which visibly turned Tamils in to official illiterates, was beginning to have its effect on the Tamil people. "It influenced us greatly," said a Tamil who turned in to militant later. M.R. Narayan Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka* (Delhi, 2002) p. 26.

## **Education**

The educational policies along with special consideration for the Sinhalese language in the 1972 constitution made many Tamils to believe that they were treated as a marginal community.

No segment or section of Tamil society was left out. This was transparently visible in the discriminatory policy called 'Standardization policy'. To the already agitated Tamils by the language policy, the radical policy of standardization in education further fuelled their anger.

Tamil students performed exceptionally well in science courses till 1969. Academic performance was the basis for the university admissions. A policy called 'Standardisation' which was introduced by the Sri Lankan government demanded the student answering exams in Tamil to gain higher marks than the Sinhalese students in the field of engineering, medicine or science. With the implementation of the standardisation and quota system as the determinants of eligibility, their number reduced radically.<sup>6</sup>

This policy was responsible for both "personal agony" and "political acrimony".<sup>7</sup> Personally, the Tamil students who failed to get admission in these schools either turned violent or became depressed. The latter reason was responsible for increase in suicides among Tamil youths.

## **Religion**

After education, the target was religion. The 1972 constitution declared 'Buddhism' as the State religion. The Republican constitution of 1978 further enhanced the supremacy of Buddhism. This made Tamils to feel inferior as their religion Hinduism was relegated to a secondary position in the country. Religion, was never a serious ingredient in the ethnic hostility between the two communities. The conflict was not between Hinduism and Buddhism but between the Sinhalese and the

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<sup>6</sup> The total share of Tamil students for science based courses was 35-3% in 1970. This had drastically fallen to 14.2% in 1995. Sinhalese students had now gained a predominant position in the university  
Lakshman Sabaratnam, *Ethnic Attachments in Sri Lanka* [New York, 2001], p.202.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, P 203.

Tamils. So, the contention was not religious, but ethnic. Still, the denial of equal status with Buddhism disappointed the Tamils.

### **Land**

The ethnic politics in Sri Lanka has manifested in the issue of ownership and access to land. There is some peculiarity in the demographic patterns in Sri Lanka. Certain ethnic groups are concentrated in certain geographical regions.

The politics of land and ethnicity was played in the North Central province and the Eastern province. These areas come under dry zone and were sparsely populated. After independence, the Sri Lankan government resettled Sinhalese farmers from the densely populated areas to these provinces. This colonisation and resettlement policy became an integral component of Sinhalese Buddhist nation-building.

The Sri Lankan Tamils perceived this as an attack on their 'traditional homeland'. It appeared to them that the Sinhala State deliberately made an attempt to marginalise them. The colonization schemes of the State did change the demographic pattern. It resulted in the distortion of the ratio of local people to the advantage of the Sinhalese. Over 1,134 families of Sinhalese were resettled in the Tamil homeland. These areas were exclusively occupied by the Tamils before this programme.<sup>8</sup>

### **Loss of confidence in democratic and peaceful means**

From the beginning, ethnic politics and fears of discrimination made Tamil politicians to make a demand for federalism. It was, as early as the 1950s, the Tamil political parties sought demanding for more political autonomy in the Tamil dominating areas.<sup>9</sup>

Many times, devolution of power was perceived as a solution for reducing tensions. Many pacts were signed for the devolution of power. They included the

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<sup>8</sup> H.P.Chattopadhyaya, Ehnic Unrest in Modern Sri Lanka (New Delhi, 1994), p.26.

<sup>9</sup> The federal party (which represents Tamils) found the 1956 Act 'unconstitutional'. It was challenged in the courts. In order to protect the cultural freedom and identity of the Tamil – speaking people, it called for an 'autonomous Tamil linguistic State' in a federal setup. Satchi Ponnambalam, Sri Lanka – The National Question and The Tamil Liberation Struggle (London, 1983), p 4.



Bandaranaike – Chelvanayagam pact,<sup>10</sup> of July 1957 and Dudley –Chelvanayagam pact of 1965. Both the pacts were annulled. After 1956, the two major political parties -United National Party [UNP] and the Sri Lankan Freedom Party [SLFP]- competed with each other to attract the vote of the Sinhalese majority. The leadership lacked political will. The influence of Buddhist ideas on the governance started growing.

The failure to implement these proposals made Tamils to demand separation,<sup>11</sup> abdicating federalism, which was the demand till then. Lack of will to implement these agreements resulted in the loss of confidence in democratic politics.

The loss of confidence in non-violent means changed the thinking of many. They argued that Mahatma Gandhi succeeded in India with his concept of non-violence as he was leading a majority against a minority. But in Sri Lanka, the Tamils were a minority fighting for rights from a majority.<sup>12</sup>

Tamils felt that the path of non-violent struggle failed to redress their grievances and win their rights. It brought among them a sense of insecurity. Every time they resisted, they faced suppression by the majority Sinhalese.

After certain point, a shift in Tamil politics from the commitment to parliamentary democracy to commitment to militant struggle became obvious.

### **Conditions that led to the emergence of the LTTE**

The marginalisation of the minority community in Sri Lanka led to the formation of the LTTE. The moderate Tamil political parties failed to redress their grievances through peaceful and political parliamentary means. The perpetration of violence by the State and its agents against the minorities turned them helpless. Sense

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<sup>10</sup> After the passage of 1956 Act, S.J.V. Chelvanayagam (FP leaders) threatened to start a civil disobedience movement, Tamils were asked to do all the transactions in Tamil or in English. It was against learning Sinhala (*Ibid.*) This was followed by the negotiations with the Sri Lankan Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. He promised to make Tamil as one of the national languages of administration in the Tamil majority regions. He also agreed for the decentralisation of power through provincial councils. The Sinhalese countered these proposals. The agreement was repudiated. Tamils continued with their peaceful agitation.

<sup>11</sup> Rejection of B-C pact at this level led to a major disaster later. The peaceful agitation made by the Tamils was thrown a deaf ear. When JR Jayawardane, who opposed Tamils in 1956, became president after 31 years in 1977 realized the decision of official language as a major mistake. A mistake which led to militancy. Ram, n.3, p.41.

<sup>12</sup> M.R. Narayan Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka* (Delhi, 2002), p.19.

of deprivation and repression among the Tamil youth necessitated the formation of LTTE.

An analysis of the conflict since independence revealed absence of violent approach. In the beginning, the Tamils used parliamentary means to register their protest. Satyagraha was one of their popular means of protest.

But, through parliamentary participation and peaceful negotiations, Sri Lankan Tamil leadership got little dividend. The Sinhalese leaders were apathetic to their concerns. They were under the constant influence of Sinhala majority. Such an attitude of the majority can be understandable in a parliamentary form of government. But unless the majority is empathetic and respects the basic rights of minority ethnic group, the whole concept of the modern State system needs to be changed. No majority has any right to crush the legitimate interests of the minority. If it does, then it has the right to self-determination.<sup>13</sup>

The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), a Tamil political party was involved in mobilization of people against discrimination. The Sri Lankan State failed to redress the grievances of the Sri Lankan Tamils.

They first demanded a federal constitution and equal linguistic rights. When the government did not pay heed to their demand, the goal became a separate State. In the 1950s and 1960s, Tamils did not resort to violence. Peaceful and democratic expression of grievances by the Tamil political parties were suppressed and ignored by the State. According to the LTTE, "the TULF did not have a concrete programme of political action to liberate the oppressed Tamil Nation as well as the attitude of the traditional left parties which collaborated with the Sinhala capitalist clan and ignored the Tamil national struggle."<sup>14</sup> The TULF's failure to achieve the Tamil rights created a space for the emergence of LTTE.

Thus, the State is one of the main culprits in aggravating the ethnic relations in Sri Lanka. The State has drifted from secular to sectarian. This led to interruption in the balance and harmony of social and political make up. Minorities who are

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<sup>13</sup> This is recognized by the charter of the United Nations. {Article 1[2]}.

C. Joshua Thomas, Sri Lanka's Turmoil and Indian Government (New Delhi, 1995), p.23

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., P.22.

marginalised are driven to the state of desperation. The ultimate propulsion towards achieving Tamil Eelam through violence is the result of “institutional decay”.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to the frustration caused by the inability to get their grievances redressed, there are other conditions which made LTTE to rise. Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna [JVP] insurgency, creation of Bangladesh, atrocities by the police and the anti-Tamil riots also attributed to the emergence of LTTE.<sup>16</sup>

In 1971, there was an armed insurgency by the JVP. The unemployed rural Sinhala youth made an unsuccessful attempt to capture power by violence in a one-day revolution. But, this made Tamils to realise that there is one more path open to them to redress their grievances. The LTTE learnt from their mistakes.

Bangladesh as an independent country also influenced the Tamils. The brave struggle of the former East Pakistan against the domination of West Pakistanis and military dictatorship at home inspired the Tamils.

The Sri Lankan Tamils were provoked by the atrocities of Sri Lankan Police. On the last day of the Sixth International Tamil Research Conference in Jaffna, Police used tear gas against the peaceful audience.<sup>17</sup>

The anti-Tamil riots of 1958, 1977, and 1981 made them understand their vulnerability. Many Tamils consider the 1977 anti-Tamil riots as the turning point. According to the report of Sansoni Commission, there were “widespread killings, assaults, rapes and damage to Hindu temples in almost every area of the island during the August – September 1977 events”.<sup>18</sup> After these riots, the Tamil youth became more determined to achieve Eelam.

Many Tamil youth who were active in the youth organisations were kept in detention without any charges. During 1972 and 1975, police arrest and harassment of Tamil youth increased. These atrocities gave rise to the early phase of youth militancy in the Tamil majority areas.

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<sup>15</sup> Neil De Votta, Control Democracy, Institutional decay and the Quest for Eelam: Explaining Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.73, no.1, spring 2000, p.56

<sup>16</sup> Ambalavanar Sivarajah, *Politics of Tamil Nationalism in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi, 1996), p.129.

<sup>17</sup> Tamils demanded an inquiry in to this incident. Not only it was ignored, but also the police officer responsible for it was given promotion. ( *Ibid.* )

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*,p.27.

All these conditions made youth to be at the forefront of the politics of violence as they suffered the most. Deeply motivated youth opted for violence when their grievances were unresolved and found no other way to register their protest. The signs of exasperation were seen in the black flag protests in Jaffna by the Tamil students who were excluded from the university because of the discriminatory standardisation policy. At every stage of the conflict the Tamil opposition was met by the highhanded tactics of the government or by the Sinhala groups. These factors ultimately provoked them to turn aggressive. Tamil students affected by the unfair education policy, stoned government buses and property. They made bombs from the chemicals stolen from the schools and colleges.<sup>19</sup> It is these students who provided the ground and leadership for the militant struggle with the goal of achieving a separate State of Eelam.

Thus, by the mid-1970s, not only the means but also their ends changed. Federal autonomy was no longer their demand with the formation of LTTE in 1976, the approach became violent and goal was to achieve the right to self-determination.

The reasons behind the emergence of LTTE are underlined in the statement made on behalf of the joint front of the Tamil liberation organisations at the Thimpu talks in 1985. It says:

We are a liberation movement which was compelled to resort to the force of arms because all force of reason had failed to convince the successive Sri Lanka governments in the past. Further under conditions of national oppression and the intensification of state terrorism and genocide against our people, the demand for a separate State became the only logical expression of the oppressed Tamil people. Our armed struggle is the manifestation of that logical expression.<sup>20</sup>

### **Formation of the LTTE**

In the midst of suppression and disgust, simultaneously with the above mentioned developments, a group called 'Tamil New Tigers' (TNT) clandestinely emerged on the Sri Lankan scene. It gradually evolved into a strong and powerful militant outfit. TNT, formed by Velupillai Prabhakaran with just eight members

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<sup>19</sup> Swamy, n.12,p.26.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.eelamweb.com/history/fs/legitimacy.shtml>.

transformed into a sophisticated extremist organization called the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 1976.

The evolutionary nature of the Tamil struggle was explained by the LTTE as follows:

The struggle for national freedom, having failed in its democratic popular agitation, having exhausted its moral power to mobilise the masses for peaceful campaign gave rise to armed resistance in Tamil Eelam.<sup>21</sup>

Caught up at the peak of a national oppression, constantly victimized by the police brutality for political actions, the revolutionary ardor of the militant Tamil youth sought concrete political expression to register their protest. Disenchantment with the political strategy of the non violence, confronted with the demand for revolutionary political practice, the Tiger movement gave its historical birth in 1972, as the armed resistance movement of the people.<sup>22</sup>

To understand the formation of LTTE, one has to trace the roots of TNT and its gradual growth and development. It is from this TNT, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam emerged in 1976.

### **The Tamil New Tigers**

It is difficult to fix the exact date of the formation of the TNT. It was the outcome of a gradual evolution. At the age of fifteen, Prabhakaran became a member of the Thangathurai- Kuttimani group (Tamil Students Union) in 1969.<sup>23</sup> Through his energy, bravery, organizational skill and dedication, Prabhakaran gradually built himself into a leader.

The highlighting features in the development of the TNT are the Duraiappah Stadium attack, murder of the Jaffna Mayor and the organised bank robbery. Prabhakaran, went underground in the process of development of TNT.

Prabhakaran's role as a leader of an armed group started when he was seventeen years old. He led a bomb attack at the carnival held at Duraiappah stadium, Jaffna on 17 September, 1972. He headed a small group of dedicated young men:

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<sup>21</sup> Quoted in V.Suryanarayana, *Sri Lanka : The Fractured Island*, paper presented at the seminar on South Asian Ethnic Conflicts and their resolutions organized by SSS, JNU, New Delhi, 1997.

<sup>22</sup> Selected Political Documents of the Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Eelam, *Towards Liberation* (n.p. 1984).

<sup>23</sup> By late 1960's, Thangathurai-Kuttimani group called 'Tamil Students Union' was existing. Ponnuthurai Satyaseelan was the founder of TSU. [http://www.sangam.org/sabaratnam/pirapaharan\\_chap6.htm](http://www.sangam.org/sabaratnam/pirapaharan_chap6.htm)

Chetti, Ramesh, Saravanan [alias Patkunnarajah), Inbam, Kirupaharan, Sivarajah, Kalapathy, Kannady. Surprisingly, all of them were elder to him. Prabhakaran. named this group 'Tamil New Tigers' (TNT). He wanted TNT to attack "Sinhala extremism" and "Tamil Conservatism".<sup>24</sup>

When Duraiappah stadium attack happened, nobody was aware of the existence of TNT. Prabhakaran organized his group in strict secrecy. Even most of the TSU leaders were unaware. But police suspected Thangathurai Kuttimani group for the Duraiappah Stadium attack. Police focussed on TSU and intensely hunted for the members of the TSU. Police took months to know about Prabhakaran. During this period, Prabhakaran was engrossed in shaping his organization.

Prabhakaran went underground after the police search of his home in March 1973.<sup>25</sup> He went hiding along with Thangathurai and Kuttimani. When the search for him became intense, he along with Thangathurai, Kuttimani, Periya Sothi Sailed to Tamil Nadu in one of the Kuttimani' s boats.<sup>26</sup> Prabhakaran returned to Jaffna in mid 1974.

One significant event that made TNT gain reputation in Sri Lanka is the murder of the Jaffna Mayor, Alfred Duraiappah in 1975. He was targeted by the TNT for acquainting with Sirimao Bandaranaike in enacting the 1972 constitution, which was against the Tamils. This act was performed by no other than Prabhakaran with his revolver. This murder is regarded as the first political murder in Tamil history in recent. This also changed the course of Sri Lankan history.

None of them know that an organization called Tamil New Tigers (TNT) was existing. Police was after the members of the Tamil Youth Forum<sup>27</sup> (TYF) and kept

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* DagmarHellmann-Rajanayagam in her book traces the roots of TNT in an independent youth organisation called Tamil Illianar Peravai [TIP], formed under the leadership of Satyasilan in 1972. It was supposed to have links with TULF. TNT emerged out of TIP in 1973. \_Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers* [Stuttgart, 1994], p.10.

<sup>25</sup> In March 1973, when the police launched a crackdown on the newly formed Tamil Youth Forum (TYF) a chase for Prabhakaran also started. He was then living with his family in Velvettithrai.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* They destined towards Vetharaniyam, one of the preferable places for Sri Lankan Tamils. Prabhakaran went to Madras to build up a cell and enhance contacts with Tamilnadu politicians.

<sup>27</sup> This new youth organization was founded in January 1973, which had a membership of about 40 youths. When Tamil Students Union (TSU) was going out of TUF's control and even weakened after arrests of its leaders, Amirthalingam (TUF) founded Tamil Elaingyar Peravai or Tamil youth Forum (TYF) but was not affiliated to TUF. [http://www.sangam.org/sabaratnaw/pirapaharan\\_chap6.htm](http://www.sangam.org/sabaratnaw/pirapaharan_chap6.htm).

all of them in jail. Some lower ranked members of the TYF revealed to the police of the existence of TNT and its leader.

On the other hand, Tamils were happy that a strong force has emerged and are ready to protect their interests even at the cost of their lives. With Duraiappah's murder, Prabhakaran become a hero. Automatically, his organization TNT got reputed.

The Bank robbery, carried out by the TNT in 1976 also made the Sri Lankan government feel the presence of the organization.

Running an organization is not an easy task. Constant finance is required to meet the needs. Money could not be raised openly as the police were constantly looking for them. Even people were afraid to give them funds. JVP's example of robbing banks influenced their minds. All the components of the plan were dealt meticulously and on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1976, Prabhakaran with his selected associates implemented the plan. They targeted the people's bank at Puttur and looted Rs.500,000 in currency and two lakhs rupees worth jewellery.<sup>28</sup>

This jolted the government and the police. Destructing TNT became a primary task for them.

### **Transformation of TNT in to LTTE**

With the bubbling confidence after the success of Duraiappah's murder and Puttur bank robbery, Prabhakaran decided to cherish his long time dream of starting an urban guerilla outfit.

He was preparing for this from the time he was in Tamilnadu. He wanted 'Tamil Eelam' to be included in the organisation's name. In Tamil literature, Eelam embraces Sri Lanka, the entire country. But his concern is only about northern and eastern portion. This region was historically under Tamil control. He included 'Tiger' because that was the symbol of Cholas, Tamil kings, and under whose rule Tamil culture and power reached supreme heights. This reflects the ancient glory of

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

Tamils.<sup>29</sup> In sum, he called the entire movement as the liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam as it is a struggle for liberation from the Sinhala oppression.

Not only the name, Prabhakaran was ready with his logo too. He took the help of an Indian artist when he was in Madurai, Tamil Nadu. Prabhakaran expressed his ideas and accordingly the artist gave life to it. It has “The head of a roaring Tiger, paws outstretched, with two rifles and .33 bullets set against a circle ringing the Tigers head.”<sup>30</sup>

His seven month stay in Madurai also helped Prabhakaran to design the military uniform for the Tigers. He also experimented with a code language to use it for secret communication. He trained the LTTE cadres in the use of walkie-talkies. The plan for a modern communication network was also prepared.<sup>31</sup>

Prabhakaran opened three training camps in Tamilnadu. They were at Sirumalai, Pollachi and Mettur.<sup>32</sup> Prabhakaran also started his first training camp in Sri Lanka called “Poonthodham” (flower garden) in a forty acre farm near to Vavuniya town.<sup>33</sup> In Tamilnadu, Indian military officer was hired to impart the training.<sup>34</sup>

Prabhakaran is a great admirer of Subhash Chandra Bose. This Indian National Army (INA) and the teachings of Swami Vivekananda inspired him a lot in moulding his organisation. Prabhakaran attended the Madurai Subash Chandra Bose Sangam’s Conference. This conference was regarded as a turning point in Prabhakaran’s life according to Nedumaran.<sup>35</sup>

### **Aims and objectives**

The Tamil liberation Tigers claims themselves to be the “historical product of the Sinhala chauvinist oppression. The objectives of the LTTE reflect the strong aspiration of the Tamils to achieve independence. They pledged to the task of

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<sup>29</sup> Dagmar Hellmann, Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers* (Stuttgart, 1994), P 56.

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.sangam.org/sabaratnam/pirapaharan\\_chap6.htm](http://www.sangam.org/sabaratnam/pirapaharan_chap6.htm)

<sup>31</sup> T.Sabaratnam, *The Indian Interest* (Pirapaharan, Chapter 29) February 4, 2004  
<http://www.Sangam.org/articles/view/zid=198>

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.sangam.org/sabaratnam/pirapaharan\\_chap6.htm](http://www.sangam.org/sabaratnam/pirapaharan_chap6.htm)

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.sangam.org/articles/view/?id=198>

<sup>35</sup> When Prabhakaran was in Madurai, he went to this conference. He was mesmerized by the speaker. What moved Prabhakaran the most the ‘Salute’ given to the Bose when the national anthem of the INA was sung. Prabhakaran said: “How I wish that I too would be able to take the Salute in a march past of at least 100 LTTE cadres”. <http://www.sangam.org/articles/view/?id=198>.



‘national emancipation’ and ‘socialist revolution’.<sup>36</sup> Their main objectives as given in their document are<sup>37</sup>:

- Total independence of Tamil Eelam
- The establishment of a sovereign, socialist democratic people’s government.
- Abolition of all forms of exploitation, the caste system in particular.
- Establishment of a socialist mode of production.
- Uphold armed revolutionary struggle; an extension of the political struggle for liberation.

Guerilla warfare will be gradually and systematically transformed in to a genuine people’s war of liberation.

To achieve these objectives, they had chosen the armed revolutionary struggle as the effective path. They call it as an “extension of the political struggle for liberation.”<sup>38</sup>

According to an LTTE publication:

The armed struggle is the historical product of intolerable national oppression; it is an extension , continuation, and advancement of the political struggle of our oppressed people....[The LTTE cadres] have no choice other than to fight decisively to advance the cause of national freedom.<sup>39</sup>

They also pledged to carry out the movement in solidarity with other national liberation movements in the world. In their words,

We uphold an anti-imperialist policy and therefore we pledge our militant solidarity with the oppressed humankind in the third world in their struggle against imperialism, neo-colonialists, Zionism, racism and other forces of reaction.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Document released by the political committee of the LTTE in November 1978, published in “Towards Liberation”.

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.sangam.org/sabaratnam/pirapaharanchap9.htm>.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in P. Sahadevan, Sri Lanka’s war for peace and the LTTE’s commitment to armed struggle in Omprakash Mishra and Sucheta Ghosh, eds., Terrorism and Low Intensity Conflict in South Asian Region (New Delhi, 2003), p.300.

<sup>40</sup> Selected Political Documents of the Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Eelam, Towards Liberation [n.p., 1984].

A five member Central Committee was set up to head the organization. The TNT got transformed in to LTTE with the adoption of the constitution by the new Central Committee on 5 May, 1976. The members of the first Central Committee were Sellakili, Iyer, Nagarajah, Vichchveswaran.<sup>41</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Tamil community in Sri Lanka has genuine grievances arising out of their minority status and discrimination by the majority Sinhala governments since independence. The resultant sense of powerlessness led to the emergence of LTTE. As all the democratic methods Tamils adopted failed to find a solution, the LTTE was founded with a belief that violence was the answer to Tamil oppression.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

## *Chapter 3*

# *Structural Factors For The LTTE's Survival*

LTTE is a role model and a trend –setter for many other groups in the world. Its political and military cells are located all over the North-East. The group has chosen urban guerilla warfare as an effective mode of armed struggle. It is one of the few guerilla groups in the world, which has the capability to challenge all three wings of the government forces. The LTTE guerilla units live with the people and are sustained by the people. They call themselves as armed political militants. They consider themselves as the political agents aimed at liberating their people from various forms of oppression. LTTE recruits are from various backgrounds. There are peasants, workers, students and intellectuals.

The LTTE has a two-tier structure: military wing, which has many professional cadres, and political wing, which is subordinate to it. Overseeing both is a Central Governing Committee. The LTTE Supremo, Velupillai Prabhakaran, heads this. This committee is responsible for directing and controlling several subdivisions. They include<sup>1</sup>:

- An Amphibious group (the Sea Tigers, headed by Soosai)
- An airborne group (known as the Air Tigers, headed by Shankar)
- An Elite fighting wing (known as the Charles Anthony Regiment, headed by Balraj)
- A Suicide Commando Unit (the Black Tigers, headed by Pottu Amman)
- A highly Secretive Intelligence group
- A Political Office headed by Thamil Chelvam (Political Leader)

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Chalk, Commentary no.77, A Canadian Security Intelligence Service Publication, <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com77e.html>, March 17,2000

Prabhakaran is advised by Anton S. Balasingham, who serves as the LTTE's theoretician. Regarding military hierarchy, the organisation of LTTE is structured into seven regular commands on the geographical basis. They are under special district Commanders responsible to Prabhakaran. Deputy commanders head LTTE's various wings. They are Sea Tigers, Black Tigers, the Women's wing, intelligence, ordnance, military intelligence, military planning etc. LTTE cadres comprise of both men and women. Women form one third of the cadres. Severe shortage of manpower after 1987 led to recruitment of young boys and girls at the age group of 9-14 years.

Till 1983, the LTTE had no armory to feel proud of and had even less than fifty hardcore members. But just in four years, its strength increased in leaps and bounds. The strength of LTTE is about 10,000-armed members. Of which, 3000-6000 members can be regarded as trained hardcore fighters. This makes the LTTE one of the largest militant organisations. <sup>2</sup>

The strong organizational structure of LTTE contributed to its survival. The structure of an organisation is determined by its style of leadership, ideological basis, nature of its cadres, method of its struggle and military strength.

## **LEADERSHIP**

The organisation of LTTE has a charismatic leader at the apex. Prabhakaran is an undisputed leader of the LTTE since its inception. His position is maintained with absolute ruthlessness. His commitment to the creation of Tamil Eelam is unalterable. Prabhakaran's political strategies and military tactics have made LTTE, a powerful organisation. Leadership, in this case, is of paramount importance in its sustenance.

Prabhakaran was born on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1954 in Valvettiturai, a coastal town famous for militancy against the state. He turned in to militant when he was sixteen. He earned the name 'Thamby' [younger brother] among the co-militants as he was very young. He is extraordinary in planning military strategy and tactics. The

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/shrilanka/terrorist\\_outfits/childsoldiers.htm](http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/shrilanka/terrorist_outfits/childsoldiers.htm).

way he executes them puzzles the enemy. Very soon, Prabhakaran became a symbol of Tamil militancy.

Popular acceptance of the leader helped in the consolidation of leadership. Prabhakaran commands great respect and is accepted as a leader by majority of Sri Lankan Tamils both within and outside Sri Lanka.

Tigers have unquestioning love for Prabhakaran. The guerilla leader's name inspires so much awe among them. They don't even use his name, they refer to him as the 'leader'. Prabhakaran's picture is seen at every Tiger's house. In their view, the leader can do no wrong. In Alex Perry's article, he refers to the words of Jaffna psychiatrist Daya Soma Sundaram who says, "the faithful make pilgrimages to Prabhakaran's former home in nearby Velvettiturai to fill little boxes of soil like holy rituals as though they are collecting water from the Ganges."<sup>3</sup> Many of her patients regard Prabhakaran as higher than their own God.

With such admiration from the people, a leader can easily extract obedience. This divine relationship between the leader and the public can easily sustain the movement. There is no parallel to his position as a Tamil nationalist. His audacity, commitment and willingness to endure personal sacrifice elevated him to this position.

In the recent past, no leader has won the confidence and cooperation of Tamils to such an extent. Tamils of all ages and all sections accept him as the leader. This consolidated his position and helped him in having good control over his organisation.

Prabhakaran's commitment to Eelam was shaped by the violence that his community had experienced. Prabhakaran was not a militant by birth. The circumstances made him so. At the age of four, he witnessed the 1958 riots. He had grown up listening to the stories of atrocities of Sri Lankan State and its agencies towards Tamils. These incidents deeply influenced him and turned him in to a radical youth at the age of sixteen and a militant leader at the age of eighteen. The personal

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<sup>3</sup> Alex Perry, "Tiger Country", TIME, Vol.160, no.11, September 23, 2002, p.31.

agony he experienced on the killing of his family friend [in Colombo], the burning of a sleeping priest on his cot and the incident of young babies drowned in to a drum of boiling tar left a deep scar on his mind.<sup>4</sup>

Prabhakaran also saw more discrimination meted out to Tamils. One of his closest friends did not get admission to a Bacheolor of Engineering course in the University of Colombo. He saw the discrimination towards Tamil tea pluckers and fishermen. Even common goods like garlic and onion were sold at very high prices in the Tamil majority North-Eastern provinces.<sup>5</sup>

All these had lasting impact on him. His strong determination and commitment for Eelam arose from these incidents. It is manifested in pervaded his organisation. Prabhakaran made a significant contribution in motivating the Tamils to the common goal. The LTTE leader display strong command over the structure and functioning of the organistion. His intrepid and heroic demeanour draws staunch obedience from the followers. He is also coercive in his methods in putting them on the track.

The withdrawal of Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) from Sri Lanka without completing its mission of putting the LTTE down, enhanced the position of Prabhakaran. He was seen as an invincible leader.

A militant group with self-disciplined, shrewd and devoted leader is hard to be liquidated. Prabhakaran, who pioneered the militant movement in Sri Lanka all these decades, is certainly a key factor in its sustenance. Without him, the organisation wouldn't have survived all these years.

## **IDEOLOGICAL BASIS**

With Prabhakaran at the head, LTTE is driven by ethnic nationalism. Unlike other groups, the LTTE has a well thought out plan of action. It centers around resisting and fighting against dominant Sinhalese state. Their acts are consequent to

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<sup>4</sup> P.Sahadevan,"On Not Becoming a Democrat:LTTE's Commitment to Armed Struggle", International Studies,Vol.32,n.3,1995,pp.260-261.

<sup>5</sup> R.Rajagopalan, "Velupillai Prabhakaran:LTTE "in Harinder Baweja,ed., Most Wanted:Profiles of Terror (New Delhi,2002), p.96.

the continuous oppression of Tamils by the Sri Lankan state. Vengeance against the State is strong in the minds of every militant. So, the Sri Lankan State's actions formed the basis for the formulation of their ideology.

The ruthlessness of the cadres is guided by this ideology. The extent of vengeance is proportionate to the extent of atrocities suffered by their near and dear ones. As the brutalities by the state and its agencies grew, the vengeance and bloodshed also grew. The vindictiveness of its leader and the cadres has strengthened the resolve to perpetrate violence and keep the movement going. This can be seen obvious in the LTTE's open letter to Lalith Athulathmudali, who was national security minister in the Sri Lankan government and who was later allegedly assassinated by the LTTE:

You cannot expect us to be idle spectators when our people are butchered and burned open on the roadside. We will never down our arms and surrender as you foolishly expect us to do. We will continue to fight you. We will strike hard more intensely than ever, with more determination. We will continue to fight until your armed forces are chased out from our homeland. We will turn [our] Tamil Eelam as a graveyard for the Sinhala State terrorists and their foreign agents.<sup>6</sup>

According to the LTTE publications, the ideology of LTTE is based on the revolutionary theory and practice of Marxism and Leninism. LTTE considers the Sri Lankan State as the chauvinistic nation, which perpetrated violent oppression against the small Tamil nation. The Tamil Tigers regard the Sinhala nation as the destructor of Tamil ethnic identity, which threatened their very survival. In LTTE's view the Sri Lankan State is the operator of "capitalist exploitative machinery" since independence.<sup>7</sup> The militants look at the Sri Lankan State's ideology as national chauvinism and religious fanaticism. The LTTE asserts that by using such ideological apparatus and by practicing "a policy of genocidal oppression the ruling bourgeoisie has been able to maintain its domination over the proletariat of the oppressor nation and prevented the class unity between the Sinhala and Tamils"<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Quoted in P.Sahadevan, "Sri Lanka's war for peace and the LTTE's commitment to armed struggle", in Omprakash Mishra and Sucheta Ghosh, eds., Terrorism and Low Intensity Conflict in South Asian Region [New Delhi, 2003], p.301.

<sup>7</sup> A.S.Balasingham, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Freedom Struggle, Political Committee, LTTE, p.4.

<sup>8</sup> ibid.

Because of this oppressive character of the State, LTTE say that they have no other option but to secede. LTTE declares in its publications that its right to secession and statehood are based on the Lenin's concept of self-determination. They have chosen this as Lenin inter-relates the national struggle with proletarian class struggle.

LTTE claims that "the Tamil nation is a historically constituted social formation possessing all the basic elements that are usually assembled to define a concrete characterisation of a nation."<sup>9</sup> LTTE's demand for secession, they say, is articulated within the Lenin's concept of self-determination.

Traditional left leaders argue that Tamils as a nation had the right to self-determination based on Lenin's stand. But, that does not imply the right to secession. Anton Balasingham criticised this and justified their stand as below:

If we want to grasp the meaning of self-determination of nations, not by, judging with legal definitions, or inventing abstract definitions, but by examining the historic-economic conditions of the national movement, we must inevitably reach the conclusion that the self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies and the formation of an independent national State.<sup>10</sup>

The decision of Tamils to resist the Sri Lankan State evolved from the intolerable conditions of national question of national oppression. According to him, "the position of reactionary bourgeoisie separatism was different from freedom for secession of the genuine democratic struggle of the oppressed Tamil nation."<sup>11</sup>

Thus, Balasingham rejected the stand of the traditional left leaders on the national question and applied the Leninist principle of self-determination to their freedom struggle. They call their demand for secession under such conditions of oppression as a correct action. It is considered as a revolutionary move to serve the interests of the class struggle.

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.36.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Ambalavanar Sivarajah, Politics of Tamil Nationalism in Sri Lanka [New Delhi, 1996], p.132.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*



The Tigers are committed to an armed revolutionary struggle to achieve their objective. LTTE, in its publications, reveal that this military objective is not just limited to fighting with the armed forces of the Sri Lankan State. They don't see revolutionary resistance as an alternative to the mass movement. This constructive nationalist ideology of the LTTE attracted the support of the masses.

Apart from the ideologies of ethnic nationalism and vengeance, Ram Manickkalingam speaks of a new political ideology of the Tigers called "Tigerism".<sup>12</sup> According to him, the politics of Tamil nationalism has now acquired its own internal dynamic which actually has begun as a reaction to Sinhala nationalism. He traces this emergence of new nationalism to the dilemmas of a nationalist movement.

In Tamil nationalism, the Tigers indulge in eliminating all the parties who oppose, organisations and individuals. Unity was asserted at the cost of internal democracy. Manickkalingam compares LTTE with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). PLO's legitimacy is drawn from the Palestine National Council (PNC). Though Fatah dominate the movement and there are many incidents of inter-factional fighting, still the decisions are made through debate and discussion in the council. But the Tigers emphasise on monolithic unity, according to him. This unity is a consequence of their attempt to invent a new Tamil identity. In this, the basis of political programmes and alliances are of an "ethnically essentialist character".<sup>13</sup> In this set up, political identity is directly derived from one's ethnic identity. Class, caste, gender, individual aspirations and wider social issues are pushed to the margin.

He further says that the Tigers new Tamil identity is drawn from history. At the same time, it denies history. They claim their identity to be linked to history based on language, region and tradition. But the Tigers are anti-historical as they reject that the Tamil identity also includes a history of co-existence with other communities. The result of this newly invented Tamil identity is that the Tigers have to reject and exterminate real or potential differences of opinion and interests among Tamils. Manickkalingam feels that this monolithic unity violently asserted by the Tigers is

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<sup>12</sup> Ram Manickkalingam, *Tigerism and other essays* (Colombo, 1995), p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

both the cause and the consequence of Tamil essentialism, and finally resulted in a new political ideology called 'Tigerism'.

Apart from the leadership and ideology, the quality of the cadres determines the sustenance of an organisation.

## **CADRES**

LTTE cadres are dedicated to the cause and determined to achieve it. The sufferings and torture their ancestors had undergone provoked and had made them men of mettle. There is no ambiguity in their methods of struggle. Every cadre swears an oath of loyalty to the LTTE leader. The cadres are well trained and strict discipline is ensured among them. The doctrine of martyrdom and self-sacrifice has made the LTTE very effective. The LTTE maintains secrecy and it is one of the reasons for its success. Its ruthlessness is in its courage to carry out deadly suicide-attacks.

The members of the LTTE lead a simple life. A rifle and a cyanide capsule, a change of clothes, and a pair of slippers are the Tiger's material possessions. Tigers wear uniform of khaki stripes for combat. When they are back at base, they wear short-sleeved checked shirts and dark baggy pleated pants. They don't maintain relations outside the Tigers. They renounced family ties, friends and material pleasures.

The cadres have to sign and accept a constitution evolved by Prabhakaran. Any disloyalty to the organisation is threatened with death penalty. Marriage is allowed. Cadres were restrained from smoking, drinking and other bad habits. They are not allowed to move very friendly with the civilians. On the other hand, they perform their best behaviour while dealing with them. Violators of the moral code are dealt severely.

All LTTE members are fighting cadres. They do not receive any payment from the organisation. There are few exceptions, like those who play an advisory or

supportive role. The cadres of the seven commands are further sub-divided as per the specialist roles they play.<sup>14</sup>

Performance is strictly the criterion for giving responsibility to the cadres. Seniority is not the basis as in the army. The promotion of cadres is to the responsibilities of command and not to a rank. Cadres are ranked only posthumously. The parameters they use are their service as well as the circumstances of their death.<sup>15</sup> They should follow strict code of conduct. Strong sense of discipline is inculcated in them. The fear of death should not have any place in the minds of the LTTE cadres. They should be ready to give up their life at any time in fighting for the Eelam.

Every member of the LTTE carries a cyanide capsule called *kuppi*. Whenever there is a threat of capture, the members swallow it. LTTE cadres regard it as a great honour to die for the cause. The doctrine of cyanide pill makes LTTE very effective. This is understood by the fact that 10% of Tamil Tiger force used this and committed suicide to avoid possible torture by the Sri Lankan security forces.<sup>16</sup> This helped the LTTE in keeping its secrets intact.

To sacrifice one's life by biting the cyanide pill is the greatest achievement of Tamil guerillas. In the words of D.B.S. Jeyaraj: "From the Tiger's perspective, it is this readiness to die for the cause that elevates the LTTE member from his surroundings. It is the cyanide capsule that symbolizes the Tiger's superiority over others and signifies the dedicated mission in life....a curious blend of rational obscurantism, absolute nihilism and revolutionary commitment has succeeded in making a fetish of the cyanide capsule principle .."<sup>17</sup>

The first militant to commit suicide by swallowing cyanide was Siva Kumar in 1974. This trend became prominent in 1987 when 13 LTTE cadres arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy swallowed cyanide capsules and died. Even the masterminds of the

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<sup>14</sup> Jane's Sentinel examines the success of the LTTE in resisting the Sri Lankan forces, 4 September 2000. [http://www.janes.com/security/international\\_security/news/sentinel/sent000904-6-n.shtml](http://www.janes.com/security/international_security/news/sentinel/sent000904-6-n.shtml).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Edgar O' Ballard, *The Cyanide War* (UK, 1989), p.67.

<sup>17</sup> V.Suryanarayana, *Sri Lanka: The Fractured Island*, Paper presented at the seminar on South Asian Ethnic Conflicts and their Resolution, organised by SSS, JNU, New Delhi, 1997, p.24.

Rajiv Gandhi's assassination died by swallowing this.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, this trend was seen by many as a heroic act.

Extreme emotional and ideological motivation is required for such self sacrificing event. Cyanide, as an instrument of sacrifice, gave LTTE a distinctive character and powerful identity, according to its leader, Prabhakaran.<sup>19</sup> The willingness of the LTTE cadres to swallow the cyanide pill is regarded as the commitment to the Tamil cause. The desperate acts are driven by their strong hatred against the partisan nature of Sinhalese governments since independence. Prabhakaran says,

It is this cyanide which has helped us develop our movement very rapidly. Carrying cyanide on one's person is a symbolic expression of our commitment, our determination, our courage...In reality, this gives our fighters an extra measure of belief in the cause, a special edge, it has instilled in us a determination to sacrifice our lives and everything for the cause. While attacking, our fighters don't count their lives. They will advance nonchalantly through an artillery attack or a hail of bullets.<sup>20</sup>

The biting of the cyanide capsule by the LTTE cadres when captured left the State and intelligentsia clueless about the group activities. This result in helplessness on the part of the State agencies in checking the militant movement. With no awareness on the part of the Sri Lankan police of its operations and acquaintances, the LTTE carries on its mission without any hindrance.

This can be explained in the words of Prabhakaran:

You won't find people from our movement in jail...Our fighters, through laying down their lives, protect our sympathizers and contacts, and the people who give us support and assistance. Otherwise the great mass of the people who support us, and their families, would be herded in to jail.<sup>21</sup>

If LTTE is a human body, Prabhakaran is the brain. He controls all the organs with ruthless efficiency. His authority was unchallenged. In case of any contention,

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<sup>18</sup> The masterminds behind Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, Sivarasan and Subha, killed themselves along with five others when Indian Commandos stormed their hideout near Bangalore in August 1991. Sivarasan chose to shoot himself in the head but the others with him consumed cyanide.

S.P.Sinha, Prabhakaran as leader of the LTTE, *USI Journal*, Vol.CXXI, no.544, April-June 2001, p.200.

<sup>19</sup> S.D.Muni, Challenges of Terrorism in South Asia, *South Asia Politics*, May 2002, p.36

<sup>20</sup> Sahadevan, n.6, p.301

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Sahadevan, n.6, p.302.

his word is final. Prabhakaran once said, “nothing happened in LTTE without my knowledge.”<sup>22</sup> Leader, at the apex, alone cannot contribute to the success of the group. For proper coordination and cohesiveness, commitment and dedication to the cause is needed at different levels of leadership. In LTTE, the integrity and discipline are noticed in other crucial figures also, besides Prabhakaran. The devotion exercised by Balasingham, Shankar, Kittu, Pottu Amman, Kumaran and all other area Commanders helped in retaining the cohesiveness in all conditions. Discipline is not allowed to decline even under unfavourable conditions.

The leadership is compared to that of a superstructure and the cadres to that of pillars. The role of the cadres is so vital in the sustenance of LTTE as they furnish the “necessary organic structure”.<sup>23</sup> For the cadres to forsake the group or “challenge a collective decision is very risky in psychological terms. If all the individuals have to rely in the realm of personal relationships on the group, he or she is unlikely to dissent or exit from the group.”<sup>24</sup> Any disobedience on the part of the member to the decision of the group can invite expulsion or can even get exterminated.

The LTTE was not immune from the splits and challenges by its cadres. In this context, the recent challenge posed by the LTTE’s eastern military commander, Muralitharan alias Karuna, is worth mentioning. Karuna has quit over the differences with his leader Prabhakaran.<sup>25</sup> In fact, quitting of high military official is not the first in the LTTE’s history. But, he was the first to take an internal rift in to the public opinion. This is the biggest ever split in the LTTE.<sup>26</sup> Reports quoted Karuna as saying he wanted to control the Batticaloa and Ampara districts independent of the LTTE.

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<sup>22</sup> P.A.Ghosh, Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka and Role of IPKF (New Delhi,1999), p.103

<sup>23</sup> Sahadevan, n.4, p.256.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p.257.

<sup>25</sup> The differences between Tiger chief Prabhakaran and eastern military leader Karuna arose following the LTTE cadres alleged involvement in the recent killing of non-LTTE politicians in the Batticaloa districts. The split had apparently come in to open after the refusal by Karuna to release additional cadres .

POT, Sri Lanka Series, April 23,2004,p.147. He publicly declared that resources and foreign aid had been unequally distributed in favour of the north and that there were no eastern Tamils heading any of the LTTE’s 30 divisions. He complained that the higher posts within the organisation continued to be held by the hierarchy in the north.

POT, Sri Lanka Series, April 27,2004,p.154.

<sup>26</sup> After quitting, Karuna alleged that the cadres from the North enjoy all the privileges. But LTTE members from the East have been suffering and nearly 2,300 had died in conflict. He said that he would operate separately with a breakaway group of LTTE members in the East.

POT, Sri Lanka Series, April 20,2004,p.137

Though splitted, he din't deny the leadership of Prabhakaran. He wanted to function as an independent unit as the LTTE, Batticaloa-Amparai. He says none has the right to reject that. After he quit, Ramesh was appointed as the new Commander of the Eastern Province. Karuna was branded as the 'Traitor'. Knowing the history of LTTE and Prabhakaran , one can say that Karuna had signed his 'death warrant'. Seven senior LTTE cadres who were deployed in the North had been shot dead on Prabhakaran's orders. For the leader, "the way to get rid of [a] doubt is to get rid of the doubters."<sup>27</sup>

This temporary rift within the LTTE has not in any manner hampered their campaign.

Prabhakaran feels that ruthlessness and discipline are the essential conditions for the enhancement of the "collective consciousness" of the cadres to fight for common cause.<sup>28</sup>

Leadership ensures commitment of the cadres to the goal through indoctrination or through coercion. The LTTE's indoctrination mainly includes propaganda against the Sri Lankan army. They highlight their atrocities. Prabhakaran's speech on his birthday in 1992 can explain this.

From the strategy of the government we must be quite clear about one thing. That is, there has been no change in the hegemonic attitude of the Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism to dominate and rule over the Tamil nation by armed might. As long as the Sinhala nation is buried in the mud of racist politics, we cannot expect a fair and reasonable solution from the Sinhalese ruling class. Our people should realise this bitter political reality.....our enemy is heartless and committed to war and violence. His objective is to destroy our homeland. We cannot expect justice from the magnanimity of his heart. What can we do in these circumstances? We have no alternative other than to continue our struggle, to continue to intensify our struggle.....

But our enemy is committed to violence. Therefore, he has imposed an unjust war on us. Today, the enemy's armed forces have come to our doorstep and are beating war drums. They are bent on devouring our land and [seek] to destroy us. He [the enemy] is prepared to shed any amount of blood in this genocidal war."<sup>29</sup> On one side, enemy is projected as the monster, and by that cultivates hate towards him. On the other, Prabhakaran's image is elevated. This image is described as the "the heroic fighter, the skilled guerilla, the fatherly overlord of the recruits."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Sahadevan, n.4, p.257.

<sup>28</sup> Sahadevan, n.6, p.303.

<sup>29</sup> Rajagopalan, n.5, pp.100-101.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

It is called as the theory of paternal dictatorship with a sinister twist.

Thus, through indoctrination, commitment is ensured among the cadres. The commitment of the LTTE cadres is mirrored “in the strict adherence to the ideology and doctrines of the group, their readiness to take risks, their total acceptance of the orders and strictures of the leader, and their absolute loyalty and unpurchasability.”<sup>31</sup>

LTTE cadres undergo rigorous training. Apart from physical drill and training in weapons handling, the members of the LTTE were also given training with wild animals. They were infested with snakes to make them rough. LTTE cadres were made to “build bunkers, dig trenches, survive without regular food and learn to kill with firearms as well as with knives and choppers”<sup>32</sup>. As such, they expertised in close quarter battle. By fighting in built up areas, they became masters in guerilla tactics.

The training schedule is for over 4 months. They receive training in battlefield craft, communications, explosives and intelligence gathering.

The cadres were instructed not to lose their weapon at any cost. If they lose, they are never armed again. The cadres should honestly report the outcome of every battle to the higher command. Any violation of the LTTE code of conduct by the cadres lead to the punishment by their senior leaders. The intensity of punishment depends on the kind of offence. It ranges from mess duty to demotion in ranks.<sup>33</sup> This morality and integrity ensured through the strict code of conduct had drawn lot of admiration to the Tigers. The Tamils wholeheartedly sympathised with the guerillas.

The discipline and military values imposed on the cadres promotes unity and integrity of the organisation. When the movement is well knit and well coordinated, it is very tough to dilute such organisation.

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<sup>31</sup> Sahadevan, n.4, p.257

<sup>32</sup> Ghosh, n.22, pp. 102-103

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.103.

Unlike the governmental agencies, there is no room for immorality and corruption in the functioning of various arms of the LTTE. As any dubious cadre is immediately removed and executed, there is no chance for inefficiency to creep in to the organisation. Success becomes a watchword for such organisation. They are not employees who work for remuneration but for a strong cause. Their innate driving force for reaching their goal doesn't allow them to deviate from their paths.

Studying the nature of cadres and the role of the militant group in shaping their behaviour makes one to conclude that LTTE has produced the most fearsome militants in the world. Their dedication, determination and devotion added great strength to the organisation. These factors are of unique significance in conflicts drawn out of ethnic consciousness, which play a stimulating role. The organization, through its strict disciplinary and coercive methods, ensures their adherence to the goal.

## **OPERATIONAL METHODS**

The LTTE has developed its own unique operational art and tactical doctrine. However, it is said that in the 1970's, the LTTE adopted "hit and run" tactics of the guerilla mostly drawn from past masters-Che Guevara, Giap, Mao and Debray. The doctrine of LTTE is flexible enough to meet the new challenges that come in the way<sup>34</sup>. It reviews its military doctrines constantly and makes a discreet analysis of every operation. They adopt methods to ensure the optimum utilisation of men and equipment.

The striking capability of the LTTE comes from its expertise in guerilla warfare. In the beginning of its militant movement in the 1970's, the guerilla attacks of LTTE mostly targeted Tamil policemen and officials regarded as the government sympathisers and informers. The 1983 anti-Tamil riots brought a paradigm shift in the kind of violence used by the LTTE. The LTTE started using a mixture of guerilla warfare and terrorist tactics.

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<sup>34</sup> [http://www.janes.com/security/international\\_security/news/sentinel/sent000904-6-n.shtml](http://www.janes.com/security/international_security/news/sentinel/sent000904-6-n.shtml).



The most important characteristic of guerilla warfare is having a clear and definite political goal. This helps them in successfully carrying out their military operations. If the political objective is not clear, the guerilla cannot have military gains.<sup>35</sup> In this context, LTTE is always sure of what it wants to achieve. Its goal is to achieve a separate homeland for Tamils comprising the North and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka.

The geographical setting under which LTTE operates is the ideal ground for employing guerilla tactics. The northern and eastern provinces which are considered as the Tamil homeland gives natural advantage to the militant movement.<sup>36</sup> Jaffna peninsula is criss crossed with lagoons and they hinder movement. This is best suited for guerilla warfare. The scrub jungles of Vavuniya and thick tropical forests of Mullaitivu and the eastern seaboard are ideal for guerilla operations. Prabhakaran's main bases are located here.

Prabhakaran carries out guerilla warfare in the North-East and most of the militant and suicide attacks on civilian targets are in the south. Some Tamils do live in the south and are vulnerable to the reprisals of the Sinhalese. But such incidents are rare in recent years.<sup>37</sup> One more advantage is that, as they can keenly choose their targets in the Sinhalese majority South, there is less possibility for making Tamils, the direct victims of their attacks. A region characterised with mixed population restricts a militant group from operating such attacks. But, the demographic distribution in Sri Lanka helped LTTE in overcoming this while choosing its form of violence in the North and the South.

At the local level, the LTTE operates through different sections like the Black Tigers, who are suicide bombers and Sea Tigers, the naval wing. Women's unit is called the 'Women Fighters of Liberation Tigers.'

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<sup>35</sup> Ghosh, n.22, p.102

<sup>36</sup>The Northern province which consists of Jaffna peninsula (96% Tamil) and the mainland of Wanni consisting of Mullaitivu, Mannar, Killinochi, and Vavuniya and the Eastern province including Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Amparai districts are considered as the Tamil homeland.

<sup>37</sup> Sinha, n.18, p.196

## **The Black Tigers**

One more aspect, which makes the LTTE ruthless, is its courage in carrying out deadly suicide-attacks. The suicide culture was adopted in the LTTE ranks in the early 1970s. About 180 suicide operations have been conducted by them since July 1987.<sup>38</sup>

LTTE started attacking their enemy targets in 1987. Their first attack was in July, 1987 when Captain Miller of the LTTE drove an explosive-filled truck in to an army camp near Jaffna.<sup>39</sup>

The Black Tigers of the LTTE is the most lethal suicide unit compared to any other group in the world. They use the latest “bomb suit” technology and the members are expertised in glider, micro-light and speed boat training in Europe and South east Asia. The LTTE is far ahead of many other organisations put together in the world. The groups like Hamas, Hizbollah, Kurdish Workers Party [PKK] and Babbar Khalsa carried out 50 suicide attacks<sup>40</sup>.

Women’s share in suicide attacks is high. They participated in 30-40% of the suicide activities. Women are efficiently used in such attacks. They deceptively used the innocent appearance of a “pregnant” woman in order to escape the heavy security arrangements while approaching their targets<sup>41</sup>.

A fear psychosis has been created by the militants in the government and in society as they can strike anywhere and at anytime. This made the government weak over the LTTE. By creating a overwhelming impact through the use of suicide operations, the LTTE intend to fulfill their objective of separate state in advance. Prabhakaran states:

With perseverance and sacrifice, Tamil Eelam can be achieved in 100years. But if we conduct Black Tigers operations, we can shorten the suffering of the people and achieve Tamil Eelam in a shorter period of time.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> M.S.Kulundaswamy, *Sri Lankan Crisis*(Delhi,2000), p.193.

<sup>39</sup> Sinha, n.18, p.200

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com77e.html>,

<sup>41</sup> Yoram Schweitzer, *Suicide Terrorism-Development and Characteristics*, Lecture presented in the International Conference on Countering suicide Terrorism at ICT, Herzeliya, Israel ,21 February,2000

<sup>42</sup> *Frontline*, February 18 2000, p.107

The Black Tigers are glorified by the LTTE. The supremeness of Black Tigers is part of the process of manipulation of the minds. Tigers consider Prabhakaran as a demi-god. Meeting him in person is a great privilege. This image is carefully cultivated by the Prabhakaran. The Black Tiger eats his or her 'last supper' with Prabhakaran before the suicide operation. This is considered as the greatest honour.<sup>43</sup> The LTTE suicide bomber is motivated not only by the commitment to the cause but also loyalty to Prabhakaran. The death and destruction that trembled the Tamil society over the past two decades influenced the psychology of Tamils of young generation.<sup>44</sup> They are sandwiched between the damage done by the brutalities of the Sri Lankan security forces and the fascism of Prabhakaran. In this context, young Tamils see "self-destruction as a form of revenge and martyrdom."<sup>45</sup>

The demand for sacrifice by the supreme leader is obediently accomplished by the Black Tigers. The process of indoctrination of the cadres by the group helps in nurturing this mindset.

Black Tiger suicide squads depend on helpers, mostly from the minority Tamil community. They play a supportive role. They provide basic intelligence, safe houses, transport. They also act as couriers.

The LTTE is also on advantageous plane pertaining to battlefield suicide bombers. It, by using suicide bombers in the battlefield, incurs heavy losses to the government. The morality of security forces gets affected resulting in loss of public confidence. This gives more strength to the LTTE as an organisation.

In the battlefield, suicide bombers mostly destroy military and paramilitary targets. They can be strategic or logistics targets. Strategic targets are Army camps, Navy camps, Air force camps etc. The logistics targets comprises of air vehicles at air ports and seaborne craft in seaports [when anchored or in mobile]. As the government and public are not the victims of this kind of attacks, its not an issue of much

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<sup>43</sup> S.P.Sinha, "Unmasking of Prabhakaran", Indian Defence Review, Vol.77, no.1-2, 2002, p.43.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.,p.44

botheration to the political elite. Due to the remoteness of northeast from Colombo, Sri Lankan leaders are less influenced by the attacks. Therefore, no required attention and investment are made to check these battlefield suicide-attack operations.

The government's overlooking of these suicide operations in the battlefield, in northeast, led to enhancement of LTTE's strength. Sri Lankan army suffers more casualties in the battlefield compared to the LTTE. The suicide bombers are advantageous to LTTE at both tactical and strategic levels. The motive behind using the suicide bombers is to keep the fighting strength of the LTTE intact. Destruction of naval logistics and strategic targets loosens the government's capability to control the sea. It also undermines the tactical and strategic mobility. This ultimately helps LTTE in increasing their overall operational efficiency of land and sea fighting units. On the other hand, it demoralises the Sri Lankan security forces which subsequently loses the public confidence.

Usually, suicide attacks do go unsuccessful. Militants look at this more attractive because of the assurance of triumph. The sacrifice of the cadres has other advantages too. After their death, they are regarded as martyrs.

The LTTE celebrates Martyr's week to honour the Black Tigers died in the suicide missions. *Karun puligal* (Black Tigers) are elevated to a supernatural status. The terms like *Veera Vanakkam* (homage to the heroes) and *Veera Maranam* (martyrdom) inspire many Tamil youths.<sup>46</sup>

The cult of martyrdom practiced by the LTTE has so much to do with its sustenance. The readiness of the LTTE cadres to sacrifice their life for the Tamil cause makes the group invincible. This preparedness to death and the cadre's devotion to the purpose are incomparable to the professional soldiers of Sri Lankan army. A fearless and ferocious Tamil Tiger can unhesitatingly take up a challenging and dreadful assignment, in pursuing his aim. A moderate fighter of the State military cannot attempt such fierce performance. Here, the value, the cadres attach to their

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<sup>46</sup> Suryanarayana, n.17, p.25

cause surpasses even their existence. The sacrifice of the cadres revitalizes the militant movement, and fuels the engine of the organisation to sustain.

Tiger villages are often dominated by martyr's graveyards with thousands of headstones. Sometimes, they are also near to purpose-built viewing halls where villagers can gaze at the bodies of dead battlefield heroes.<sup>47</sup> This helps in mobilisation of cadres.

Thus, sacrifice is the crux of the militant movement. The Black Tigers are considered as the real "revolutionary nationalists" pursuing the Tamil cause<sup>48</sup> Black Tigers are considered superior than any other cadre in the organisation. They destroys themselves while destroying the chosen target. They have no fear of death and carry the mission willingly.

The LTTE suicide bomber is motivated by his or her politico-social environment. The indoctrination carried out by the militant group also influence him.

The main argument is that, "whatever the mode of mobilisation, the blood of fallen martyrs has made the LTTE's determination stronger." In the words of Prabhakaran:

A liberation warrior's death is not a normal death occurrence. This death is a historical incident. It is a miracle of high ideal becoming a reality . In fact a liberation fighter does not die. The fine of ideal which was his life never burns out. That fine of ideal becomes a historical force and captures the heart of others. It wakes up the national spirit of a race<sup>49</sup>

Our history has been written in the blood of these mahaveerars[*great heroes*]. Their passing away is not a loss without meaning. Their deaths have become the power that moves our history forward...[They are] the life breath of our struggle. They are the artisans of freedom...they will be worshipped in the temple of our heart throughout the ages.<sup>50</sup>

The Tigers have steely determination to continue their armed struggle. Their commitment to the armed struggle is intensified by the sacrifices made by the cadres over the years. Prabhakaran feels morally responsible for the death of the thousands of

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<sup>47</sup> Perry, n.3, p.32.

<sup>48</sup> Sahadevan, n.6, p.302.

<sup>49</sup> Reflection of a Tamil National Leader V.Pirapaharan-<http://www.eelamweb.com/leader/quotes/>.

<sup>50</sup> Quoted in Sahadevan, n.6, p.302.

its cadres.<sup>51</sup> The sheepishness of the leader doesn't allow the group to compromise with the Sri Lankan government. Abdicating the armed struggle without the achievement of Eelam indicates total disregard to the blood shed for the cause by its martyrs. The cult of sacrifice and martyrdom, the very principle on which the organisation is built will be collapsed. This remorseful attitude of the leadership sustains the militant movement. This is revealed in the publication of LTTE 'after IPKF was sent to Sri Lanka to put the LTTE down :

If we surrender today to the military actions of India.... all our sacrifices and sufferings and commitment would become stories penned on sea water. Our noble freedom struggle in the legendary traditions of our heroic tamil ancestors would become a spent force. If we surrender now, the coming generations are not going to pardon us...<sup>52</sup>

This feeling of guilt expressed in the 1980s got strengthened now with the multiple sacrifices made by the LTTE cadres. At present, after their relentless struggle for almost two decades, agreeing for autonomy by the Tigers can amount to surreptitious connotations.

Prabhakaran expressed, "The patterns of battle may change, but our battle ideal will never change."<sup>53</sup> Their uncompromising demand for a separate state over the years has succumbed to the international pressures after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack on USA in 2001. The LTTE had resigned from their earlier stand for secession during the Norwegian brokered peace talks after the cease-fire signed in 2002. But whether the LTTE had really abandoned their hard-determined goal is under question.

The observation of the character of the LTTE since its inception indicates its strong passion for a separate state. The LTTE cannot easily settle for autonomy. The covert intentions behind their acceptance for autonomy cannot be ruled out. The LTTE have their own hidden strategies to sustain the movement till they reach their destiny.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p.303.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.eelamweb.com/leader/quotes/>

The success of the assassinations in Colombo by the suicide bombers can be attributed to the LTTE intelligence network in Colombo. Its intelligence headquarters plan operations, build models and train cadres in suicide bombing.<sup>54</sup>

The intelligence network was cellular and coordinated from the LTTE-controlled area. As the principal agent handles it in the LTTE controlled area, he was protected.<sup>55</sup>

The LTTE had built two airstrips. But, they were destroyed by the Sri Lankan Air Force. So, the Sky Tigers cannot operate aurally. But, in collaboration with the Black Tigers and the anti-aircraft unit, they could plot spectacular strikes. They could destroy several aircraft both in the air and on ground.<sup>56</sup>

The security and intelligence community could not sufficiently analyse the use of a suicide bomber as a strategic weapon. The fear of suicide bombing degrades the moral strength of the public to unite and fight against the deadly organisation.

### **Sea Tigers**

Sea Tigers is the naval arm of the LTTE. Sea Tigers are amongst the most ferocious wings of the Tigers. They are operational in the seas of the north-east. But, the Black Tiger units have the capability to operate elsewhere, even in Colombo. The Sea Tiger bases are both coastal and inland.

The Sea Tigers originated from the boatmen. In the early days of the armed struggle, these boatmen used to carry weapons, ammunition and other supplies in motorised fishing boats in between northern Sri Lanka and southern India. They also had shuttled new LTTE volunteers to training camps on the mainland. These boatmen hailing from the fishing communities on the northern coast were excellent seamen. They were well familiar with the waters around the island. As the LTTE expanded and when the Indian mainland could no longer be tenable for sustaining the campaign

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<sup>54</sup> Kulundaswamy, n.38, p.198.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> [http://www.janes.com/security/international\\_security/news/sentinel/sent000904-6-n.shtml](http://www.janes.com/security/international_security/news/sentinel/sent000904-6-n.shtml).

in the island, the Tigers began developing their naval capabilities.<sup>57</sup> Considerable effort and funds were invested in its development.

At present, Sea Tigers of the LTTE operate with the advanced technology and practiced tactics. This organisation consists of 3,000 trained personnel. Their cadres include specialists from marine engineers to naval commandos. It possesses 100-200 surface and underwater vehicles. This organisation is divided into 12 departments. Each department has specific responsibilities. The 12 departments of the Sea Tiger Organisation are listed below as given in the Rohan Gunaratna's article on Sea Tigers<sup>58</sup>:

- **Sea Battle Regiments:** deployed for all surface battles requiring marine weapons. These regiments conducted surface operations to disrupt maritime supply routes between the Jaffna peninsula and the south.
- **Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT):** deployed for all underwater attacks using UDTs, the LTTE has attacked anchored and berthed Sri Lankan naval, commercial and foreign craft.
- **Sea Tiger Strike Groups:** deployed for all land battles, but require sea borne infiltration.
- **Marine Engineering and Boat Building Team:** It builds, repairs and maintains the LTTE fleet. The LTTE has three categories of craft: attack; mid sea transfer, logistics and personnel; and suicide craft. Some crafts are modified for multi-purpose missions.
- **Radar and Telecommunications Unit:** responsible for monitoring the movement of Sri Lankan naval, commercial, and foreign craft, service LTTE craft, coastal bases and ship- to- shore communications.
- **Marine Weapons Armoury and Dump Group:** maintains the sea tiger weapons and equipment. While the bulk of the weapons are seized from the military, specialised weapons and equipment is procured from overseas. The weapons include underwater pistols and dual- use technologies such as sea scooters. The

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<sup>57</sup> RaviS, Tamil Eelam Navy, the Sea Tigers, A decade on the ocean wave, special Report, July 24, 2002. <http://www.infolanka.com/ubb/Forum1/HTML/008298.html>.

<sup>58</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, "Sea Tiger Success threatens the spread of copycat tactics", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol.13, no.3, March 2001, p.13.



highly compartmentalised dump groups hold restricted maps marking secret locations where greased weapons are wrapped in polythene and dumped.

- **Maritime School and Academy:** established in the early 1990s, this unit trains LTTE recruits joining the Sea Tigers from basic advanced training. Every cadre is trained 14--16 hours a day. Advanced training ranges from underwater hand signals to analysing the capabilities, limitations and vulnerabilities of naval craft. Kangai Amaran, the deputy leader was the long time head of the school.
- **Recruiting Section:** this works closely with the political, finance and propaganda section. Sea tiger publications, posters and public events aim at politicising potential recruits and building public support for LTTE aims and objectives.
- **Political and Finance and Propaganda Section:** The LTTE political offices worldwide collect literature on all aspects of boats to support the domestic organisation fighting the military.
- **Exclusive Economic Zone-Marine Logistics Support Team:** the most secretive department of the Sea Tigers, this team directly deals interfaces with the LTTE blue water fleet. When commercial vessels bring supplies, the heavily armed team in Singapore – manufactured Mirage- class speedboats pulling barges move out into the deep ocean to effect mid –sea transfer of supplies.
- **Reconnaissance Team and Intelligence Section:** this gathers data on static and mobile, land and sea naval targets with the intention of destroying them. This department, responsible for assessing the naval capability and future intentions, runs agents into the navy. They attempt to determine the role and function of naval and commercial craft by cultivating fishermen.
- **Welfare and the Registry:** in addition to caring for maimed and destitute families of disabled and dead cadres, the welfare and the Registry Section maintains Sea Tiger Records. To facilitate greater recruitment, the LTTE assigns priority to looking after *ma-vira* (great hero) families.

This study of the Sea Tigers departments and the intelligent allocation of the responsibilities make it the finest organisation. There is no overlapping of functions. This enhances specialisation of one department in single field. Such well-structured

and well-articulated organisation can easily operate efficiently and help in the overall success.

The operational aim of the Sea Tigers is to upset the movement of the Sri Lankan Navy by causing harm to the north-south sea link. Sea Tigers organisation also aim at making the Sri Lankan Navy lose control over the Sri Lanka's north-eastern waters. By this, they support the LTTE's claims to Sri Lanka's north-east. These operations help LTTE in securing a maritime corridor. This facilitates the uninterrupted flow of armaments and other essential supplies, which are required for maintaining the effectiveness of the LTTE.

The dominance at sea is key to the outcome of the armed conflict. It can be known from the words of Prabhakaran:

Geographically, the security of Tamil Eelam is interlinked with that of its seas. Its only when we are strong in the seas and break the dominance of our enemy now has that we will be able to retain land areas we liberated and drive our enemies from our homeland.<sup>59</sup>

The importance they attach to the sea can be understood in their demand for defacto naval status to the LTTE in the Interim Self-Government proposal in the recent Norwegian brokered talks.<sup>60</sup> They are trying to gain legitimacy by projecting themselves as the only protectors of the Sri Lankan fishermen. In one incident, Sri Lankan fishermen, backed by the LTTE, captured Indian fishermen and trawlers. Indian fishermen had to pay huge ransom to the LTTE for their release. LTTE was telling Sri Lankan fishermen that Sri Lankan Navy was interested in maintaining good relations with India and would not protect them.<sup>61</sup>

The LTTE has developed the Black Sea Tiger wing in 1990. This wing was started to counter the Sri Lankan Navy's technical superiority. The Black Sea Tigers can easily destroy the Sri Lankan vessels like the Israeli built Dvoras or Super Dvoras, which stood in the way of LTTE's success. The Black Sea Tigers use small

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<sup>59</sup> <http://www.infolanka.com/ubb/Forum1/HTML/008298.html>.

<sup>60</sup> LTTE asked for control over marine and offshore resources of the adjacent seas and the power to regulate them.

<sup>61</sup> V.Suryanarayana, Sea Tigers, a threat to both India and Sri Lanka, 4 June 2004. [http://www.asiantribune.com/show\\_article.php?id=1478](http://www.asiantribune.com/show_article.php?id=1478).

boats filled with explosives and can explode alongside the targets. During the battle for Elephant Pass in 2000, the Sea Tigers demonstrated a new phase in their development. The LTTE naval wing conducted a massive amphibious operation, landing over fifteen hundred Tiger troops undetected on the Jaffna coastline along with their weapons. Sri Lankan defences, and a Special Forces base, in the area collapsed under the subsequent ground attack. This was a crucial event in the chain, which led to the collapse of Elephant Pass base complex.<sup>62</sup> The Black Sea Tiger performed over 30 maritime suicide attacks.

LTTE randomly attacked some foreign commercial vessels. This discouraged maritime commerce and international trade with Sri Lanka.

Like any other navy, the Sea Tigers also have their own marine forces. There are several hundred commandos in the organisation. They can be inserted behind Sri Lankan lines for guerilla raids. They are involved in gathering intelligence and lead an assault on a major coastal target. Sea Tiger divers, which is another elite unit infiltrate Sri Lankan naval harbours to lay mines. They conducted reconnaissance and recovered material from sunken Sri Lankan craft also.<sup>63</sup>

### **Sea Tiger Tactics**

“Deception” is the central ingredient in Sea Tiger tactics. For example, to attract naval craft in to sea ambushes, they attract commercial craft and then use “wolf pack” or “cluster tactics” against the naval vessel.<sup>64</sup> Another tactic is attracting a naval craft towards the shore from where LTTE uses land-based weapons to shoot at the vessels.

There were times when Sea Tigers had painted their crafts with navy colours and symbols. They even dressed in navy uniforms to move near to the foreign vessels. Using this tactic, the LTTE hijacked and looted the Indian-owned merchant vessel *Princess Kash* in August 1998. In the same way, Sea Tigers wearing uniforms in a

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<sup>62</sup> <http://www.infolanka.com/ubb/Forum1/HTML/008298.html>.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Gunaratna, n.58, p.12.

look-alike navy craft attacked Indian fishermen to disrupt Indo-Sri Lankan relations. When Sri Lankan Air Force was searching for survivors of a missing helicopter, Sea Tigers pretended to be dead air men by covering themselves with seaweed. By acting so, they could destroy at least one helicopter by firing at it.

As noted earlier, Sea Tigers operate not only in the North -Eastern waters but also in other parts of the sea. For example, on the order made by the Sri Lankan government, Israel delivered Kfir aircraft and when it was being unloaded in the port of Colombo, Sea Tigers mounted a suicide attack.

Sri Lankan Navy had increased its capabilities over the years. But the Sea Tigers countered this by developing their technologies and tactics. When the Sri Lankan Navy purchased the first generation Israeli-built Dvora attack craft, the Sea Tigers increased the number of outboard motors [OBM's] on some of its craft to match the speed of the Dvora. When the Sri Lankan Navy upgraded to second-generation super Dvora craft, the Sea Tigers increased the number to 225 horsepower engines on their craft to four. This continued.

Unlike the unwieldy Sri Lankan military and defence bureaucracy, the LTTE is an organisation that learns from its mistakes.<sup>65</sup>

India's Intelligence wing RAW [Research Analysis Wing] contributed to the development of Sea Tigers. The Sea Tigers got introduced to underwater demolition initially by the India's RAW. They also provided recruit training for Sea Tiger batches in Uttar and Himachal Pradesh in India. RAW also gave specialised training in Communication, explosives, anti-aircraft, weapons and underwater demolition. This external support provided by India enhanced the efficiency of the Sea Tigers.

In case of transporting a substantial quantity of explosives over a long distance, the Sea Tiger first used boat to approach the target. From there, the underwater scooter is used. If the target is difficult to approach because of the

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<sup>65</sup> In 1986, LTTE lost many trained divers because of the bubbles surfacing up from Scuba equipment. Even the cost of training was high. So, in 1980's and early 1990's, LTTE purchased closed circuit under water diving equipment. LTTE also procured special military purpose Scuba sets in late 1993.

protective cover or because of its location in a high security zone, then the scooter operator drops the divers. These divers, who are embraced with IED's go near the target and explode.<sup>66</sup> This explains the determination and audacity of the Sea Tigers to fulfill their mission at any cost and circumstances. This iron will and courage can hardly leave any operation to go unsuccessful.

Sea Tigers haven't spared even the naval vessels in the lagoon and channels. They developed naval control mines and naval contact mines especially for this purpose. Mines are carefully located after discreetly studying the maps. Sea Tigers, Tamil passenger vessels and friendly fishing boats are warned of the routes marked with the mines.<sup>67</sup>

### **Technology**

Technology plays an important role in the success of Sea Tiger operations. The Sea Tigers who began with the fishing dinghies can now deploy squadrons of heavily armed gunboats and speedboats. Many of the vessels are designed and built at extensive, camouflaged boatyards located along the Vanni coastline. They developed radar stations on the coasts and this helps the gunboats. They even had defeated darkness by acquiring night vision equipment. So, there's no break for their supplies and launching raids even at night. By possessing the Global Position System (GPS) equipment, it became easy for the supply ships to meet the fast boats many dozen miles off the coastline.<sup>68</sup> Sophisticated communication systems of the Sea Tigers allowed for the coordination of multi vessel 'wolf pack' type attacks on Sri Lankan convoys.<sup>69</sup>

There are four different types of craft manufactured in its own boatyards by 1995. They are called Thrikka, Sudai, Muraj, Idayan. With the transfer of new boat

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<sup>66</sup> On 16 March 1994, a team of divers from a Sea Tiger under water Demolition Team approached Karainagar harbour with the intention of placing an IED on a naval vessel and withdrawing. But, they failed to attach the device to the craft. Rather than aborting the mission, a male and a female diver decide to cling to the bottom of the hull and activate the device that they had transported to the target.

<sup>67</sup> Many naval vessels which are operating in the Jaffna lagoon [separating the peninsula from the mainland] have been struck by these mines.

<sup>68</sup> Fast boats shuttle the material to the shore collected from the supply ships.

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.infolanka.com/ubb/Forum1/HTML/008298.html>.

designs, especially from the LTTE representative in Australia, the LTTE built new boats in the second half of the 1990's. These craft were equipped with VHF communication, radar and GPS. By 2000 the LTTE fleet had developed a dozen different types of craft with several variations.

The LTTE brown and green water capable craft are launched from land. LTTE manufactures bulk of its craft –fibre glass on land.

The Sea Tigers acquired stealth designs in 1999-2000 and built suicide craft with angled metallic superstructures to reduce their radar cross-section. Black Sea Tigers who are trained for suicide attacks man these crafts.<sup>70</sup>

Sea Tigers are also found to be using a variant of the 107mm Katyusha rocket, fired from a lightweight tripod, in pairs. This is quite a rare weapon.the missile weighs 18kgs and has a range of about 8 km. These weapons are ideal for militant groups like LTTE as they provide them with a form of artillery support that can be transported, hidden and easily used. The rockets are fired electrically from a few yards distance by simply connecting up a battery.<sup>71</sup>

Sea Tigers upgrade their technology from time to time and these technological advancements of their organisation makes it an impregnable force. Well trained, determined, confident, tactical, courageous nature of the Sea Tigers supported by advanced equipment remain unconquerable to the Sri Lankan navy. They are thus, successful in controlling the north-east waters of Sri Lanka and in keeping off the Sri Lankan Navy.

### **Child Soldiers**

The escalation of conflict and increasing casualties during the IPKF operations didn't threaten the survival of the LTTE. Though, it slightly weakened them. Recruiting women and children compensated this loss of cadres and new threat.

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<sup>70</sup> Gunaratna, n.58, p.16

<sup>71</sup> Roger Davies, Sea Tigers, stealth technology and the North Korean connection.  
[http://www.janes.com/regional\\_news/asia\\_pacific/news/jir010307\\_2\\_n.shtml](http://www.janes.com/regional_news/asia_pacific/news/jir010307_2_n.shtml).

Child soldiers were recruited in to the LTTE's wing 'baby brigade'. This was commandeered by Justin. Even before 1987, children formed a part of the Tigers cadres, but serious recruitment of children started after 1987. After 1987, child cadres were integrated with adult units.

Perhaps, the LTTE is a rebel group with cadres mainly drawn from children. An assessment of the LTTE fighters that have been killed in combat reveals that 40% of its force are both male and female, between 9 and 18 years of age.<sup>72</sup>

Through indoctrination, children are attracted in to the movement. It includes lectures at schools and screening of inspiring films which fascinate children to join the movement. Commemorative events like Heroes Day also play an important role in captivating the children's' mind.

In the beginning, child soldiers were recruited from the refugees in India. They were sent for training to the camp in Pondicherry [Southern Indian Port]. But, then training just included physical exercises and education.<sup>73</sup> Later, the training in battle and field craft was also included. Child cadres also receive instruction on communication, explosives and intelligence gathering. When they are inducted in to the field, they are asked to attack villages as they have no significant armed cover.<sup>74</sup>

Child soldiers are assigned various duties. They do menial jobs in the kitchen and in medical camps. They also help in the supplies division in distributing arms and ammunitions to other cadres. Moreover, they are also given the task of gathering intelligence and fight along with adult cadres. They even function as the bodyguards.

Children proved very efficient in the battlefield. Their first recorded major action was on November 22.1990 on the Mankulam Army camp. They killed one third of the Sri Lankan troops and the troops vacated after two days of clashes.

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<sup>72</sup> Sinha, n.18, p.199

<sup>73</sup> [http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/shrilanka/terroristoutfits/child\\_soldiers.htm](http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/shrilanka/terroristoutfits/child_soldiers.htm).

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

Another example is the 1996 amphibious attack on the military complex in Mullaitivu. Child soldiers shot dead some 300 troops after they were disarmed.<sup>75</sup>

The LTTE had seen astonishing results with child cadres. Whenever the LTTE suffer high number of casualties, it look at children as the filling source. Children became a promising factor in times of contingency. The child combatants fought and dead much like the adult soldiers in the battlefield. They involve in challenging activities to capture weapons and also the territory.

The fiercest of all LTTE –fighting units is the Leopard Brigade or *Siruthai Puli*. This unit consists exclusive of children. They are staunchly loyal to Prabhakaran and strongly committed.

There are some complaints on LTTE of kidnapping children from areas under their control. In an UN- sponsored study –The Graca Machel Report revealed that the LTTE was known to recruit children as young as 10years. This example shows that by all means LTTE maintains its strength and thereby sustains.

Thus, the manpower required for the struggle to go on is nourished by the supply of children.

### **Women Fighters of Liberation Tigers**

The women's structure of LTTE is known as the 'Women's military unit of the Liberation Tigers.' There was a large-scale induction of women in to the LTTE. It is well organised and experienced fighting force. The women fighters of the Liberation Tigers are reputed as the most fierce, highly disciplined and valiant women combatants in the world. They compose a full-fledged military force and are structured within the overall organisation of the LTTE.

The women military wing of the LTTE is known as the "birds of freedom" or "*Suthanthirap Paravaikal*". In the beginning, women recruits were girls mostly drawn

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.



from families affected brutally by the war or those who were fired by the “romantic adventurist visions”.<sup>76</sup> In some cases, personal experience was the motivating factor.

The repercussions of the 1983 anti-Tamil riots and the ongoing armed oppression inspired many young Tamils to join militant movement. The contribution of women was less compared to men. This was because of the cultural barriers. In the early period, women cells were formed in various parts of Tamil Eelam. In 1985, various women militant cells were formed. For the first time in contemporary Tamil history, Tamil women obtained martial training and formed a revolutionary fighting unit. The women organisations were involved in lot of propaganda and political work among women. In order to raise consciousness among women about the national liberation struggle and female oppression, a journal called “*Suthanthirap Paravaikal*” [Freedom Birds] was published.<sup>77</sup> The first issue was in December, 1984. Soon, that name became a synonym for the women’s unit. When the peninsula became a semi-liberated zone, women’s division activities were broad based and intensified. The freedom birds integrated and co-ordinated activity with women organisations, trade unions, training centres, health centres, and primary education centres.<sup>78</sup>

The birds of freedom were initially like a paramilitary division. Great care was taken not to upset the cultural values of the society at large. First aid, cooking etc. were the overt functions. They also obtained military training. As the time passed, the birds of freedom began to participate in fighting also. The Indian intervention was a watershed. The Indian army’s brutal behaviour, made a bitter impact on Tamil women.

The young women fighters have shown exceptional performance in the military tactics. According to the LTTE publications, training and carrying weapons, confronting battle conditions, enduring the constant emotional strain of losing close

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<sup>76</sup> Adele Ann, *Women and The Struggle For Tamil Eelam*, Tamil Eelam, 1990.

<http://www.eelamweb.com/women/>.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

associates, facing death almost everyday, are situations that most women not only wish to avoid, but feel ill at ease with. But, not the women fighters of the LTTE.

The LTTE leadership expanded its military programme for training women. In 1984, the potential women fighters gathered in Tamilnadu, India. On 18-8-1985, they established a new military camp for young women in the jungles.<sup>79</sup> Training programme for women involves a basic course for three months. This is followed by an additional advance period of three months.

The basic three months course is a testing ground for the energies and endurance. For them, day begins at 4:30AM. It consists of strenuous physical exercises. This include long distance running, crawling under barbed wires, rope climbing, military parade etc. They also were given theoretical and practical exercises on weapons. At the same time, women trainees staff the sentry positions in the camps, day and night. The training programme also includes political studies.

This initiation period of three months is described in the LTTE publications as :

This is the period when elbow skin turns to calluses; when barbed wire treat the soles of the feet as a pin cushion; when ropes burn off the hands. It is the time when cadres bathe in their sweat; when dust replaces talcum powder; where clothes become rags. This is the time when your rifle becomes your friend; when alertness becomes a life saver; the moon and stars your light; grass and twigs your informants.<sup>80</sup>

After finishing this course, then the trainees undergo three months of advance training. They are given training in heavy weapons handling. They are made familiar with different combat situations and firepower. This instills confidence and skill among the cadres. Discipline is strictly maintained among the cadres. Code of conduct and the nature of punishment are clearly set.

Apart from the main training course, there are also special training courses for young women. Through mutual consultation and discussion between trainees and instruction, the young women cadres divide on the basis of their interest. They

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<sup>79</sup> Adele Ann, Women Fighters of Liberation Tigers [ Jaffna,1993], p.17.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp.19-20.

specialise in maintaining communication equipment, handling explosives, mining, weapons technology, electronics, intelligence work etc. When the situation arises, they are deployed in to battle situations. Some women cadres who show aptitude for combat situations are chosen for further military training. They undergo special commando training. Periodically, all the women fighters return to the training camps for refresher courses.<sup>81</sup>

An independent women's military structure was inaugurated in September 1989 with Sothia as the leader.

The fighting capability and courage of women gave additional potential to militant movement. With the advantage of supplementary cadres and fighting force, the militant movement cannot easily exhausts its military potential. With the recruitment of children and women, the avenues for LTTE's human resources widened.

Not only the men cadres, Sri Lankan Army has to confront with the fierce and tough women force. Women cadres are involved in jungle guerilla warfare to a more advanced and sophisticated form of mobile warfare. Women are ferocious and motivated on the field.

## **STRATAGIES**

LTTE adopted politico-military strategy, designed in accordance with the particular conditions of the Tamil nation. "This strategy aims to fuse the progressive patriotic feelings of the broad masses with proletarian class consciousness to accelerate the process of national emancipation and Socialist revolution...."<sup>82</sup> The LTTE organized political and military cells all over the Tamil dominated areas. While its guerilla units involve in fighting for the cause of national freedom, the political cadres engaged in educating the masses and recruiting ranks among the people. "It has been modeled on Fidel Castro's original guerilla movement. It is tightly controlled

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p.20.

<sup>82</sup> Sivarajah, n.10, p.132.

organisation that has managed to keep its strategy and movements secret through public executions of alleged informers.”<sup>83</sup>

This can be seen in the lamp post killings of the LTTE. They used to hang government spies from lampposts and tie a wooden board around their necks with details about their crimes. Even severe punishments were given to petty offenders. The standard sentence for prostitution was 10 years in an underground Tiger jail. If the deserters were caught, they shot them simply.<sup>84</sup> In the list of LTTE leaders executed, the prominent was Gopaldaswamy Mahendrarajah, alias Ajith Mahattaya. He was the deputy leader of the LTTE for long time and also a childhood friend of Prabhakaran.

The strategy of LTTE aims at organising and politicising the broad masses of Tamil Eelam towards achieving their goal of separate state. They say that their total strategy is to integrate both the national struggle and class struggle. LTTE’s strategy aims at inter linking both “nationalism and socialism into a revolutionary project.”<sup>85</sup>

The support of the community is vital for the militant group to sustain. According to the Maoist paradigm, if the militants are fish, then they survive only in the waters of supporters. When the support is lost, militants can hardly survive. The LTTE had well understood this significance of the popular support. The LTTE attempted to make their armed resistance, a popular struggle.

The LTTE has shown readiness to sacrifice for the people’s sake. But, what they demand in exchange is the unconditional support from the masses. Regarding the Tigers as the protectors, the Tamils rely on the LTTE. This reliance was in the form of their support to the movement by joining the militant group. The sympathisers provided LTTE with intelligence information.

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Perry, n.3, p.32.

<sup>85</sup> Balasingham, n.7, p.42.

In the beginning of the militant movement, the LTTE didn't enjoy much popular support. The 1983-anti Tamil riots victimised many Tamils. When the community felt threatened, they got bound against the common adversary.

Also, the government's brutal response to the guerilla attacks made people to turn closer to the militant movement. The highhandedness of the government always proves beneficial to the militants. To counter the guerilla attacks, government indulged in savage and indiscriminate violence against the innocent Tamil civilians. The main militant group, LTTE, which was fighting against the Sri Lankan Armed forces, was seen as the saviours of the Tamil masses. LTTE declare that it was not just guerilla warfare but a people's war of national liberation. By this, they had drawn much support from the people.

Tamil guerillas were seen as the legitimate, traditional protectors of the people. The LTTE rhetoric strikes a related chord among the Tamil population. It says, "we protect you, your nation, your honour, your women."<sup>86</sup> Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam in her book "The Tamil Tigers" says that rhetoric is not of a Marxist grouping but that of a feudal chivalrous class of warriors who are always present in Tamil society and literature and they stand between the people and injustice. Even their names refer to the great imperial use of the Tamils. This rhetoric is unmatched to any other group.

Thus, the LTTE appeal to the people by playing on the traditional symbols and feelings of Tamil heroism. Not only this, guerillas attract the Tamils by quoting the just and equitable Tamil society under the royal or warrior patronage.

The success of LTTE in spreading its message across all the sections of the population also helped LTTE to sustain. LTTE had used various sources like papers, magazines, books, journals, pamphlets, songs, plays and poems to influence the minds of people.

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<sup>86</sup> Dagmar Hellmann, Rajanayagam, The Tamil Tigers (Stuttgart, 1994), p.137.

The publications of the LTTE aim at drawing the support of the masses. They were the only sources in Tamil and English which print folk tales and stories from the Jaffna chronicles. They also publish the reports from the battlefield and heroic short stories.

The persistent propagation of LTTE of its cause, its disciplined organisation and they as the saviours of the Tamils in their homeland had great impact on the thinking of Tamils. Whatever LTTE publicizes is what people know and they assume it to be right. The LTTE could attract all the sections of the Tamil community. Violence may not be desirable to them but it became inevitable. The LTTE has taken up arms not by choice but the circumstances forced them to do so. In the emergence of common threat, a new integration of Tamil society is seen. This unity is seen not only among the old and young but also among the upper and lower castes.

Tamils have more confidence in Tamil Tigers as their protectors. Before their faith, the accusation of LTTE by other groups is insignificant. They held Tigers in great respect though there are complaints about them like “forced requisition of houses, student demonstrations against the excesses of the Tigers, and the odd protest after the liquidation of TELO.”<sup>87</sup>

At present, support from the community is much extracted through coercive methods to sustain the militant movement. By this, it cannot assert itself as the single “authentic representative” of the people of Northeast.<sup>88</sup> People have no audacity to criticise it in the public. They are frightened to criticise it even in their informal chitchats. “Actual criticism is therefore muted and indirect at the most.”<sup>89</sup>

To say, the LTTE maintains its support only by spreading fear cannot be made. Alex Perry’s account of Kilinochchi education administrator about LTTE support this. He said, “if they had ruled only through fear, as many people think, they would not have lasted. But the LTTE looked after us. They showed us how to make bunkers, how to behave if bombers came above and you were caught out on a road, how to

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p.138.

<sup>88</sup> P. Sahadevan, “Peace in Jaffna”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, February 28, 2004, p.892.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

hide, what to do.” As conditions worsened and food and medicine ran short, “the LTTE sent people round to villages to give cooking demonstrations, showing people how to collect and cook certain leaves that we don’t usually eat.”<sup>90</sup>

There are some people who give total support to it by choice. Such people have developed a strong bond with the organisation because of the Tigers contribution of suffering and sacrifice to the cause of Tamil Eelam. To some others, LTTE is a “necessary evil”<sup>91</sup> They feel that their equal political rights cannot be secured without the LTTE. They regard LTTE’s military strength to be the responsible factor for the government’s interest in a negotiated political settlement. Any weakening of the LTTE’s military power would lead to weakening of the present bargaining power of Tamils with the Sri Lankan State which has Sinhala majority.<sup>92</sup> These perceptions are based on their past experiences.

Because of the above-varied reasons, the LTTE continues to enjoy popular support. The popular support, which Tigers enjoy, has been very crucial in sustaining itself over the years. The LTTE wouldn’t have achieved much without this popular factor.

For government to successfully contain any militant movement, the support of the local people is very essential. The discriminatory policies of the Sri Lankan government caused common resentment among the Tamils. Their majoritarian attitude and coercive tactics made them to lose belief in the State. The insecure Tamils voluntarily and spontaneously supported LTTE. They look at the government agencies with enmity. The Sri Lankan army’s brutalities made Tamils to stand on the side of Tigers in fighting against the Dracula [in their view] of Sri Lankan army. In fact, Sri Lankan soldiers find themselves helpless and frustrated in the land of hostility. The strength of LTTE accompanied by the power of masses appears gigantic to the Sri Lankan army.

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<sup>90</sup> Perry, n.,3, p.33

<sup>91</sup> Sahadevan, n.88, p.892.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

Another strategy of LTTE is affecting the morale of the Sinhala soldiers. Sinhala soldiers fight in an unexplored territory, amidst the hostile population. They live in constant terror as the unseen enemy can strike them at any moment and anywhere. Their discipline is eroded and also resulted in mass desertions.<sup>93</sup>

Army imposes restrictions and occupies the Tamil lands in the name of High Security Zones [HSZ's]. This limitations imposed by them on the public affected their relations with the public.

In order to diminish the morale of the Sri Lankan State and counteract Tamil political opposition, the LTTE was involved in assassinating many popular leaders of all communities and senior military Commanders. The LTTE assassinated many powerful Sinhala political and military leaders.

The development of Tamil essentialist ideology as explained by Ram Manickalingam is obvious in the political attitude and strategy of the Tigers towards the Muslims of the northeast. Because of this development of dangerous brand of Tamil nationalism, the Muslims of the north and the east became slowly alienated from the Tamil community. The increasing domination of Tamil nationalism by the Tigers resulted in the killings of hundreds of Muslims. They even expelled thousands of Muslims from the north and the east. The demand for 'traditional Tamil homeland' which was a direct consequence of ethnic essentialism has now taken to a fanatic stage. This new Tamil identity of Tigers "denied not just political space, but even physical space to all non-Tamils in the North-East"<sup>94</sup>

The LTTE emerged as the most important militant group by eliminating other Tamil militant groups and political parties. Most Tamil groups have lost leaders to LTTE assassinations. Even the members of political groups like the TULF have been targets of assassination. The vast military resources of LTTE made it successful in marginalising and eliminating them. The methods used are through brutal force and intimidation.

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<sup>93</sup> Balasingham, n.7, p.43.

<sup>94</sup> Manickalingam, n.12, p.5.



Presence of many groups and disunity among them would have normally given the government an opportunity to easily infiltrate the rival groups, dissipate resources and undermine external support. But, the supremacy of the LTTE has frustrated the government's efforts.

The successful manipulation of Tamil struggle by the Tigers made them to dominate Tamil politics. By murdering all political rivals of the Tamil movement and by intimidating and threatening all cultural, social and human rights activists in the northeast, the Tigers have removed the possible rise of alternative source of leadership in the Tamil society.

Another strategy is based on their cunning use of the peace process. When conditions are not favourable to the Tigers, they agree to cease-fires and negotiations. This period they utilise for enriching the group with arms and consolidating their position. When peace seem possible, the Tigers break off negotiations to resume war.

During the peace talks with the government in November 1994, LTTE without knowing to the government had built an extraordinary fighting capability during the peace talks.<sup>95</sup> The same strategy has been applied by the LTTE during the present peace talks brokered by Norway after the cease-fire signed by it with the government in early 2002. A recent report says that international community could afford the Sri Lankan government the political space to conclude the civil war but it has been proved extremely difficult militarily. It says, that if the cost of the strategic shift becomes unsustainable, the LTTE would merely revert back to guerilla tactics. And the LTTE could continue to confront the government on the most advantageous terms, so long as the access to weapons, ammunition, money, fuel and communication equipment continued.<sup>96</sup>

Politically, the LTTE tries to exercise control over northeastern region by providing a considerably well managed administration. The LTTE successfully

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<sup>95</sup> They acquired 60 tonnes of high explosives from the Rubezone chemical plant in Ukraine; micro-lights, fixed wing aircraft and mini helicopters from Australia; and surface-to-air-missiles from Bulgaria-

Rohan Gunaratna, "LTTE adopts heavy artillery", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, June 2001, p.26.

<sup>96</sup> POT, Sri Lanka Series, February 5 2004, p.33.

weakened and crippled the administrative machinery of the government. The power vacuum created was filled by the LTTE by taking up the functions performed by the government earlier. It has set up hospitals, welfare system, and police force and law courts, which judge according to Tiger law.

Even, the Sri Lankan State continues to supply basic commodities to citizens in these areas. This is to prevent humanitarian crisis. But, political institutions are not functional. The Sri Lankan government is not able to exercise its control over this region as a defacto State of Tamil Eelam has been established by the LTTE. As such, the LTTE could easily instigate Tamil people to support the Tigers. This support is in the form of providing finance and cadres to the organisation. The LTTE forces label the Sri Lankan military as an 'army of occupation'.

Not only through guns and armed fight, the LTTE is trying to get legitimacy by running parallel administration in the Tamil areas.

The military capability of the group is crucial in its sustenance. The military potential of LTTE is very significant in LTTE's survival. It is the only organisation, which has developed a "daring guerilla navy capable of checkmating a powerful conventional navy commanded by British and US-trained naval officers."<sup>97</sup> The Charles Anthony Brigade is well trained, while standard Tiger military units have repeatedly demonstrated their proficiency in jungle warfare.

The LTTE uses landmines as an effective weapon against the army. By acquiring missiles, a new dimension is added to the LTTE's striking capability. Though the LTTE has experienced military setbacks from the security forces, they have enough capacity in guerilla warfare to pester the combined operational efforts of all the three wings of the Sri Lankan military.

To engage military intrusions by the Sri Lankan forces into the LTTE-controlled areas, the LTTE has highly trained units that are increasingly developing their conventional force structures.

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

Its high innovativeness makes it capable of retaliating against aggression, reprisals and pre-emptive strikes. “Regular features of the LTTE doctrine feature the unleashing of widespread terror on soft targets. Concentrating on lightly or unprotected targets is a classic diversionary tactic in warfare, pinning down troops to static sentry/bunker duties and restraining search and destroy operations.”<sup>98</sup> The Tigers have bombed Sri Lankan commercial aircraft, trains and buses. They raided non-Tamil border villages and towns. They landmined, ambushed and assaulted military and police patrols and posts.

LTTE cadres who are battle-hardened are deployed to strike at “heavily fortified military targets”.<sup>99</sup> The LTTE has experienced in limited action against Sri Lankan forces. They are highly developed in the art of mobile warfare. Both the unconventional and semi-conventional capabilities of the LTTE have grown over the years. Its present concentration is on developing its conventional force capability.

The command Mullaittivu/ Weli Oya is the headquarters of the LTTE for training, ordnance and the logistics. This has “reserve strike force” which can support military action in other commands. “Unlike the case in conventional forces, the operational commanders of the LTTE always command their cadres from the front and not from the rear.”<sup>100</sup> Because of this, the LTTE commander is on advantageous plane as he can direct the battle. Within the mission, cadres are given freedom of operation.

The LTTE build their camps in deep jungles. Due to thick undergrowth, they are not visible either from air or ground. The premises of the camp are mined with landmines and IED's. For around one to two kilometers of the camp, early warning elements are deployed. Each camp has all round protection and defence. Trenches and underground bunkers are also the part of their tactics. Some LTTE jungle camps were

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<sup>98</sup> [http://www.janes.com/security/international\\_security/news/sentinel/sent000904-6-n.shtml](http://www.janes.com/security/international_security/news/sentinel/sent000904-6-n.shtml)

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

found to have connections through underground tunnels. Alampil camp in the Mullaitivu area is one such example.<sup>101</sup>

The LTTE has fully exploited the natural features like caves, marshes and rivers to increase their defence potential.

The variety of tactics, LTTE adopts in fighting against its adversaries can be discussed from its operations against the Indian Peacekeeping Force [IPKF] in 1987. During the war, the LTTE mixed with civilians. They camouflaged behind a group of civilians, shoot at the IPKF and swiftly moved away before the IPKF could react. The Tigers also used treetops, inside houses and temples to fire at the IPKF soldiers.<sup>102</sup> To target from the most unexpected places is one of the military tactics of the LTTE.

During the LTTE-IPKF operations, the LTTE fought from hidden positions. They avoided open confrontation. Soft targets like civil police stations and logistic elements were mainly targeted. The LTTE uses “hit and run” by using automatic weapon and hand grenades. They immediately mix with civilians after a firefight. Just like classical guerilla, the LTTE follows, “retreat when enemy is fresh, strike when enemy retreats, fire at him when not in strength.”<sup>103</sup>

Militants were also experts in preparation and lying of ‘Improvised Explosive Devices’ (IEDs). The motive behind using these is to deny access to the army and discourage cordon and search operations. As the militants are completely familiar with the terrain, they can plant the landmine in locations advantageous to them. They proved to be the most effective and devastating weapons of the LTTE.

They have high degree of innovation. Even the bulldozers are made suitable to function as armoured vehicles. An ordinary looking coconut can be an improvised explosive device.

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<sup>101</sup> Ghosh, n.22, p.107.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p.99

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p.107.

The LTTE maintains its efficiency through “effective training, state-of-the-art equipment and, for a guerilla force, unparalleled battle control technology.”<sup>104</sup>

In relating to conventional arms, the LTTE has demonstrated significant strike force potential. The organisation’s brown, green and blue water naval capabilities are well armed.

The LTTE possess superior intelligence network. They get right information about the movement of the troops. The efficiency of this is known during the LTTE-IPKF operations. The best source of information for LTTE was the public. Even temple bells were used to raise the alarm of approaching IPKF men. The LTTE had also used effective radio communication network based on the Japanese sets.<sup>105</sup>

After the LTTE lost external Indian support, they started compensating it by striking against the Sri Lankan military camps and weapon depots. They acquired most of its long-range artillery directly from the Sri Lankan armed forces. Moreover, the LTTE also increased their indigenous weapons production programme. It has manufactured hand grenades, claymore mines, mortars and improvised explosive devices. They also developed a sophisticated a short-range missile capability by 1990.

The LTTE also possess high ability to convert dual-use technology for certain military purposes. The LTTE has the capacity to manufacture at least four types of maritime attack craft.

In parallel to the national intelligence network, the LTTE has a military intelligence network. This network doesn’t have cadres on the ground but had agents in the Sri Lankan security forces. The benefit for LTTE in having a second intelligence organisation is that it can cross check and verify both raw data and assessments.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> [http://www.janes.com/security/international\\_security/news/sentinel/sent000904-6-n.shtml..](http://www.janes.com/security/international_security/news/sentinel/sent000904-6-n.shtml..)

<sup>105</sup> Ghosh, n.22, p.103.

<sup>106</sup> Kulundaswamy, n.38, p.198.

The main source of the LTTE's strength is the military weakness of the Sri Lankan army. Though some impressive military equipment was acquired over the years, it is not enough to suppress the LTTE. Even, the LTTE's striking capability is not so superior to win total victory over the Sri Lankan army. This power relation determines "no-win" outcome in the war and helps the militant movement to thrive.<sup>107</sup>

After a series of defeats with the LTTE, the Sri Lankan security forces launched a year-long modernisation programme recently. Still after the enhancement of their firepower, the Security forces have been unable to improve their fight capabilities. "An attacking force always sustains more casualties", said one security forces commander.<sup>108</sup> The Sri Lankan troops have to advance into the LTTE controlled region. The Sri Lankan soldiers have to clear mines and the artillery and mortar fire forces. This explains the disadvantageous position of the Sri Lankan army in countering the Tigers. This benefit results in tilting of power towards the LTTE.

The security forces also expressed helplessness publicly in catching the LTTE cadres. M.R. Narayan Swamy, in his book quoted the Inspector General of Police who said,

Members of this (Tigers) movement are not common criminals. They are educated, sophisticated youth, a factor which makes them all the more dangerous. Considering they are armed and operating in conditions highly conducive to their activities, police is unable to make any headway in investigation. The local population is terrorised to give any information.<sup>109</sup>

"The lack of military leadership, absence of an overall strategy and inadequate training for the troops gradually impeded the military efficiency of the Sri Lankan security forces."<sup>110</sup>

Because of all these advantages, the LTTE continues to survive amidst the military challenges of the Sri Lankan military.

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<sup>107</sup> Sahadevan, n.6, p.305.

<sup>108</sup> Iqbal Athas, "Military defeats lead to new round of Norway-sponsored negotiations", in Rohan Gunaratna, "LTTE Adopts Heavy Artillery" *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol.13, no.6, June 2001, p.26

<sup>109</sup> M.R.Narayan Swamy, *Tigers Of Lanka* (Delhi,2002) p.40.

<sup>110</sup> Gunaratna, n.95, p.26.

## **Conclusion**

The LTTE has a powerful fighting force with superior organisational and strategic skills and strong leadership. The successes of the Tigers and their courage and conviction for their cause have made them near to the Tamil population.

The LTTE enjoys the supreme power among all the groups representing Tamils. Though, there are many other groups fighting for the same cause in Sri Lanka it is the LTTE that enjoys the support and backing. The spectacular victories of the Tigers in the battlefield make them the most powerful and successful.

Prabhakaran and the LTTE have gone beyond purely military abilities-the adoption of stealth, the ability to surprise, to communicate fear and panic, to hide, to hold their own safe territory-and achieve much more.

## *Chapter 4*

# *LTTE's Internal Resource Base And Its International Network*

Militancy has persisted in Sri Lanka because of its strong and powerful material base. The LTTE has abundant financial resources that are accumulated by means of extortion, taxation, funds from diaspora, drug trafficking etc.

The wide resource base of the LTTE is one strong factor helping in its sustenance. Finance, which is the backbone of the LTTE make significant contribution to the success of its armed movement. The Tigers accumulated resources from all possible avenues. Though internal taxation and international network, LTTE became one of the richest militant organizations of the world.

During 1990-95, the government's administrative apparatus in the North had collapsed. This created a vacuum, which was filled by the LTTE. Almost the whole of North except few pockets of land [encamped by the Sinhala army or navy] was under the administrative control of the LTTE. This administrative control over the land helped the LTTE to levy taxes and revenues. The LTTE supposed to have provided services ranging from transport to trade, production, marketing and distribution of food. It regulated transport and the infrastructure. It inaugurated Tamil Eelam Bank in 1993 that introduced revolving loan system.<sup>1</sup> The LTTE also launched its planning and development secretariat recently on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004. This is responsible for setting policy guidelines and strategies for the development needs of North-East.<sup>2</sup>

Even, the Sri Lankan State continues to supply basic commodities to citizens in these areas. This is to prevent humanitarian crisis. But, political institutions are not functional. The Sri Lankan government can have no control over this region as the defacto State of Tamil Eelam is operational. By means of this control over the

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<sup>1</sup> A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism* [London, 2000], pp.167-168.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.observerindia.com/sln/on\\_Sri\\_Lanka/news.htm#2](http://www.observerindia.com/sln/on_Sri_Lanka/news.htm#2).



territory, the LTTE could easily instigate Tamil people to support the Tigers. This support is in the form of providing finance and cadres to the organisation.<sup>3</sup>

The activities of the Tamil Tigers centered in India in the early years. But due to restrictions imposed by the Indian government, this centrality got dispersed. According to Peter Kloos (he researched the LTTE's operations abroad), transnational aspects are strategic for separatist movements like those of the LTTE.<sup>4</sup> Globalisation not only helped LTTE in becoming a transnational enterprise, but also revealed the true character of the LTTE.

The conflict in Sri Lanka has led to migration of many Sri Lankan Tamils to different parts of the world. The LTTE has made greater use of these transnational migrant communities in acquiring resources. This network helped the LTTE to expand internationally by establishing offices and cells worldwide.

Through this network of international offices and cells, LTTE disseminates information to the Tamil communities all over the world. The publicity of their cause helps them in raising funds, which are used in procuring weapons. Arms purchased in such a manner are transported to Sri Lanka by ships. Narcotics also are transported through ships. In this manner, LTTE strengthened its resource base and made its movement stronger at home.

### **LTTE's Internal Resource base**

In the beginning, the LTTE had inadequate finance and support internally. In such circumstances, the LTTE had developed not only military strategies, but also the avenues for weapons procurement and basic infrastructure. This financial backup has given the movement the strength it needed survive till now.<sup>5</sup> Kittu himself, one of the

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<sup>3</sup>[http://www.janes.com/security/international\\_security/news/sentinel/sent000904-6-n.shtml](http://www.janes.com/security/international_security/news/sentinel/sent000904-6-n.shtml).

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in S.P.Sinha, "Prabhakaran as Leader of the LTTE", *USI Journal*, Vol. CXXXI, no.544, April-June 2001, p.206.

<sup>5</sup> Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers* [Stuttgart, 1994], p.51

LTTE leaders admitted openly that donation from the people came to the organisation only after the movement got well established.<sup>6</sup>

Initially, they obtained a farm in the Vanni, where the LTTE first established its first training camp called “poonthoddam” in a 40-acre farm near to Vavuniya town. The farm composes of flower gardens, vegetable plots and paddy fields. Boys, newly recruited have to work in the paddy fields and vegetable plots at least for two years. These provided them with required rice and vegetables for them to survive.<sup>7</sup>

In the beginning of the guerilla movement by the LTTE, the Tigers carried a campaign in which each household had to contribute two sovereigns of gold. If that was not affordable, the family had to donate son or daughter for the movement. Those without these resources were taken to dig bunkers in frontline which were susceptible to shell attacks.

In 1990, economic embargo was imposed on the North and Eastern provinces (lifted in January 2002). This embargo included a range of consumer goods including fuel, food and medicine. As a result, an informal market for these goods was created. The LTTE has taken account of this situation and played a dominant role in the management of the economy in the territory. This has resulted in a dual economic system. The LTTE has pursued a command economic model for 12 years of the economic embargo. Some of the important features of such a command economy were “severe shortage of essential and other consumer goods, rationing, hyperinflation, and LTTE-run transport, trade and productive enterprises.”<sup>8</sup>

### **LTTE’s Taxation and Extortion**

The LTTE imposes direct and indirect taxes on the people of the North and Eastern provinces. Ocassionally, the LTTE collects monthly income tax from the

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> T. Sabaratnam, TNT matures in to LTTE. [http://www.sangam.org/sabaratnam/pirapaharan\\_chap9.htm](http://www.sangam.org/sabaratnam/pirapaharan_chap9.htm)

<sup>8</sup> Saravanathan Muttukrishna, “Economic Revival in North and East Sri Lanka”, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.38, no.19, May 10, 2003, p.1844.

public servants from the North and east province. A certain proportion of their monthly salaries is taken as tax. For example, occasionally school principals are asked to set aside a certain percentage of the monthly salaries of the teachers to pay the LTTE. Even the private tutors are not left out. Not only the Tamils in the LTTE controlled areas, but also those in the government controlled areas are taxed. The LTTE's taxation operations which were going on clandestinely in the government areas till February 2002 became open after the ceasefire was signed.<sup>9</sup>

The LTTE taxes farmers, fisher folk, small shop owners and others with regular income. The taxes, which were collected in the name of welfare work, were diverted to arm, feed and clothe LTTE. The farmers and fishermen in its controlled areas are expected to contribute part of their output to the LTTE. The LTTE do not consider the income level and household size of the taxpayers. In the same way, small-scale manufacturers and service providers are also taxed monthly.

The LTTE's taxation could be felt at the entrance of the LTTE controlled areas. A9 highway, major road linking the Northern province with the rest of the country was closed for about 12 years. Anyone who travels to Jaffna on the A9 road (highway that connects Jaffna with the rest of Sri Lanka) has to pay 'entrance fees', customs duty levied by the Customs Unit- Finance Division payable to the Bank of Tamil Eelam.<sup>10</sup>

Most of the businesses in the LTTE controlled areas are unregistered in order to avoid payment of taxes to the Sri Lankan government. This they do to avoid double taxation. They can avoid paying taxes to the government but not to the LTTE. Thus, they remain in the informal economy controlled by the LTTE.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to direct taxes, the LTTE also imposes variety of indirect taxes. The goods being transported to the LTTE territory or passing through the LTTE territory to the Jaffna peninsula are taxed at the rates ranging from 5% to 25%. All vehicles in the LTTE territory are required to pay vehicle registration tax. All the passengers

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.1845-46.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.uthr.org/Statements/press.htm>.

<sup>11</sup> Muttukrishna, n.8, p.1845.

traveling to Jaffna peninsula in privately run vans on the A9 highway are subjected to a unit tax of LKR 350 per passenger. Further, the sale of property in the Jaffna peninsula is subjected to taxation by the LTTE. A percentage of the proceeds of sale have to be paid to the LTTE. <sup>12</sup>

Every item is so scrupulously classified. Activity like fishing includes payment of duties on negligible necessities like net dye, hooks, resin, thread etc. Different types of textiles and vehicles are categorically arranged for the collection of duties. Even from the items like candle and camphor, 25% duty is demanded. Milk, groceries and detergents of everyday use are also heavily burdened with the duty. <sup>13</sup> The LTTE has entered every field and left no sphere untouched. This arrangement of duty collection by the LTTE explains the extent to which a common man is exploited. Insignificant exceptions and the strict procedural requirements characterises the LTTE's policy of duty exemption. The North-Eastern economy already crippled by the economic embargo is further deteriorated by this taxation policies of the Tigers.

LTTE also collect some levies and excises like <sup>14</sup>:

- Visa fees
- Demands of gold in compensation for not joining the movement.
- When the last person in the family leaves the Jaffna, their land and house are confiscated.

The condition is further exacerbated by the LTTE's extortion.

Many cases of extortion by the LTTE have been reported in the past 20 years within Sri Lanka. The LTTE extorts mostly from the Tamil and Muslim communities. The Tigers collect fines for violating the LTTE laws. This collection is done in the LTTE controlled areas in Sri Lanka.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.1846.

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.uthr.org/ Statements/press.htm](http://www.uthr.org/Statements/press.htm)

<sup>14</sup> Hellmann, Rajanayagam, n. l, p.74.

The LTTE uses the term 'donations' for this collection. The taxpayers are made to sign a form declaring the money as the 'donation' to the cause. The LTTE legitimises the resources extracted from the people. They acquire money through hostages and ransom notes, payments at checkpoints, routinised levies on individuals and businesses in the area etc. They were regarded as the legitimate functions of a state. Some families also made payments to the LTTE in order to escape from donating their kids to the movement.<sup>15</sup>

The LTTE also collects taxes from those who don't observe LTTE's word. For example, the LTTE had collected Rs.12, 000 from the shopkeepers for not observing the hartal called by the LTTE on Sri Lanka's Independence Day [February 4<sup>th</sup>].<sup>16</sup> Muslims of the East organised a hartal during the cease-fire period. The LTTE fined Muslim traders a total of Rs. 29,000 for their part in the hartal.<sup>17</sup>

The LTTE extorts money from the business community in the North-East. Even it makes Tamil businessmen in Colombo to pay money at many times. The businessmen who failed to pay these taxes and extortion money were subjected to several forms of harassment and torture and even death.<sup>18</sup>

The LTTE has allegedly banned the distribution of fuel to filling stations in the Batticaloa district from the Ceylon Petroleum Cooperation [CPC] installation in the district. This was done by the LTTE after its demand for 50 cents tax per litre of fuel was not paid.<sup>19</sup> This made the drivers supplying fuel from Colombo to Batticaloa to return to Colombo. The acute shortage of fuel affected the citizens. Public transport has been badly disturbed too.

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<sup>15</sup> Vasuki nesiah, Taxation without representation, or Talking to the taxman about Poetry, [http://www.lines-magazine.org/Art\\_Feb04/Editorial\\_Vasuki.htm](http://www.lines-magazine.org/Art_Feb04/Editorial_Vasuki.htm).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> LTTE fine Muslim traders for hartal-[http://www.observerindia.com/sln/on\\_srilanka/news.htm#2](http://www.observerindia.com/sln/on_srilanka/news.htm#2)

<sup>18</sup> Dr Hillary Rajakarunanayake, Tiger taxes economy and people in the North, 29<sup>th</sup> October 2003. <http://www.abooda.com/news/Wend291003.asp>.

<sup>19</sup> No fuel for Batticaloa while petroleum boss refuses to pay LTTE tax-  
[http://www.observerindia.com/sln/on\\_srilanka/news.htm#2](http://www.observerindia.com/sln/on_srilanka/news.htm#2)

The LTTE also tried to tax the organisation responsible for de-mining in the north. When that was not possible, they started extorting Rs.10, 000 to Rs.15, 000 monthly salary of this local mine workers. Those who protested were beaten up. The LTTE also takes a chunk out of the resettlement allowance allotted to all Internally Displaced Persons [IDP's] returning to resettle in the North and East.<sup>20</sup>

Earlier, the Tigers had been sending extortion notes from their offices across the Batticaloa lagoon. But now because of the cease-fire, the LTTE could freely move in government controlled areas. This has resulted in the Tigers being able to go straight to houses or directly call people to threaten and demand money described as taxes or donations. The LTTE, taking advantage of the cease-fire, is now demanding the Tamil people who have not paid any money for several years as they were living in government areas. The Tigers are asking all the Tamils to pay their dues with penalties for not paying earlier. Prominent citizens, professionals and business people are being forced to pay money under different arrangements for different people.<sup>21</sup>

Even in Jaffna, which was supposedly under government control, the LTTE members could freely move around and collect 10% from shopkeepers and other establishments.<sup>22</sup>

After the cease-fire signed in early 2002, the LTTE is supposed to have collected some 30 million rupees from Batticaloa and Amparai. The LTTE has also begun spreading its extortion activity in other parts of the east, which comes under the control of security forces.<sup>23</sup>

The daily revenues of the LTTE earned on the A9 highway by way of taxation of passengers and goods is said to be around LKR five million (50 Lakh). In addition, the daily revenue collected from the people and businesses throughout the North and East province is around LKR 2.5 million (25 lakhs). So, LKR 7.5 million [75 lakhs] is calculated to be the daily total tax revenue of the LTTE. This translates in to annual

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<sup>20</sup> [http://www.lines-magazine.org/Art\\_Feb04/Editorial\\_Vasuki.htm](http://www.lines-magazine.org/Art_Feb04/Editorial_Vasuki.htm).

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.uthr.org/Statements/press.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.lankaweb.com/news/items03/130503-3.html>.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.uthr.org/Statements/press.htm>.

revenue of LKR 2,340 million(2.34 billion). Besides, the LTTE is involved in farming, fishing and other several other economic activities as in the territory under their control. If we add these tax revenues to the annual domestic income of the LTTE, then the total income could be at least LKR three billion.<sup>24</sup>

How these revenues are utilized by the LTTE are unknown. LTTE do not seems to be involved in providing public services to the people of the North and East provinces whether they are under LTTE control or government control areas. In both these areas, it is the Sri Lankan government that is providing public services in education, health, agriculture, irrigation, social services, etc, to the people.

All the abandoned farmlands and dwellings are under the control of the LTTE. It neither pays compensation nor distributes the land to the needy. In this way, the LTTE has become a “major de facto property owner”.<sup>25</sup>

Tamil people are worried about complaining to the cease-fire monitors, as there are Tiger representatives also in the monitoring mission. Even the Tamil National Alliance MP’s are of no help to the people as they are controlled by the Tigers.<sup>26</sup> The Sri Lankan government and international community are cautious in dealing with the LTTE because they don’t want to disrupt the cease-fire.

Extracting ransoms is one source of financial resources for the LTTE internally. LTTE has involved in kidnapping to sustain its militant struggle. Kidnapping is one tactic employed by the revolutionary guerillas to survive in their struggle.

LTTE leader Athiyaman is incharge of extortion for the LTTE in the east. The LTTE has allegedly abducted people to make them pay money to the militant movement. Abducted people are taken to Tiger camps in the western interior called Paduvangarai. Relatives go to camps and after giving them a guarantee of payment, the abducted people are released. Batticaloa- Amparai Civil Liberties Association

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<sup>24</sup> Muttukrishna, n.8, p.1846.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.,p.1847.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.uthr.org/Statements/press.htm>.

(BACLA) charged the LTTE for keeping nearly hundred civilians in forced captivity for extortion purposes at any given time. People even agree to pay immediately in order to avoid getting abducted.<sup>27</sup>

The LTTE tax collectors seem to have every detail about the income of their targets: salaries, bank balances, assets, liabilities. Those singled out by LTTE have to visit its office in nearby Kokaddicholai. They can bring down the amount they have to pay by bargaining. Those who refuse to pay are imprisoned.<sup>28</sup>

Apart from demanding money or gold the LTTE is also forcing the Tamil people to legally transfer their property like houses and paddy lands etc. in the names of people proposed by the Tigers. When the people are found with no money, the LTTE is claimed to have even confiscated cows and grabbed a motorcycle. EPDP [Eelam People's Democratic Party] accuses LTTE of demanding Rs.25 lakhs from the lawyers. The LTTE is blamed to have stolen rations from all cooperative stores of Kokkadicholai.<sup>29</sup> No one was spared from their policy of taxation or extortion.

The LTTE kidnapped Muslim merchants who resisted their demands. Subsequently, the families of those kidnapped are forced to pay for their release. Human rights groups and other observers report that the LTTE continues to extort money from Muslims despite an April 2002 pledge to end the practice.<sup>30</sup>

BACLA says that by targeting professionals particularly leading lawyers, the Eastern Tamil elite is panic-stricken which actually in normal situations help the public to oppose such extortion acts.<sup>31</sup> By putting the lawyers under threat, the legal avenues are also shut for the victims.

Recently, the LTTE was in news for abducting 82-year-old man, Sitham Parampillai and he had been released only after an assurance of paying Rs.2.5 million as ransom. He was not of any help to the Sri Lankan government to accuse LTTE's

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Nirupama Subramanian, Fear Stalks Batticaloa, <http://www.uthr.org/Statements/press.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> <http://org/background/asia/srilanka/#Extortion>.

<sup>30</sup> <http://uscis.gov/text/services/asylum/ric/documentation/LKA02001.htm>.

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.uthr.org/Statements/press.htm>



indulgence in such activities as he was completely under trauma.<sup>32</sup> The LTTE is accused of many such cases of abduction. The fear of harassment from LTTE avoids the victims from providing any support to the State agencies in countering such nefarious activities. This works to the advantage of Tigers who, with additional confidence, further increase their resource mobilisation activities without any hindrance. With no barrier against their brutal activities, the militant movement continues to thrive.

Even those who are ardent supporters of the LTTE say that they are ashamed of its conduct over the last few months. “The LTTE has undoubtedly created a lot of resentment with its activities,” said one eminent townsman who has close contact with the area leader of the Tigers, Sivagnyanan Karikalan.<sup>33</sup> But there are also those who justify the recruitment and collection of money as necessary to strengthen the LTTE.

The common people living under frightful conditions willingly or unwillingly finance Tiger movement and help in its sustenance. The legal and political elite got succumbed to the horror erupted from the heightened Tamil militancy. The national and international diplomats are discreet in dealing with the LTTE and are handicapped by their efforts in maintaining status quo.

The Tamils of North-East had fallen prey to the mighty power of LTTE. The Tigers could easily extort money from the Tamils as their powerlessness and vulnerability disabled them. The Tigers who sustained in the beginning their movement through active public support is also again surviving by the same factor. But the only difference is, earlier, Tamils bolstered the militant movement because of their fear of armed forces [Sri Lankan Army]. At present, the fear of LTTE ensures patronage from public.

The nature of LTTE’s economic policy within Sri Lanka helped it in getting satisfactory resources even in the war-ravaged region. Many of the Tamils in Sri

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

Lanka migrated to different parts of the world. Compared to the resources collected from this international diaspora, the internal resources of LTTE are very meagre.

## **LTTE's International Network**

The complex international structure of the LTTE reflects the intricateness of the “quasi-governmental structure” created by the LTTE.<sup>34</sup> Their network is called the LTTE International Inc. This depends on the loyalties and resources of members of a global Tamil diaspora. It connects the commercial companies and small business, government offices, informal banking channels, human rights organizations, arms dealers and foreign mercenaries. The LTTE can be compared to a multinational organization, which has resources all over the world.

The international network of LTTE is practically spread all across the globe. LTTE operates in Canada, France, Switzerland, Italy, Norway, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, Australia and recently to South Africa.<sup>35</sup> They are stretched to at least forty countries. Around US \$ 80 – 100 million, which forms 80% of the LTTE budget, is secured from the contribution of diaspora and revenue generated from international trade, enterprises and investments.<sup>36</sup>

### ***Organs of LTTE's International Network:***

The international network of the LTTE operates through three organs.

1. Eelam House
2. International Secretariat
3. The Tamil Information Centre

### **Functions of Eelam House**

Eelam House is one of the propaganda and communication centers of the LTTE. The LTTE projects its face to the British public and the world through this.

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<sup>34</sup> *Asiaweek*, 26<sup>th</sup> November, 1996.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/srilanka/terroristoutfits/LTTE.htm>

<sup>36</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, “Asia pacific: Organised Crime and International Terrorist Networks”, in K.P.S. Gill, Ajai Sahni, eds., *The Global Threat of Terror*[New Delhi, 2002], p.259.

Eelam House is situated to the south of the Thames River in London (LTTE bought Eelam House building in 1996 and Lawrence Thilagar inaugurated it in the same year). The funds donated or extorted from the Tamil community in Sri Lanka and abroad were used to purchase this building.

Like in other countries, the Tamil vote bank is the determining factor in achieving political support for the LTTE. It is at this Eelam House, that politicians and LTTE exchange assurances. Political leaders give their sympathy to the LTTE's cause. The LTTE secures the Tamil vote in the electorate for them. Eelam House is also the home of the UTO (United Tamils Organisation). The functions of the propaganda/fund raising activities of LTTE are carried through the UTO at Eelam House. Eelam House is also the address for TEEDOR (Tamil Eelam Economic Development Organisation).<sup>37</sup> This organization makes effort to get European Union, local and governmental authorities for distinct projects. The address of Eelam House is under different names in the eyes of the public to get donations and grants.

#### **LTTE International Secretariat**

The International Secretariat of LTTE is at London. The name of LTTE is always associated with this. Though VTO, TEEDOR etc use the Eelam House address for fund raising, their face behind all their operations is LTTE. LTTE, in disguise, raise funds using the Eelam House address. The reason behind collecting the funds by the Eelam House is said to be for 'rehabilitation work and refugee relief'.<sup>38</sup>

The central governing committee of LTTE includes the International Secretariat. It is headed by V.Manoharan. It is this body, which has the responsibility to ensure smooth functioning of LTTE global network. However, different sections of the international structure are headed by experts in their own fields.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/sinhala/ehouse.htm>.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Peter Chalk, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's International Organization and operations- A Preliminary Analysis, March 17 2000. <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com77c.html>.

## **The Tamil Information Centre**

The Tamil Information center is also located in London. It is obvious from the name that it is a 'propaganda mouthpiece' of the LTTE. Many publications and television documentaries on the Sri Lankan conflict are done for BBC and ITV channels with the assistance of the Tamil Information Centre. They try to project themselves as 'independent' and 'impartial'.<sup>40</sup>

### **Functions of the LTTE's international network:**

The international functions of the LTTE are at three different levels.

1. Publicity and propaganda
2. Arms procurement
3. Fundraising

Though the networks overlap, they remain separate operationally. The LTTE also functions with the help of front, cover and sympathetic organizations.

### **1. Publicity and Propaganda**

Civil war at home had driven several thousand Tamils to different parts of the world. Some 70,000 people lost their lives in the past 20 –21 years of civil war. Five times to this number have fled seeking refuge in India, Canada, Australia and the countries of Western Europe.<sup>41</sup> The main goal of publicity and propaganda activities of LTTE is to widen the international political support of this dispersed Tamil community for the Tamil cause.

As in May 1998, the 'quasi-diplomatic' LTTE organization was supposed to be comprised of offices and cells in around 54 countries. The biggest and significant centers are located in Western countries with large Tamil population. Places that can be mentioned are UK, Germany, France, Switzerland, Canada and Australia. LTTE's presence is also seen in countries such as Cambodia, South Africa, Burma and Botswana.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> <http://www.ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/sinhala/ehouse.htm>

<sup>41</sup> Ramachandra Guha, "Tigers in the Alps", *Himal*, Vol. 16, no. 5, May 2003, p.12.

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com77e.html>.

V.Manoharan heads the publicity and propaganda activities of the LTTE. He operates from a small office. International propaganda of LTTE is mostly done through 'politically sympathetic pressure groups' and 'media units'. All their activities are coordinated through 'umbrella front organisations'.<sup>43</sup>

Front Organisations:

The most important and active ones are:

1. Australian Federation of Tamil Associations
2. The Swiss Federation of Tamil Associations
3. The French Federation of Tamil Associations
4. The Federation Of Associations of Canadian Tamils
5. The Illankai Tamil Sangam in the USA
6. The Tamil Coordinating Committee in Norway
7. International Federation of Tamils in the UK

Through this global network, LTTE wants to gain political and economic support for their goal of achieving Tamil Eelam. They are supported not only by Tamil diaspora but also lobbied politicians and human rights activists.

Communication Centre of LTTE:

The operations of LTTE international propaganda network are very sophisticated. The main communication center of LTTE is based in Norway. In the name of front organizations, LTTE operates six offices out of Norway.<sup>44</sup> The two important LTTE front organizations in Norway are the Tamil Coordinating Committee (TCC) and the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO). The LTTE communication center in Norway is the nodal point for receiving daily information from the Wanni jungles to the busy capital of Norway. The selective battlefield reports are sent through satellite phone links as daily faxes.<sup>45</sup> Within twenty-four hours, the communication center transfers the information onto the Internet, which is viewed globally.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Fedrica Janz, "The LTTE Rides High in Norway While Sri Lanka Gets Torn Apart"  
<http://www.sinhaya.com/norway.htm>.

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com77e.htm.l>

The LTTE as a group with 'international support structure' is much aware of the technical means of gathering intelligence. So they are very cautious of developing open communications network. The LTTE makes use of highly trained 'human couriers' to transmit important messages.<sup>46</sup>

The LTTE also makes use of taped cassettes and videotapes along with Tamil publications to win the sympathy for the Tigers' cause. Graphic videos, pamphlets and calendars highlighting the implications of government aims and military strikes (against LTTE) are brought out by the LTTE.<sup>47</sup> Such propaganda material is also used to seek financial support towards sustaining the LTTE in Sri Lanka

Support from NGOs:

The banner of LTTE is 'Peace' in its international campaigns.<sup>48</sup> The motive behind this is to attract the support of various non-governmental organizations to their cause. Such important organizations are :

1. Canadian Relief Organization for Peace in Sri Lanka
2. The International Educational Development Inc
3. The World Council of Churches
4. The Australian Human Rights Foundation
5. The International Human Rights Group
6. The International Federation Of Journalists
7. Pax Romana
8. The International Peace Bureau
9. The International Human Rights Law Group
10. Robert.F.Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights.

The support LTTE gained from these groups proved very beneficial. These groups demonstrate their support publicly. This gave lot of strength to LTTE that their cause

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<sup>46</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, "Transnational Terrorism: support networks and trends" *Faultlines*, Vol.7, November 2000, p.2.

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com77e.html>.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

got internationalized. The LTTE believes that their claim for secession got legitimized.

*Use of Internet as Propaganda Tool:*

Groups like LTTE fighting for a separate State need a means to “implant their doctrine in the popular mind”<sup>49</sup>. Tamils are extensively dispersed all over the world. The LTTE also doesn’t have any access to the established media of communication. It is a banned organization in Sri Lanka and in other countries like India. Until 1991, the LTTE was operating in India. It lost its ground in India after it was charged with the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. After that, the LTTE is left without any public platform. Though the LTTE has its radio station ‘Voice of Tigers’ and a television station, which are operated secretly in Sri Lanka, they are of limited reach. But the internet has become an ideal tool in the hands of the Tigers crossing all the limitations. Reaching distance is not the only advantage with the internet. Through internet, the banned LTTE could get safe access to mass media. This facilitates them “careful and sustained construction of identities”<sup>50</sup>. Internet is also used as a weapon in its war for the Eelam. It is also used as a means to win support for its struggle for separate State.

According to Peter Chalk, Tigers propaganda operation is unmatched to Sri Lankan government<sup>51</sup>. Internet serves not only as a propaganda tool but also helps in appealing for funds. The LTTE runs several websites. The official website of the LTTE is [www.eelam.com](http://www.eelam.com). Other websites dealing with the Sri Lankan issue are [www.tamilnet.com](http://www.tamilnet.com), [www.tamilcanadian.com](http://www.tamilcanadian.com) etc. Not only these, the LTTE funds many other websites dealing with the Eelam issue. They have “hot links” and “jump-off points” which are networked to globally popular humanitarian and development organizations.<sup>52</sup> As the technology itself provides anonymity, it is difficult to trace the LTTE funded websites. The LTTE uses the net to disrupt the government operations. It is called ‘cyber-terrorism’. The wing of LTTE called the ‘Internet Black

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<sup>49</sup> Maya Ranganathan, “Nurturing a Nation on the Net: The Case of Tamil Eelam”, Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, Vol.8. no.2, Summer 2002, p.58

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com77e.html>.

Tigers' which attacked the networks of Sri Lankan Embassy and Consulate with up to 800 junk emails per day.<sup>53</sup>

Through internet, the LTTE has the advantage of addressing both the first generation and second-generation expatriate Tamil population. The second generation of Sri Lankan Tamil is brought up exclusively in the Western atmosphere and has never made a visit to Sri Lanka to get knowledge of the land and the movement. For the movement to sustain, it is necessary to draw this section of community into the nation of Eelam. And the LTTE could achieve this through internet.

## 2. Procurement of Weapons

The reason for the success of the LTTE is the group's capacity to build a strong weapons chest. In confrontation with the Sri Lankan military in close quarter engagements, the LTTE units are better armed and trained in the use of heavy weapons. No guerrilla or terrorist organization in the World today can equal the LTTE in the standoff capability. The LTTE has abundant Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPG's), armour piercing Light Anti-Tank Weapons (LAW's) and Surface-to-Air Missiles (SAM's).<sup>54</sup> The LTTE also possess high and trajectory weapons like mortars, artillery, multi-barrel rocket launchers etc. The capability of the LTTE added strength and made it fight like a conventional force.

Like the propaganda wing, the Tigers' arms procurement network is also widely expanded. It's been built up since 1983 with the support of millions of dollars. Its foundation is laid at Velvettiturai (henceforth VVT), the birthplace of Prabhakaran. VVT has long been the center of Asia-wide web of LTTE's commercial, maritime and smuggling activities.<sup>55</sup>

These contacts haven't developed just with the rise of militancy. The traders belonging to the Tamil sea fairing caste of VVT developed links with the countries across the Bay of Bengal; South China Sea and Java for centuries. The location of

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<sup>53</sup> Ranganathan, n.49, p.58.

<sup>54</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, "LTTE Adopts Heavy Artillery", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol. 13, no. 6, June 2001, p.23.

<sup>55</sup> *Asiaweek*, 26<sup>th</sup> November, 1996



VVT at the north coast of the Jaffna peninsula made them easily accessible to other parts of Asia. After Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948, some traders turned into smugglers ferrying goods across the Palk Strait (which divides India and Sri Lanka).

When Tamil militancy was in its infant stage, VVT helped LTTE to have a distinct “logistical edge” over other militant groups.<sup>56</sup> The LTTE had established links in Tamil Nadu even before the outbreak of the 1983 anti-Tamil riots. The relations got boosted further between 1983 and 1987 with India providing sanctuary, training and weapons to LTTE.

If not for external support, the LTTE would not have been what it is today. By itself, without the assistance of India in particular, the LTTE achieving its goals are indeed remote. The geographical proximity of South India proved a great benefiting factor in the militant movement of Sri Lanka. Jaffna peninsula is separated from the Indian mainland by 35kms long stretch of islets known as Adam’s Bridge. Vedaraniyam and Point Calamere on the Tanjore coast are the nearest points from Jaffna. Prabhakaran has used the terrain to great advantage. The LTTE has established a wide network of landing points and contacts all along the Tanjore coast. It has the advantage of using the fishing fleet as cover for its secret movement.<sup>57</sup>

Prabhakaran was not confident of New Delhi’s commitment to his goal of achieving an independent Eelam. Prabhakaran turned his attention to local politicians and businessmen and began to develop contacts. These relations enabled him to set up the first independent arms manufacturing units not only in Tamil Nadu but also in the Jaffna peninsula.

After this he began to look abroad for equipment. He first turned to VVT commercial contacts in Singapore. This helped LTTE in buying radios. He is just like any other good capitalist from VVT. According to one militant “ He registered a company in Singapore, invested in Malaysia, started a shipping company in Cyprus, played the share market in London”.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Sinha, n.4, p.196.

<sup>58</sup> Asiaweek, 26<sup>th</sup> November, 1996.

The LTTE arms network is headed by Tharmalingam Shanmugham, alias Kumaran Pathmanathan. He is known by his initial 'KP'. [He is the second most wanted person in Sri Lanka after Prabhakaran.] There are more than 20 passports in his name and he travels extensively. It was KP who focused on setting up a specialized department in document forging and spreading the international network.<sup>59</sup>

The global weapons procurement team of LTTE is known as the KP department. Most of its members including Pathmanathan haven't received any formal military training. But those inducted into this department receive intensive instruction in various fields like document forgery, gun running, communication, international freight shipping and investment. KP's main bases are in Singapore, Rangoon and Bangkok. He is accused of holding many bank accounts in London, Frankfurt, Denmark, Athens and Australia.<sup>60</sup>

LTTE shipments:

At the center of KP departments operations is a highly clandestine shipping network. In the beginning shipments were made to India. From there, speedboats would carry them to Jaffna or the north east coast of Sri Lanka.

But, their deep sea going operations started in 1984 with the purchase of a ship called 'The Cholan' from Singapore.<sup>61</sup> In between 1985 and 1986, the LTTE started building their maritime network. Pratima Das, a Mumbai shipping magnate, helped them in this regard.<sup>62</sup>

The LTTE possess a fleet of two-dozen ships. They carry arms, human beings [LTTE transport Asian migrants to Africa and Europe.] and narcotics illicitly. The merchant ships of the LTTE operate independently of the Sea Tigers. They are managed through Shell companies of the LTTE. These vessels are mostly registered

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<sup>59</sup> <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com77e.html>.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Tara Kartha, *Tools of Terror*[New Delhi, 1999], p.150.

<sup>62</sup> *Asiaweek*, 26<sup>th</sup> November, 1996

under Panamanian, Honduran or Liberian flags (colloquially known as Pan-Ho-Lib. These states are notorious for lax registration requirements).<sup>63</sup> They have Sri Lankan Tamil, and foreign crew.<sup>64</sup> Around 90% of the time LTTE ships are involved in transporting general cargo like sugar, rice, fertilizer, flour and timber. By transporting legitimate commercial cargo most of the time, it gives a safe cover for the transport of arms, explosives etc for the LTTE.<sup>65</sup> LTTE ships frequently visit Japan, Indonesia, Singapore, South Africa, Burma, Turkey, France, Italy and Ukraine. Some ships are also heavily armed.<sup>66</sup>

Singapore and Hong Kong forms the communications hub of the LTTE weapons procurement network. These two 'city-states' are strategically situated on key shipping lanes and possess sophisticated banking structures. Singapore also became a favorite market for the purchase of dual-use items like computers, electronics, outboard motors and diving gear. Singapore and Hong Kong orchestrate cells located in Thailand (particularly Phuket and Trang, Trang is a coastal town on the Andaman Sea), Pakistan and Burma (particularly Twantay in the Irrawady delta, South of Yangon).<sup>67</sup>

This geographical links makes them easily accessible to the flourishing arms bazaars of Southeast and Southwest Asia.

#### *Geographic Operation of Arms Procurement Activity:*

Peter Chalk in his article divided LTTE international arms procurement activity into five main zones of geographic operation:

1. Northeast and Southeast Asia, operates mainly in China, North Korea, Cambodia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Vietnam and Burma.
2. Southwest Asia particularly in Afghanistan and Pakistan
3. Former USSR, Ukraine is important to the LTTE

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<sup>63</sup> LTTE ships also sail under other flags. LTTE's ship "Sun Bird" which is also known as Illiyana, Ichulite and Francis is registered under a Cypriot flag. The Golden Bird known also as the Baris, St. Anthony, Sophis and Parhan under a Maltese flag. Another ship Amazon bears the New Zealand flag. <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com77e.html>.

<sup>64</sup> . Rohan Gunaratna, "The Asymmetric Threat from Maritime Terrorism", *Jane's Navy International*, Vol.106, no.8, October 2001, p.29. Peter.Chalk talks of only Tamil crew in his article.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com77e.html>

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

4. Southeastern Europe and the Middle East. Here LTTE functions particularly in Lebanon, Cyprus, Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey
5. Africa, LTTE's focus is on Nigeria, Zimbabwe and South Africa

The sources of LTTE's arms as listed above indicate LTTE's procurement from three continents – Asia, Africa and Europe. Australia and North America are inaccessible to them in terms of acquisition of arms and equipment.

Well-established trafficking routes of these major sources are used to transport the weapons to Sri Lanka. South China Sea is used to carry the weapons from China, North Korea and Hong Kong.<sup>68</sup> From there, arms are carried through the Malacca and Singapore straits to the Bay of Bengal and finally to Sri Lanka. Arms from the Southeast countries like Cambodia, Vietnam, and Burma travel through Thailand. They are loaded on to vessels at Ranong, the Southern port. Then the ships cross the Bay of Bengal.<sup>69</sup>

On the other hand, arms from Eastern Europe, Ukraine and the Middle East pass through the Suez Canal. The ships take a turn round the Horn of Africa to reach Sri Lanka. Finally, from the African continent, munitions are smuggled to the LTTE strongholds in Sri Lanka in two ways. They are transmitted either around the Cape of Good Hope from ports Liberia, Nigeria and Angola or through Madagascar from Beira (Mozambique Coastal town).

Yangon was an early port of call for LTTE freighters. Prabhakaran's grandfather owns some property there. Pathmanathan and associates established Tiger trading companies in parallel with the ships. The LTTE has trading companies in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Yangon, Dhaka, Chittagong etc.<sup>70</sup>

Tigers found Myanmar as the easiest place away from home. In the late 1980's, the LTTE's vessels were believed to have begun shipping from Myanmar to Thailand. This business brought them closer to Myanmar military. The contact, which LTTE developed, helped them in establishing a base at the small town of Twantay.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Asiaweek, 26<sup>th</sup> November, 1996

This base, which came into existence after mid 1990, consists of a communication and a transshipment facility.<sup>71</sup>

Sources of LTTE's Arms and Equipment:

According to intelligence reports, most of the arms used by the LTTE are purchased from Singapore, India, Afghanistan, and the Middle East. Soviet-made AK47 Automatic Kalashnikovs, T 56 Chinese assault rifles, the Indian-Belgian AKMS, and the M16 manufactured by the Colt company in the United States [believed to have been obtained through Vietnam] have been the common weapons of the LTTE guerilla. In late 1980s and early 1990s, the LTTE is known to have received weapons from munitions factories in India. In 1990, the LTTE was receiving small weapons from factories in the Tamil Nadu centers of Ranipet, Coimbatore, Salem, and Trichengode.<sup>72</sup> The LTTE leader had easy access to former Tamil Nadu CM M.G. Ramachandran, who often donated large amounts of money to the LTTE. The Indian government had arranged the supply of arms-rifles, pistols, rocket propelled grenades, rocket launchers and rockets-to the militant group.<sup>73</sup>

The major source of LTTE's arms and equipment is the black market. Even when they were under Indian training, the LTTE developed access to the black market in arms. Militant groups are also involved in smuggling when they failed in their initial efforts. Very soon, they get involved in trade too as mentioned above. Even before Indian intelligence training, the LTTE had received from Lebanese militant and Palestinian groups to some extent.<sup>74</sup> This links helped them in acquiring weapons also. Mossad supplied a variety of military equipment to the Tigers. That included refurbished Soviet made mines, Uzi sub-machine guns, Galil assault rifles, rubber boats, LMG's, shoulder carried field missiles, Eagle pistols and water resistant pouches for underwater sabotage. Tigers got major part of their sophisticated weapons

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<sup>71</sup> This base was quietly closed because of the protests from Sri Lanka.

<sup>72</sup> [http://www.larouchepub.com/other/1995/2241\\_south\\_india\\_groups.html](http://www.larouchepub.com/other/1995/2241_south_india_groups.html).

<sup>73</sup> *Frontline*, November 29- 12 December 1997

What was strange was Indian soldiers were getting killed and maimed in Sri Lanka by the explosives and grenades manufactured in Tamil Nadu. Wounded LTTE guerillas were getting treatment in hospitals in Tamil Nadu. [ *Frontline*, 23 December , 2000- 5 January, 2001 ]

The efficient network that the LTTE built in Tamil Nadu, comprising smugglers, fishermen, political activists, transport operators, businessmen and corrupt officials, provided support to its war machine.

<sup>74</sup> Kartha, n.61, p.149.

from Palestinian groups. They were important in providing the first access to the international black market. The LTTE was also found to be helped by many foreigners in acquiring arms.<sup>75</sup>

The LTTE also had developed links with Hekmatyar's Hezb-I-Islami. The arms bazaars on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border were the favorite spots of the Tamil Tigers. In 1987, a large quantities of arms with Pakistani and Israeli markings were seized by the Indian Peacekeeping Force [IPKF] in Jaffna from the LTTE.<sup>76</sup>

Tigers also contract their ships to other groups. The vital input like the coastline and the support were available to LTTE's ships. Near the Madras coast along Nagapattinam, the ships coming from Singapore or other countries used to dock off.<sup>77</sup> This kind of support is very crucial for the group to sustain. They were ferried by the fishermen to the Sri Lankan north-east. There was also a network which supplied the all important diesel, food, clothing and other items for Jaffna and Tiger cadres. This support structure was evident at least till 1990. Tamil Nadu was also crucial to the Tigers in housing their weapon factories and accessing explosives.<sup>78</sup>

The most important purchases that the LTTE makes from the international black market are the fibreglass speedboats. These boats are part of the naval wing of the LTTE. They are believed to be purchased from Liberia. They travel with an average speed of thirty knots. The LTTE's constant success can be attributed to these boats. It possessed massive technology by 1997.<sup>79</sup> Their armory included shoulder-fired SAM's, satellite global positioning systems and sophisticated communication equipment. They have an arsenal of over 10,000 weapons.

Kumaran always laid emphasis on explosives in his global weapons procurement efforts. Prior to 1987, these were directly supplied to LTTE from India.

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<sup>75</sup> In August 1983, in Salonika, Greece, two West Germans were sentenced to four years imprisonment on charges of illegal transport plane which took off from East Berlin and landed at Salonika. The plane was headed for Sri Lanka, where the LTTE was scheduled to pick up the 267 cases in the plane, which contained 33,000 rounds for automatic rifles and 400 rockets.

[http://www.larouchepub.com/other/1995/2241\\_south\\_india\\_groups.html](http://www.larouchepub.com/other/1995/2241_south_india_groups.html).

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Kartha, n.61, p.150.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p.155.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p.150.

But after the Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Accord of 1987, the LTTE lost the benefit of external Indian support. This forced the LTTE to look for alternatives. Ukraine became the new favoured source after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990.

The main goal of the KP department has also been to provide the LTTE with war material that cannot be produced indigenously. KP department has been successful in this regard. For example, Sri Lankan air force posed a major threat to the LTTE for a long time. To counter their strikes, the KP department helped in building up a sophisticated surface-to-air missile capacity for LTTE. This technology is mostly based on Soviet made SAM- 7's. They are purchased from corrupt government officials and insurgent forces in Cambodia. During the 1980s US supplied as many as 900 stinger missiles to the Afghan Mujahideen.<sup>80</sup> These missiles, which are deadly and accurate, got proliferated with the LTTE.

In the middle of the year 1997, a vessel carrying 34,500 81mm mortar shells from LBG military supplies of Israel was hijacked by the LTTE. It is a sub-contractor of Zimbabwe Defense Industries and was an arms supplier to the Sri Lankan government. From then onwards 60-70% of the Sri Lankan troops killed or injured in combat have been attributed to mortar fire. The LTTE sent a fax to the US embassy in Colombo on 11 July 1997 confirming the above hijack by them. The fax said: " We the Tamil Tigers, inform you by the present that on 11 July 1997 we have hijacked a vessel carrying arms destined for Colombo. We know that the manufacturer and the supplier of the mortar bombs is ZDI from Harare. The cargo has been confiscated. We make known and warn that we will take action against all persons participating in the supply of military equipment used against the legitimate rights of Tamil people and we will severely punish those concerned".<sup>81</sup>

In the 1990s, the LTTE transported consignments of weapons from Bulgaria (SA 14, LAW), RPG's from Cyprus, 50 tonnes of TNT and 10 tonnes of

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<sup>80</sup> <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com77e.html>.

<sup>81</sup> Gunaratna, n.54, p.24.

RDX from Ukraine.<sup>82</sup> It also transported small arms from Thailand and Myanmar. 32, 400 mortars are transported from Croatia.<sup>83</sup>

Through its international network, the LTTE has also procured multi-barrel rocket launchers (MBRL's). In the mid 1990s, one of its European offices tried to purchase MBRL's from Belgrade. The LTTE developed serious interest to purchase MBRL's from then on.

In the same way, the LTTE purchased dual use technologies from Malaysia (diving gear, speed boats, outboard motors), Australia (light aircraft, gliders), Singapore (communication equipment, GPS, chemicals), Denmark (sea scooters), UK (micro filming and communication equipment) and Germany (telescopic sights).<sup>84</sup>

The LTTE acquired 60 tonnes of high explosives from the Rubezone chemical plant in Ukraine, surface-to-air missiles from Bulgaria, micro lights, fixed wing aircraft and mini-helicopter from Australia in November 1994.<sup>85</sup>

No other guerilla and terrorist group could beat LTTE in the quantity of armaments that it transports. The main responsibility of the merchant vessels is to maintain the critical lifeline for sustaining the LTTE's campaign at home.

The LTTE with its variety of artillery has become an unbeatable force. Their sophisticated and distinct armory makes them very strong. The strength that LTTE musters from this makes them sustain for long.

When the LTTE was in the initial stage of developing its heavy weapons capability, Sri Lankan military underestimated it. The Sri Lankan army was skeptical of LTTE's ability to "use, maintain and replenish" the equipment.<sup>86</sup> However, the LTTE brought the artillery guns and the MBRL's under the engineering regiment.

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<sup>82</sup> In 1996, LTTE used some of this RDX for the truck bomb explosion outside the Central Bank building in Colombo. This is considered one of the horrific militant attacks in History. [Asiaweek, 26<sup>th</sup> November, 1996.]

<sup>83</sup> Gunaratna, n.54, p.24.

<sup>84</sup> Gunaratna, n.64, p.28.

<sup>85</sup> Gunaratna, n.54, p.26.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.



This newly formed engineering regiment ensured the best possible maintenance and service.

To curtail the effectiveness of the group, the benefit of maritime operation helping in the sustenance of military need to be checked. But the LTTE operates globally. About 90% of the maritime attacks occur in the developing world. In these countries, the governments are corrupt and inefficient. They don't have required intelligence and legal tools to disrupt and destroy them. Even if there is any response from any government, groups like LTTE can rapidly move and search for new opportunities.

### 3. Fund Raising

The international fund raising campaign of LTTE is also sophisticated. The LTTE uses the widespread Tamil network to raise funds.

The anti-Tamil riots of July 1983 in Colombo led thousand of Tamils to flee Sri Lanka. Most of the Tamils went to Tamil Nadu. They also traveled as far as Europe, Canada and Australia. The Tamil refugees in various countries made spontaneous contribution to the LTTE. The LTTE gets its major financial resources from six areas: Switzerland, Australia, Canada, the US, the UK and the Scandinavian countries.<sup>87</sup> All these places have large Tamil diaspora.

The methods of fund collection ranges from investments to donations to outright blackmail and extortion. The LTTE started taxing Tamils abroad in the beginning. The revenues are used to finance their struggle. After some time, the voluntary contributions got transformed into extortions. Many of the migrants leave behind their property and relatives in Jaffna. Because of the fear of LTTE, the Tamils abroad cannot take the risk of refusing its request to support the movement financially.

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<sup>87</sup> <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com77c.html>.

After the LTTE lost effective control over the Jaffna peninsula in 1995-96, finance from overseas became a major source. In Switzerland the monthly contribution of the 23,000 strung Tamil population ranges between \$40-\$80.<sup>88</sup> The expatriate Tamils are persuaded to donate and even reports of violence and murder exist.<sup>89</sup> The monthly worldwide revenue figures of LTTE show it as a very profitable organisation. Every month LTTE gets approximately \$660, 000 from Switzerland, \$730, 000 from Canada and \$390, 000 from Britain. The income is estimated to be as high as \$2 million a month.<sup>90</sup> Funds raised by LTTE through their international network are consolidated in LTTE's so-called National Defense Fund.

The reasons for contributing to the LTTE differ. The older generation well established as members of expatriate communities firmly support LTTE struggle for a separate state. They believe this as the sole long term solution to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Some, mostly illegal migrants or asylum seekers contribute to LTTE for other reasons. They depend on LTTE as it facilitates their integration into society. They pay to the organisation as it "helps them find jobs, acquire forged identity papers and access housing".<sup>91</sup>

In the US, wealthy individuals make lump sum contribution.<sup>92</sup> Funds are not raised through Tamil diaspora always. Donations given to non-profit cultural bodies are diverted to LTTE. The biggest advantage of this kind of money acquisition is that no account is made of money spent. Norway can be taken as an example here.

Norwegian law allows Sri Lankan Tamils to raise funds in Norway. After entering into Norway there is no need for individuals to register as an organization before fund raising. The Tamils who are LTTE sympathizers propagate the cause of Tamil Tigers. Fundraising in Norway is done in the name of humanitarian issues for the Tamil population in Sri Lanka. The LTTE collects around US \$65, 000 monthly

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<sup>88</sup> <http://www.geocities.com/theTropics/7666.theLtte.html>.

<sup>89</sup> Swiss police arrested some 15 suspects including Nadarajah Muralidaran, LTTE's head operative in Switzerland

<sup>90</sup> [www.geocities.com/theTropics/7666.theLtte.html](http://www.geocities.com/theTropics/7666.theLtte.html).

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com77e.html>.

<sup>92</sup> One famous medical practitioner residing in USA can give even US \$ 100, 000 at any time. This depends on the person who visits him and the intended purpose. At the global level he remains the most important contributor. <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com77e.html>.

from Sri Lankan Tamils in Norway and other Scandinavian countries. At present, around 10, 000 Sri Lankans reside in Norway.

The LTTE is actively involved in fundraising in Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland as they are regarded as the safe havens for LTTE operations.

There are some 45, 000 Tamils in Switzerland. One in every 80 Sri Lankan Tamils lives in Switzerland. Around 40, 000 Tamil families live in Germany. In some parts of Germany like Bern, one in every 20 residents is Tamil. Each family contributes an estimated DM 1,000 annually.<sup>93</sup> If this is the population in other countries, Tamils in Sri Lanka are less than 3.5 million.

Tigers collect 50 Swiss Francs per month per family. This amounts to five million francs per year from the Tamil community in Switzerland.<sup>94</sup> On events like Heroes Day, which is observed annually on 27th November, much money is collected. Tigers also bring the Tamils together on to a common platform by organizing annual festivals and rallies. By conducting such programmes, the LTTE keeps the ethnic spirit among them alive. This is one means to propagate their cause and raise funds. The congregation of Tamils in Swiss town of Bern explains this. Tamils gather in Bern every year in the month of August. Four or five thousand Tamils in this get-together affirm their spirit of community. The motto behind this annual festival is to congregate Tamils across Europe to consolidate them as a community.<sup>95</sup> This festival reminds them of an unfinished struggle back home. Their attention is drawn to the needs and claims of the LTTE. Each team in the festival has to pay an entrance fee. Every shop has to make a cash deposit. Public meetings and rallies too happen and they are organized by the LTTE.<sup>96</sup> By keeping in touch with the public and sustaining their group by their support, the Tigers have made LTTE a popular struggle. With such wider financial base, the LTTE could sustain any longer.

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<sup>93</sup> Guha, n.41, p.12.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> In this festival the dress code of the organizers is black trousers and white shirt. They wear a black jacket, which has the logo of the LTTE in front 'WTCC' standing for World Tamil Coordination Committee is on the back. They are spread out in the crowd and coordinate various games.[Ibid.]

<sup>96</sup> In May 2002, Balasingham visited Switzerland to spread to the exiles why the Tigers decided to go for peace. Anton Ponnaraja organized a large rally in Freiburg. More than 3000 Tamils attended it. In this rally, LTTE cadres in black and white were strategically placed. [Ibid.]

Apart from the diaspora, nexus with Tamil criminal gangs also helped LTTE in raising fund. Canada's most notorious street gangs which generate illicit profits through organised criminal activity have strong connection with the LTTE. The report by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) exposed the relation between the Tamil gangs like A.K.Kannan gangs and the LTTE which are operating in Toronto and Montreal. RCMP report also revealed the presence of large number of LTTE members in Canada.<sup>97</sup> Their reliance on Tamil gangs for fundraising and intimidation is also reported.<sup>98</sup> Key figures in the LTTE are also active gang members in some cases. The Tamil criminal groups indulge in various activities like "extortion, theft, import and sale of brown heroin, home invasion, production and sale of counterfeit passports, attempted murder, arms trafficking, migrant smuggling, money laundering, casino and fraud".<sup>99</sup>

This evidence shows Canada as the key source of funds for the LTTE. Even some of the Canadian politicians are ignoring the fundraising activities of the LTTE in their constituencies. This is because of their interest in the strength of the votes of the Tamils. Political leaders become tolerant of the activities of the LTTE as they don't want to lose their local electoral support base.<sup>100</sup>

Canada's national intelligence agency, CSIS, identified the key front organizations raising funds for the LTTE in Canada. They are:

1. World Tamil Movement (WTM)
2. The Federation of Associations of Canada's Tamils (FACT)
3. Tamil Eelam Society of Canada (TES)

According to the changing times and needs, the LTTE modifies its strategies and keep looking for new pastures and methods to survive. In South Africa, the LTTE is involved in propaganda and fund raising through its front organisations. The

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<sup>97</sup> Quoted by the Sri Lankan High Commission in Ottawa in their Press Release in March 2000, <http://www.spur.asn.au>.

<sup>98</sup> Tamil gangs involve in violence. In Canada, the authorities had to establish a high-powered Tamil Task Force to put the violence in the streets of Toronto by rival Tamil gangs under control. Many deadly killings had occurred. The attacks range from automatic gunfire to machete attacks. All these happen in daylight in the crowded city of Toronto. <http://www.spur.asn.au>.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> The report prepared for Canadian Security Intelligence services CSIS by Peter Chalk, an Australian Terrorism expert reveal this. <http://www.spur.asn.au>.

presence of large number of Tamils in South Africa helped it in spreading its tentacles there. South Africa is the home for six lakh strong Tamil communities. The Dravidian population is receptive to the extreme Tamil nationalism expressed by the LTTE. Moreover, the South African political parties look at the Tamil community as a vote bank. In addition to all the above reasons, Nelson Mandela has natural sympathy towards liberation movements.

The assistance provided by the South Africans to the Tigers is considered as the rise of “Pan-Negroism” in Southern Asia.<sup>101</sup> The LTTE receives funds, sophisticated armaments and dual technologies and also trained combatants from South Africa. These increased the LTTE’s capabilities. From its central base in South Africa, the LTTE can also expand its operations to other parts of Africa. The LTTE already has cells in Reunion, Fiji, Madagascar, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Swaziland.

The initial attempts to make a strong base for raising funds started in 1995 by John Chrysotham alias Lawrence Tilagar. He is head of the Paris based LTTE international Secretariat. His efforts in South Africa led to the formation of People Against Sri Lankan Oppression (PASLO) by the South African Tamils in December 1995.<sup>102</sup>

The LTTE offices, particularly in London and Paris, provided PASLO with functions of propaganda. The LTTE activists regularly travel to South Africa. Though western security and intelligence agencies alerted their Sri Lankan counterparts regarding the spread of LTTE’s international networks, Colombo underestimated the threat.<sup>103</sup> This underestimation of the capabilities of the Tigers worked to the benefit of LTTE to sustain without any hurdle.

Several other South African Tamil organizations were formed. Of these, Dravidians for Peace and Justice (DPJ), an offshoot of PASLO, was formed in

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<sup>101</sup> <http://www.dalitstan.org/journal/dalitism/da1000/pntam.sin.html>.

<sup>102</sup> Rohan Gunaratne, “LTTE chase the propaganda war in the ANC’s South Africa”, *Janes’ Intelligence Review*, Vol. 11, no. 4, April 1999, p.44.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

Gauteng. Other active LTTE fronts in South Africa were the Movement Against Sri Lankan Oppression (based in Cape Town and Durban) and the Tamil Eelam Support Movement (based in Durban). In March-April 1998, the latest front called the Peace for Sri Lanka support movement was established in Pretoria.<sup>104</sup>

The Tamil Rehabilitation organisation is the principal fund raising group of the LTTE . Through this organisation, money is channeled out of South Africa. LTTE receive 37 million rands as funds from South Africa.<sup>105</sup> In order to increase their influence further, the LTTE tried to infiltrate other Tamil organizations in South Africa. These include the Natal Tamil Federation, The South African Tamil Federation, the Tamil Federation of Gauteng and the World Saiva Council of Chatsworth.

Throughout these front organizations and sympathetic groups, and by linking with other individuals and organizations, the LTTE is represented throughout South Africa. All their activities are coordinated.

With the funds, the LTTE managed to collect through these global financial operations, the group purchases most of its arms and weapons. In the early 1990s, the LTTE member Dharmakulaseelan played a central role in transferring the money raised in North America to Philippines.<sup>106</sup> Here arms are purchased from Southeast Asian arms dealers. In addition the money collected is also used to bear the expenses of legal defenses of the LTTE and its members. [This is evident from the LTTE's response to the arrest of its representative in Canada in 1995, Manikyavasagam Suresh. The LTTE initiated a mass mail-out campaign and also hired two highly paid lawyers to provide legal counsel. Suresh was suspected of having links to terrorist organizations and so was arrested under the Canadian Immigration Act.]

The LTTE invested extensively in propaganda. This aim is to get contribution voluntarily rather than forcibly. When a militant group like LTTE makes a request for a donation, one cannot dare to deny it. When an individual is threatened or assaulted

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> <http://www.dalitstan.org/journal/dalitstan/dal000/pntamsin.html>.

<sup>106</sup> <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com77e.html>.

or killed, it frightens the others and they comply rather than bear the unpleasant consequences.

LTTE has explored all possible means to reach the Tamil diaspora in order to sustain its struggle. It, by involving larger ethnic community in its struggle has become a strong force.

Drug Trafficking and the LTTE:

Drug Trafficking is considered as the most profitable LTTE activity. According to one senior diplomat, “collection of money from Tamil expatriate sources is insignificant compared to money from narcotics”.<sup>107</sup> One can definitely make huge profits from the drug trade. The cost of one kilogram of heroin sold in New York at the wholesale price is estimated to be not less than US \$250, 000.

The LTTE is believed to finance its weapons procurement through drug trafficking. The LTTE is reported to be involved in trafficking heroin through Bombay, Turkey, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Canada, and the US. In the early 1990s, over 600 cases involving Sri Lankan Tamil traffickers were reported to Interpol.<sup>108</sup>

Tigers maintain very good relations with drug mafia groups in the Ukraine, Czechoslovakia and Cyprus. There are three Tamil Tiger groups operating in these three countries. The groups consist of about twenty-five members of the LTTE.<sup>109</sup> They have good understanding with the illicit drug barons. The LTTE also have links with the Burmese Drug baron, Khunsa. Khunsa is part of the ‘Golden Triangle’ and is a major supplier of narcotics to the world.<sup>110</sup>

The LTTE carries out transcontinental drug trafficking also through semi-autonomous units. By this, they can escape surveillance and also can ensure

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> [http://www.larouchepub.com/other/1995/2241\\_south\\_india\\_groups.html](http://www.larouchepub.com/other/1995/2241_south_india_groups.html).

<sup>109</sup> European report details LTTE/Tamil militant drug smuggling, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2000

[http://216.239.57.104/custom29=cache:dG2evB4T\\_3WJ:www.priv.gov.ik/news%2520update/current%2520Affairs/ca200003/20000313LTTE\\_in\\_drug\\_smuggling.html#LTTE&hl=en&ie=UTF-8](http://216.239.57.104/custom29=cache:dG2evB4T_3WJ:www.priv.gov.ik/news%2520update/current%2520Affairs/ca200003/20000313LTTE_in_drug_smuggling.html#LTTE&hl=en&ie=UTF-8)

<sup>110</sup> Asiaweek, 26<sup>th</sup> July 1996 exposed this link in its major investigation of the activities of the LTTE <http://www.ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/sinhala/ehouse.htm>.

deniability. The LTTE also uses merchant vessels to smuggle drugs and other merchandise goods. The revenues earned through narcotics trade help the LTTE in financing arms smuggling.

A minimum of 10 million rupees is collected by LTTE monthly for smuggling illicit drugs and gold. Kumaran Pathmanathan coordinates the smuggling activities of the LTTE both for illicit drugs and gold. He is the international coordinator for the LTTE based in London.

A fair amount of evidence does exist which suggests some nexus between the LTTE and narcotics trafficking. When Manoharan was in jail, it was found that LTTE office in France paid monthly salary to his family as per the orders of Prabhakaran.<sup>111</sup>

Sri Lankan Tamil militants are also arrested for drug trafficking in Brussels, Rome, France, India and Britain. Some years back, the Enfield Advertiser (a local North London newspaper) reported the kidnapping of a Tamil man by a Tamil gang over a drug deal. Garden pruning scissors were used to cut off all the fingers of one of his hands.<sup>112</sup> Though the LTTE involves in this kind of violence, direct evidence can't be developed because of the silence of Sri Lankan Tamils. The way LTTE mafia operates in the world causes fear psychosis among them.

In 1997, the British police raided the international secretariat of the LTTE at London on a narcotic investigation. Nothing was discovered by them. Western security agencies are always suspicious of the LTTE's involvement in drug trafficking. Narcotics are one source to finance the militant activities. So the LTTE is continuously under scrutiny by outside agencies. Over 400 Sri Lankan Tamils were found in Italian jails alone in the 1980s. They were caught smuggling drugs into the West.<sup>113</sup>

There is no solid evidence to show the LTTE's involvement in drug trafficking. However analysts point out the benefit LTTE has in using its highly

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<sup>111</sup> <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com77e.html>

<sup>112</sup> Media release, 8<sup>th</sup> September, 1999, London Times, Daily Telegraph.

<sup>113</sup> <http://www.ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/sinhala/ehouse.htm>.



sophisticated international network (which it has developed to smuggle arms) for drug trafficking. Major drug producing countries like Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Southern China have direct contact or are very close to these arms routes.

*LTTE Enterprises and Investment:*

The LTTE is engaged in money laundering also. To generate clean money and earn high profits, the LTTE also invest in trade, enterprise and stock exchange through its front, cover and sympathetic organizations. In the UK, the LTTE owns broadcasting stations, restaurants, newspaper etc.

The LTTE invests its funds in business. From mid 1990s, the LTTE's revenue from business exceeded that of contributions compared to preceding period. It is very easy for the group as the registered company operates on behalf of it and transacts business. The LTTE also employed professional accountants. Grants are solicited, funds are laundered in high income generating investments all in disguise.<sup>114</sup>

Only when the host country is capable of monitoring the range and depth of militant groups front cover and sympathetic organisations, important staff etc, they have the capacity to disrupt the militant infrastructure. Monitoring contribution is relatively easier than monitoring revenue from business. By engaging in business, which is difficult to detect, disrupt and destroy, the group constantly gets revenue and thrives.

**Training of the Tigers**

LTTE became tough to handle because of its links with the different militant groups. Their reliability on each other militarily and financially gave strength to carry out its operations efficiently. Many countries sponsoring terrorism also provided training facilities to LTTE. Intelligence organisations of various countries have also provided training facilities to LTTE.

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<sup>114</sup> Gunaratna, n.46, p.12.

In the 1970s, Fatah, the Japanese Red Army, the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) and Sri Lankan Tamil groups all shared their expertise and experience. This, they did by training with the African National Congress's (ANC) military wing in the Syrian controlled Bekaa valley in Lebanon. In the 1980s, the LTTE had contacts with the ANC in London through Dr. Rajini Thirangama (of LTTE). LTTE activists frequently met ANC representatives at the Arab league building of the UK. These meetings were facilitated by the umbrella organisation called 'Friends of Palestine'.<sup>115</sup>

The LTTE has also developed links with People's War Group [PWG] and United Liberation Front of Assam [ULFA]. There are reports of LTTE providing training to them.<sup>116</sup>

A number of State and private organisations in Lebanon, Libya, and Syria provided training to the Tamil groups. Ex- French legionnaires, dissident sects within the Palestine Liberation Organisation, and a few South American groups were also involved in this. John Glover, a British feature writer, wrote to Western Mail in Wales about the ongoing and future training programmes for Tamil youth by British mercenaries. "A band of mercenary soldiers recruited in South Wales is training a Tamil army to fight for a separate State in Sri Lanka . About twenty mercenaries were signed up after a meeting in Cardiff and have spent the last two months in southern India preparing a secret army to fight the majority Sinhalese, in the cause of a separate Tamil State in Sri Lanka," he said.<sup>117</sup>

Russian Gen. Mikhail Barsukov reported in February 1990 that the LTTE had undergone special training in Lebanon and received combat experience there.

During 1983 and 1984, the Intelligence Bureau and the Research and Analysis Wing [the two Indian intelligence agencies] got directly involved in training the militant group.<sup>118</sup> The Tigers were trained in guerrilla warfare and provided with

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<sup>115</sup> Gunaratna, n.102, p.43.

<sup>116</sup> [http://www.larouchepub.com/other/1995/2241\\_south\\_india\\_groups.html](http://www.larouchepub.com/other/1995/2241_south_india_groups.html).

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Frontline*, November 29- 12 December 1997.

arms, ammunition and financial support. They were permitted to organise training camps in Tamil Nadu.

In the early 1970s, the LTTE began establishing training camps and secret arms caches under the cover of a chain of Refugee and Rehabilitation Farms of the Gandhian Society. Funds for the farms came from Oxfam [Oxford Famine], one of the most powerful and secretive British Intelligence organisations acting under the non-governmental organisation cover.<sup>119</sup>

In the view of analysts, the Israelis provided them some of the best training. According to accounts by retired officials of the Israeli secret service, the Mossad, the Israelis were simultaneously training the Sri Lanka Army and the Tigers, and providing arms to each other. Victor Ostrovsky, author of "By Way of Deception", told Indian Abroad news service in 1991 that the Tigers were trained in Israel in 1985. "These groups kept coming and going. It was part of our routine job to take them to training camps and make sure that they were getting training worth what they paid for, not more and not less."<sup>120</sup> The groups paid in cash. Ostrovsky said that the arrangement for the training was made by the Mossad liaison in India, who lived there under a British passport. The British Special Air Services [SAS] firm Keenie Meenie Services, was simultaneously training the Sri Lankan Army and the LTTE.<sup>121</sup>

After forming the front organizations and developing other links for propaganda, the LTTE's position became strong in South Africa. The Tigers then concentrated on initiating military activities in South Africa. The LTTE started a series of training camps for the South African Tamils.<sup>122</sup> The LTTE established the training programme after registering as a closed corporation in February 1996 by paying 200 rands (US \$ 32). (In South Africa a closed corporation can change its company name and also its member without informing the registrar.) The LTTE established training camps in three major towns of South Africa. They are Laudium, Lenasia and New Castle, which have Tamil population. The recruits are provided with accommodation in the camps. Recruits are trained in guerilla warfare. In the

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<sup>119</sup> [http://www.larouchepub.com/other/1995/2241\\_south\\_india\\_groups.html](http://www.larouchepub.com/other/1995/2241_south_india_groups.html).

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> Gunaratna, n.102, p.44.

beginning only Sri Lankan Tamils participated in the training. Slowly, South Africans also joined them. In the training, recruits were taught the history of Eelam Tamils. Six instructors were involved in giving rigorous physical training.

Basic military training and training in armed and unarmed combat were imparted. In addition to all the above, the recruits were given training in “surveillance evasion, counter intelligence, communication and the use of explosives”.<sup>123</sup> The duration of training for each batch was about three months. This training can be compared to the training provided to the Tamil nationalists in South India. The basic training provided to the LTTE recruits in Sri Lanka also is in the same manner. After finishing graduation, the best recruits were sent to Sri Lanka.

Ms. Chandrika Kumaratunga, Sri Lankan President informed Mandela of the LTTE bases in South Africa and expressed her concern. On the order of Mandela, South African troops, assisted by National Intelligence Agency (NIA) raided three LTTE camps in South Africa at a time.<sup>124</sup> Investigations later revealed that the LTTE was informed of this decision to raid even 24 hours before the raids by some influential sources in the National Intelligence Coordinating Committee. After these raids, the LTTE trainers and trainees moved to safe houses and operated in greater secrecy.

This example reveals the unholy nexus between the militants and the intelligence agencies, which helps the militant groups to sustain despite the governmental efforts.

### **Conclusion**

Governments worldwide have concentrated mostly on the criminal side of the militancy. But the political aspects like the propaganda and fund raising is ignored by the international community.

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p.47.

Recently, the LTTE has received a setback in its global propaganda campaign. In 1997, USA included LTTE in the State Departments list of proscribed international terrorist organizations. This has made impact on other countries in their consideration of legality of LTTE public activities. The British parliament passed the tough anti-terrorism law in September 1998. This law has banned even sending faxes or email by extremist groups. In February 2000, Canada became a signatory to the UN sponsored International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. These may not make a big difference to the LTTE. They operate in many states like Norway, Sweden, Australia where there are not even statutory provision for proscribing a group as 'terrorist' as in the US and Canada. In addition, the LTTE can 'bypass' any 'legal stipulation' by operating through social and cultural cover and front offices.

The factors like international political environment, disparity in national laws, and the lack of international cooperation in checking the militancy added strength to organizations like the LTTE.

Sri Lankan embassy in some countries doesn't even have adequate funds to travel and evaluate the activities of the LTTE. With no check on their fund raising the LTTE has strength to sustain its warfare in Northern Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan government doesn't put much stress on taking the cooperation of foreign governments in cracking down on LTTE activities abroad. All these work to the advantage of the LTTE in sustaining further. No effective machinery has been set up to counter the lobbying of LTTE in many countries. As such, the LTTE could easily operate across borders and thrive. In addition to this the phenomena of globalisation has helped LTTE to sustain easily.

## *Chapter 5*

### *Conclusion*

The underpinning factor behind the formation of militant groups in Sri Lanka is ethno-nationalism. A sense of relative deprivation and discrimination lies at the bottom of the Tamil ethnic movement. In Sri Lanka, the partisan state apparatus evolved policies which protected majority Sinhalese at the cost of minority interests.

The citizenship acts and land colonization schemes of the Sri Lankan government proved discriminatory to the Tamils. The language and education policies also had a negative influence. The declaration of 'Sinhala' as the official language in 1956 was directly responsible for the loss of their employment opportunities. The unfairness to the Tamil students was evident in the standardization policy of 1970. By giving special status to Buddhism, the religious freedom of the Tamils is also restricted.

The "Tamil United Liberation Front" (TULF) was involved in the mobilisation of people against the discrimination. The Sri Lankan state failed to redress the grievances of the Sri Lankan Tamils. The Tamils first demanded federal constitution and equal linguistic rights. When the government ignored their demand, secession became their objective. Till the 1970s Tamils were not involved in violent methods. They expressed their despair in peaceful and democratic manner. But these efforts of Tamil political parties were discarded and crushed by the state. Their failure to achieve Tamil rights through democratic means left a gap for the rise of militancy. Frustrated Tamil youth had chosen the violent path as all other options to register their protest failed. Youth vanguarded the politics of violence as they were mostly victimized by the government policies. By the mid-1970s, not only the means, but also the ends transformed. No longer they demanded for autonomy. With the formation of LTTE in 1976, the approach became violent and the goal was to achieve the right of self-determination.

The Tamil Students Union (TSU) which existed in the early 1970s formed the basis for the formation of Tamil New Tigers (TNT) in 1973. The TNT was later

named as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 1976, under the leadership of Velupillai Parabhakaran. The LTTE was formed with the commitment to establish a separate Tamil homeland in the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. The LTTE started its armed conflict with the Sri Lankan government in 1983 and largely adopted guerilla strategy. The Tamil Tigers call themselves freedom fighters as they regard their armed struggle as the people's war of national liberation.

Many militant movements were existing in Sri Lanka by the mid-1980s. Though they were active initially, the problem of leadership, manpower, finance or internal rivalry weakened them and made them disappear. They also competed against each other for absolute power and, in the process, vanished. But, the LTTE has surpassed all these hurdles and became a paramount force demanding for a separate state. Over the decades, it remained in-exhaustive and pioneered the militant movement in Sri Lanka.

The LTTE had feeble armory till 1983. The LTTE which had just 50 hard core members became a supreme organization with around 10,000 armed members just in few years. In this, 3000-6000 members are trained hardcore fighters. This strength of LTTE makes it one of the largest militant organizations. The strong organizational structure and wider international network of LTTE have contributed to its survival.

The structural components of an organization are leadership, ideology, military strength, nature of cadres and method of its struggle. The organisation of LTTE has a charismatic and committed leader. Every section of the Tamil community accepts him as the leader. The political strategies and military tactics adopted by the leader have made the organisation powerful. Leadership has played a vital role in sustaining the militant movement. Prabhakaran is advised by Anton. S. Balasingham, who serves as the LTTE's theoretician. Regarding military hierarchy, deputy commanders head LTTE's various wings. LTTE cadres comprise of both men and women. Women formed one-third of the cadres. Severe shortage of manpower after 1987 led to recruitment of young boys and girls at the age group of 9-14 years.

The force that drives the LTTE is ethno nationalism. The LTTE's discreet planning makes it distinct from other groups. Their actions concentrate mostly on

resisting and fighting against dominant Sinhala State. The continuous oppression of Tamils by the Sri Lankan state aroused vengeance in the minds of Tamils. The oppressive nature of the state formed the basis for the formulation of their ideology.

The cadres of LTTE show great dedication to the cause. They are highly determined to achieve the goal. They became hard listening to the stories of the agony and torture caused to their ancestors. The state actions provoked them. Their method of struggle is very clear. Whoever joins the organization takes the oath in the name of Prabhakaran. The cadres undergo rigorous training. Strict discipline is ensured among them. The doctrine of martyrdom and self-sacrifice makes LTTE an effective organization. One of the reasons for the LTTE's success is its strong sense of secrecy. The courage with which it carries the deadly suicide attacks reflects its ruthlessness.

The LTTE has well understanding of the importance of support of masses to the sustenance of the armed struggle. They affirmed its principal objective is to protect the Tamil rights and make them secure. By this, it could mobilize more people.

Militancy could thrive in Sri Lanka because of its well-built and powerful material base. The LTTE has abundant financial resources that are accumulated by means of extortion, taxation, funds from diaspora, drug trafficking etc., External support is one of the decisive factor for the success of any militancy. In the past, Tamil Nadu played a vital role in this matter. Without the external support of India, the LTTE would not have been what it is today. The geographical proximity of South India proved a great benefiting factor to the militant movement of Sri Lanka. After 1983-riots, moral, political, material and military support was given to the LTTE by the Indian government Whenever there was a threat of arrests, the Tigers used to flee to Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu, became not only its sanctuary but a safe haven from where the Eelam struggle got political and material support. Initially, they enjoyed considerable sympathy from the locals. It would have been difficult for the LTTE to sustain itself without having a support base like Tamil Nadu to operate. The LTTE has built its vast network in different parts of Tamil Nadu. It was vital for communication, banking and access points. Till 1987, Tamil militants even received training in India.



The conflict in Sri Lanka has led to migration of many Sri Lankan Tamils to different parts of the world. The LTTE has made greater use of these transnational migrant communities. This helped the LTTE to expand internationally. It has made investment in huge areas. They own supermarkets, transportation companies etc., It also has broadcasting stations, newspapers, restaurants etc. in the UK. It has its own shipping fleet. The LTTE has also invested their funds in business. It has its international Secretariat in the UK. They also operate in Canada, France, Switzerland, Norway, Germany, Denmark, Holland, Australia and South Africa. Around US \$80-100 million which forms 80% of the LTTE budget is secured from the contributions of diaspora and revenue generated from international trade, enterprises and investments.

The analysis of factors sustaining overview of the LTTE's sustenance factors clearly indicates that its survival was mostly based on its firm roots in ethnicity. The centralised leadership has created a structure which is strong and rigid. Moreover, these advantages coupled with the modern facilities further helped ensuring its sustenance.

The LTTE, having its roots in ethnicity, formulated an ideology based on ethnic discrimination. They are determined to retaliate against all those responsible for their grievances. They have a clear-cut objective i.e. to achieve a Tamil Eelam. The clarity of its goal has made the strategy of the group very clear. The domination of Tamil population in the North-East has made the LTTE to justify its secessionist demand.

The LTTE, because of its ethnic struggle, could automatically get support from the community they are representing. The ethnic group has provided the organization the required support to thrive. The Tamil community is the source of recruits, moral and material support. The LTTE cadres are strongly determined to the cause as they themselves have got exposed to the ethnic discrimination.

Thus, the LTTE being a militant organization drawn from ethnicity has shown more prospects of survival. It is capable of sustaining itself for longer duration when

compared to other militant movements because of the ethnic support it enjoys. This proves our hypothesis that “militancy having its source from ethnicity thrives for a longer duration” .

The LTTE, based on ethnicity created a structure which is very powerful and rigid. Since its inception, it was steered by a single leader. The leader’s grip over the organization has disallowed loosening of the threads. His discipline and commitment to reach the destiny can be seen in the organization. Prabhakaran has the ultimate control over various organs of the LTTE. The leader’s influence is seen dispersed all over the organization. The significance of leadership is obvious in the cadres pledging to Prabhakaran and not to the LTTE when they join. The leader ruthlessly punishes the disobedient cadres. No one can easily disregard him. This proves our hypothesis that “ the greater the centralised structure of a militant organisation, the greater the chances of its survival”. With his tight control over the militant struggle, the organization could manufacture disciplined, self-sacrificing cadres who have produced a strong movement. Its methods of self-sacrifice and martyrdom have made the militant movement powerful. The demand of sacrifice by the leader is immediately obeyed.

LTTE which has become strong with the ethno nationalist ideology, has got further boosted by its centralised structure. Because of such advantageous position, the LTTE could not easily be defeated. This proves the hypothesis that “a centralised militant organisation with a strong ideological background cannot easily be brought to the political mainstream. It leads to a conclusion that “a militant organization with a strong ideological background cannot easily be brought to the political mainstream”.

Diaspora is an important source of the militant movement. The post-1983 riots period has seen mass exodus of Tamils. The Sri Lankan government expected that such an exodus will weaken the militant movement. But the LTTE has turned the situation to its advantage. The LTTE could expand internationally only because of these transnational migrant communities. Improvements in weapons, communication, transport and electronics have made easy for the LTTE to sustain. The globalised world has helped the LTTE to move anywhere in the world with less restrictions. They could swiftly carry out their international activities of fund raising, propaganda and weapon procurement. The LTTE could also expand its resource base by involving

in drug trafficking, money laundering, investing in trade, enterprises and stock exchange. Open borders and liberal markets have allowed the LTTE to enhance its international operations which strengthened and sustained them. This proves our hypothesis that “structural factors coupled with modern facilities help a militant group to sustain its armed movement.

Militancy is an international phenomenon. Identifying factors which help the LTTE’s survival, will help us understand other militant organisations also. Much emphasis has been laid on the causes of militancy. But the factors that sustain the militant movements are ignored. The strategy of containing the LTTE should be guided by the factors which sustain the organisation.

## *Appendix*

### LTTE'S TAXATION POLICY

	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DUTY</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Textiles</b>	
	Sarong	10%
	Cheetai	10%
	Poplin	10%
	Handloom Saree	10%
	Other Varieties of Textile	10%
2	Stationery inclusive of CR Books and foolscap paper[Stationery used by students exempted]	20%
3	Galvanized buckets	20%
4	Silverware	20%
5	5.1 Household utensils	20%
	5.2 Cosmetics	20%
	5.3 Sports goods and equipment	10%
6	Aluminium Ware	20%
7	Furniture	25%
8	Push bicycles	7 ½%
9	Motor bicycles	7 ½ %
10	Vehicles	15%
11	Work-related machines	15%
12	<b>Machinery spares</b>	
	12.1 Tyre, tube and other push bicycle spares.	15%
	12.2 Tractor spares	15%

	12.3 Tractor tyres and tubes for tractors only	15%
	12.4 Small tractor {landmaster} spares	15%
	12.5 Small tractor front tyre and tubes	15%
	12.6 Other machinery spares inclusive of tyre and tubes	25%
13	13.1 Electronic and electric items	25%
	13.2 Solar panel set [refers to cells with voltage not exceeding 120V with necessary acid and not more than five DC bulbs]	12 ½
	13.3 Solar Torch	12 ½
14	Building materials	25%
15	Lead	25%
16	Boats	5%
17	<b>Fishing gear</b>	
	17.1 Fishing nets, links, floats	5%
	17.2 Hooks	10%
	Tongoes	10%
	Resin	10%
	Thread	10%
	Asbestos sails	10%
	Potnes	10%
	Net dye	10%
	Resin gum	10%
	17.3 Outboard motor	5%
18	<b>Agricultural Items</b>	
	18.1 Agricultural inputs	5%
	18.2 Agricultural implements	10%
	18.3 Agricultural machinery	5%

19	<b>Fuels and Lubricants</b>	
	19.1 Lubricating oils	25%
	19.2 Kerosene per litre	10/-
	19.3 Petrol per litre	15/-
	19.4 Diesel per litre	15/-
20	Edible Oils inclusive of coconut oil	15%
21	21.1 Beedi, cigars	20%
	21.2 Cigarettes	25%
22	Lunch sheets, shopping bags, polythene	25%
23	23.1 Box of matches	-/25
	23.2 Candle	25%
	23.3 Camphor	25%
24	24.1 Soft drinks	15%
	24.2 Confectionery	15%
25	25.1 Anchor milk power	5%
	25.2 Condensed milk [e.g.Milkmaid]	10%
	25.3 Other milk powders	8%
26	Feeding items	7%
27	<b>Detergents</b>	
	27.1 Soap	8%
	27.2 Soap Powder	8%
	27.3 Shampoo	10%
	27.4 Siyakai	10%

	27.5 Tooth paste	10%
	27.6 Tooth brush	10%
	27.7 Shaving razors	10%
	27.8 Blue	10%
28	<b>Cleansing Agents</b>	
	28.1 Cleansers and implements	10%
	28.2 Disinfectants and Insecticides	7%
29	Joysticks, frankincense	25%
30	Biscuits	15%
31	Bakery items	25%
32	Wheat flour	6%
33	<b>Tea, coffee</b>	
	33.1 Unpacked tea, coffee seeds	6%
	33.2 Other tea	8%
	33.3 Aromatic coffee	10%
34	Groceries, including cereals and lentils	7%
35	Fruits	10%
36	Vegetables, yams	15%
37	Packed foodstuffs	15%
38	Betel leaves	10%
39	Arecanut	10%
40	Liquor	25%
41	Cooking gas [LP Gas]	12 ½%
	41.1 Empty gas cylinder	15%
42	Other items	20%

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