

Role of Non-Governmental Militant groups: Cross-border Linkages and Implications of India and Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

This chapter seeks to understand the conflict of Non-Governmental Militant Groups which had an implication and linkage of cross border relations basically between India and Sri Lanka. It critically examines the relation between Non-Governmental Militancy and state relation specially LTTE as Non-Governmental Militant Group and India as well as Indo-Sri Lankan relations. In South Asia, the social, political and economic process within the countries has been important issues for bilateral as well as regional level relations.

Therefore, the social, political and economic problems within the countries of Asia have been bound to have a spillover effect in the region. It has been an effect on the India due to the nature of Indo centrism of the region which generates the intra-regional interaction. In the context of geographical proximity and ethnic intimacy or similarity of culture the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka had serious implications for India due to the existence of Tamil brotherhood.

As from the ancient period India especially South India has been maintaining its close relations with Sri Lanka in the sphere of social, cultural, religion, artistic, language and political, the crisis of any sphere could affect the India. India's perception of threat to its security in the Indian Ocean region is largely governed by political and military developments in Sri Lanka.

1. Introduction

This chapter seeks to understand the conflict of Non-Governmental Militant Groups which had an implication and linkage of cross-border relations basically between India and Sri Lanka. It critically studies the relation between Non-Governmental Militancy and state relation specially LTTE as Non-Governmental Militant Group and India as well as Indo-Sri Lankan relations. In South Asia, the social, political and economic development within the countries had been significant issues for bilateral as well as regional level relations. Therefore, the social, political and economic glitches within the countries of Asia had been assured to have a spill-over effect in the region. It had been a consequence on India due to the nature of Indo-centrism of the region which generated the intra-regional interaction. In the context of geographical proximity and ethnic intimacy or similarity of culture the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka had serious implications for India due to the existence of Tamil brotherhood. As from the ancient period, India especially South India had been maintaining its close relations with Sri Lanka in the sphere of social, cultural, religion, artistic, language and political, the crisis of any sphere could affect India. India's perception of threat to its security in the Indian Ocean region is largely governed by political and military developments in Sri Lanka (Kulandaswamy, 2000: 59).

Sri Lanka's position in the Indian Ocean is important for India's security. The ethnic conflicts of any region in South Asia have the serious effect in the internal section of the region. It generates the internal pressures within the particular sector. The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has serious implications for India due to the existence of Tamil people in Tamil Nadu who

sympathize with their brethren in Sri Lanka. India's perception of threat to its security in the Indian Ocean region is largely governed by political and military developments in Sri Lanka (Kulandaswam: 2000). The ethnic crisis of Sri Lanka had a serious effect on Tamil Nadu, especially on Tamil speaking people. Tamil Nadu government and other opposition political parties demanded the central government of India to interfere in the civil war in Sri Lanka for the restoration of Tamil identity and nationality. In this connection, they were in favour of the right of Tamil speaking people.

Ethnic riots of Sri Lanka had an implication with India due to the factor of Tamil people in Tamil Nadu in India. The sense of identity and nationality has been considered by the establishment of main political identity. The ethnic sympathy becomes more important to the Tamil People in Tamil Nadu. The issue of expatriate Tamil is important for India. It is the root point of interest of India in Sri Lanka. Tamil Nadu has maintained its close relations through social, religious, linguistic artistic, cultural and political relationship with Sri Lanka. It is proved that the commercial and religious relations between India and Sri Lanka had been developed from the ancient period.

A total population number of around one million Tamils from Tamil Nadu had been brought in by the tea, coffee and rubber plantation landlords before the independence of Sri Lanka in 1948. I have discussed the disenfranchisement of these Tamil in 1949 by the passage of a parliamentary bill. The Sri Lankan government cruelly disenfranchised the Indian Tamils who had worked tirelessly, for little remuneration, to

contribute to the great tea production business which formed a major share of the net national revenue of the country. The fact that these workers were Indian Tamil, gave the chauvinist Sinhalese government enough reason to snatch their voting rights, in order to weaken the parliamentary representation of the native Sri Lankan Tamil (Gunasingam, 2012: 84).

2. Changing role of India towards Sri Lanka since 1987

Sri Lanka faced ethnic violence and a turmoil situation came into existence in the very beginning of 1987. When the 'December proposal of 1986' was rejected by Sri Lanka government and Tamil leaders, India again tried to convince in favour of the proposal on 10th February 1987. But the Sri Lankan government and LTTE did not support the principles of the December proposal. On 14th March 1987, Rajiv Gandhi further requested to accept the proposal for the peaceful settlement and he sends a special envoy Dinesh Singh to reaffirm India's arbitral ambitions. But the Sri Lankan government suddenly had started the vigorous military offense in 21st April 1987 when LTTE bomb blast at Pettah Bus stand in Colombo. This attempt bomb blast killed 150 Sinhalese (Times of India: 5, June 1987). In response, Sri Lanka government started its military offensive attack via Land, Air, and Sea. The military of Sri Lankan Government was also receiving contributions from Israel and the branch protecting Israeli interests which were started in May 1984 in the office of the American Ambassador in Colombo (Gunasingam, 2012: 98). The Sri Lankan military got training from the Israeli military systems. It was also popularly mentioned in the news media of those days that British Special Air Service (SAS) which operated under the banner 'KeenieMeenie Services'(KMS) based in the Channel Islands in Britain, had also trained Sri Lankan Air Force officers with the support of the Defence Ministry of Britain (Gunasingam: 99).

The Sri Lankan government got the military support from different countries like America, Pakistan, South Africa, and China. On the other hand, the Sri Lankan government cut off the financial assistance and essential commodities to the people of North-eastern province of the Island. In this context, India government realized that though Sri Lanka was in favour of peace talk resolution, they tried to solve the ethnic problems through the military action. After the application of military action in Tamil areas with the help of above-mentioned foreign aid Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India send a message to Sri Lankan Government for taking the initiative of peaceful dialogue for the resolution instead of military attack.

Rajiv Gandhi said that the military activities must be stopped for the benefits of human beings. India cannot call for a renewed dialogue in such a way. Sri Lanka did not allow any kind of dialogue. President Jayewardene and Prime Minister Premadasa told that Sri Lanka had been immobilizing the military solution. In this context, India did not support strengthening the LTTE and did not take any steps against the Sri Lankan militarism. Because India considered that it would have the long effect on India. Again, India realized that the people of Tamil Nadu strongly opposed the military operations operated by the Sri Lankan government. They were demanding the democratic process of peaceful resolution of the clash in Sri Lanka.

3. Role of Non-Governmental Militant groups: Cross-border Linkages and Implications of India and Sri Lanka

As India's position in South Asia is unique due to the common ethnic and boundary which coincided the various ethnic groups and clashes in the region, the common border and ethnic connection became important determinants for the foreign policies of any country of the region. The emergence of non-governmental or non-state militancy based on the ethnic multitude determined the cultural functions and cross-border relations. The activities of the non-governmental military have been extended by the autonomy of identity and rigid ethnic components which connect the cross-border sphere of the territory. The non-governmental militant groups have been considered as the internal threat of the society of the country. But these militant groups have been playing the influential role and became more complex with the emergence of the globalization, and greater transnational connections. So, it is difficult to analyse the bilateral relations without analysing the impact and implication of these issues.

In South Asia, the sovereign states establish the structure of national-construction process against the development of 'national consciousness' (Phadnis, 2001: 63). Although the pre-colonial states have the ethnic plurality, their differences form a common political agenda for achieving the political independence. These ethnic differences emerged for the establishment of identity after the achieving the independence. Their dissatisfaction emerged from state policies which reluctance to save the multicultural divergence of the society. Phadnis and Ganguli analysed that the state became national-centric based on the majority rights after the post-colonial society. The hegemonic power has been important over the ethnic communities in the society.

The Non-Governmental Militant Groups have mainly emerged from conflict of state coercion and society for the fulfilment of the socio-political objectivity. They had been playing the influential role in the state policies. The emergence of the non-governmental militant groups is accompanied by the political marginalization which rouses the people for the rebel in society.

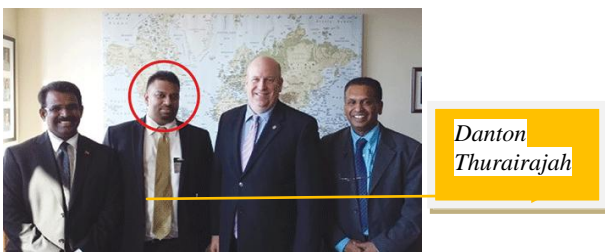
The non-state militancy can be understood in the context of the intra-state and inter-state armed conflict. It is necessary to introduce that there are 232 Non-State Militant Groups in twenty-three countries (Englehart, 2016: 171) from 1980 to 2018 in Asia. In these non-state militant groups, LTTE is different. Because it had established the pro-governmental process in the particular areas i.e. Military forces, Naval forces, and Air Forces. They established district courts for the grievance in the specific areas of the Island.



Kilinochchi District Court in LTTE-administered Tamil Eelam.
(Source: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo, Sri Lankan.)

The LTTE had been considered as Non-Governmental Militant Group which offers an alternative to military reactions through different armed forces. Intra-state militancy is defined as the clash between governmental and non-governmental militant without implication and interference of the outside pressures or another state. Inter-state militancy means the clash between State and Non-Governmental Militant Groups with the involvement of the dominant power/powers or states. The most important factor is that there had been a transition from Intra-State clash to Inter-state clash since last three decades. 'South Asia had particularly witnessed an increase in the number of intra-state conflicts since the 1980s' (Liyanage, 2011: 230).

Basically, the LTTE constituted two wings; 1. Political Wings and 2. Military wings composed of Military forces, Naval forces, and Air Forces. These wings were controlled by the Central Governing Committee (CGM) under the leadership of Velupillai Prabhakaran. He sets out all the policies and organizational regulations. So, the military and administrative functions have been governed by the principles of hierarchical process. The political section of LTTE supervises the administrative systems in the specific area through the Police Department, Law Courts, Administrative offices, Planning Administration, Post-Office, and broadcasting centres etc. another important factor is that this group had formed an 'International Secretariat' (Nathaniel: 2014). It has been extending the international network and maintaining the international relations.



Former US fundraiser for LTTE Danton Thurairajah and LTTE activist David Poopalapillai in Canada engaging in lobbying
<https://www.mfa.gov.lk/tam/the-ltte-revives-its-us-network/>

Another wing was Military wing which is composed with different wings; Elite guerrilla force, Black Tigers, Women's military wing, Naval wing as Sea Tigers, Arms procurement network, Research and development wing, Secretive Intelligence Group, Military Offences Group. In this context, it is proved that the LTTE was able to establish a Non-Governmental Militant Groups/Forces in the specific areas which provide the basic civil needs of Tamil people and fulfilled their administrative functions. There were three commands in LTTE structure; Jaffna Peninsula, Vanni, and East.

4. Militant Groups and Tamil Nadu factors: Implications, and Consequences

In the 1980s there were several movements emerged in Tamil Nadu like 'Islamic fundamentalism, Separatist and Naxal

movement' (Liyanage: 270). Two important secessionist groups were influential for the separatist tendency in Tamil Nadu. They were Tamil National Retrieval Troops (TNRT) and Tamil Nadu Liberation Army (TNLA). The Tamil National Retrieval Troops (TNRT) was formed in the late 1980s under the leadership of P. Ravichandran. It is a small group composed of 30 members. Its objective was to establish the Tamil homeland in India. It had the close relationship with the LTTE and linkage with Veerappan (Tamil National Retrieval Troops: 1980s). The members of the troop were from the Vanniyar community. Another was Tamil Nadu Liberation Army (TNLA) which was formed under the leadership of PulavarKaliyaperuamal. It was a wing of the Tamil Nadu Communist party-Marxist-Leninist (TNCP-ML). In mid of the 1980s, the TNLA was active when India Government decided to send the IPKF to Sri Lanka.

Tamil Nadu became the influential factor for the development of the relationships between India and Sri Lanka. Tamil Nadu was against the military offense operated by the Sri Lankan government on Tamil people in Sri Lanka who sympathize their brethren with Tamil brotherhood and Tamil fraternity. This was because all of the groups from the ruling party, opposition parties and other mass movements were pressing the Indian government to stop the war, voicing their concern through democratic protests as well as filing petitions with the Indian Union government (Gunasingam: 100). In this context, Tamil Eelam Supporter's Organisation (TESO) was playing the crucial role in 1986. They put pressure on the Indian government to interfere in the Tamil movement in the island. India took a decision for supplying nineteen boats with necessary commodities and foods to the Jaffna gulf. Sri Lanka government did not happy about the commodity and food supply actions taken by India government in the Tamil areas.

On the basis of humanitarian realization, India decided to help with the basic needs of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. India organized a medical service with the help of the Red Cross. As Sri Lanka blocked the passage, India did not supply the basic needs and foods to the Tamil people in 3rd June 1987. On 4th June India decided to launch the Eagle Mission-4 through Indian Air Force for supplying foods and basic needs to the Tamil people. They supply these commodities in the Jaffna areas. India launched the Operation Poomalai. This step for supplying the goods was contradictory that the Sri Lanka government considered it as an intervention in its territory. 'Sri Lanka had strategically posted its army, probably to make a direct assault on Jaffna town. However, the expected attack did not materialize. Probably, Jayewardene started having second thoughts and India had sent clear signals against a wholesale massacre of civilians' (Behera: 566). Sri Lanka strongly opposed India's decision and called it as the violation of U.N. Charter. They considered it as the violation of territorial integrity and sovereignty (TOI: 5th June 1987). India's decision for supplying the foods and medical assistance from airdropping was considered as the military intervention in the civil crisis of the state.

The connectivity between LTTE and Non-Governmental Militant groups in India has been based on the reliance on the information. Some existing works on the relationship of these

groups were done, but these are unable to find out the governance process and its relations with other Militant groups across the boundary of the state which has an implication in another state. Therefore, my work tries to proliferate on an unknown plea and identifies the existence of the integrated network of connection among the Non-Governmental Militant Groups across the Palk-Strait. The LTTE has been launching the armed struggle against the regime of Sri Lankan Government. This struggle was survived extensively by a sophisticated and broad network of arms smuggling, drug trafficking and money laundering supported by close cooperation between the Non-governmental Militant groups in the region. Many organizations work through linkages and implications.

There is adequate 'soft' evidence in the case of incident reports, newspaper articles and the picture of existing linkages. The LTTE links with India basically Tamil Nadu Government, Centre, and Intelligence agencies have been well documented (Liyanage: 277). But its networks with Non-Governmental Militant Groups did not receive much attention in India because this network does not qualify as an organized syndicate but it has a large part of the regional network. In this context LTTE as a Non-Government Militant Group has a contact and link with ULFA, NSCN, and PWG. There was an accurate link with TNRT and TNLA in Tamil Nadu (Sharma; 1997).

In the remarkable work of Northeast rebellion in India Sanjoy Hazarika illustrates that LTTE agents visited Assam connecting with ULFA in the 1980s. He mentioned about the visit of Dinesh Kumar who was an operative of LTTE (Hazarika; 1994). He was hosted by ULFA in 1990 and went to Lakhpathar for one night. Then he went to Sri Lanka via Madras and informed that ALFA-LTTE link has not achieved much better progress. In 1997 two groups meet in Tamil Nadu for their operative progress. It was reported that the guerrilla warfare training is given by tiger to the ULFA cadres in the 1990s (Sharma; 1997). Jain Commission Interim Report (1991) revealed that there was a nexus between ULFA and LTTE. Other three agencies IB, RAW, and Army Intelligence reported about the nexus of ULFA-LTTE. In 10th January 1991, the ULFA-LTTE nexus issue was included in the Lok Sabha. In this context the Prime Minister Shri Chandrashekhar put his speech on the basis of the report of government agencies in the Lok Sabha (Jain Commission Interim Report; 1991);

Column 588-589: -

".... when I was an ordinary Member of this House, I sent a note to the then Home Minister of the Government of India giving the details of the activities of militants or extremists of the LTTE in Tamil Nadu and also the reaction of the then Tamil Nadu Chief Minister at that time. I have my own information. But my information is communicated to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu... Mr Karunanidhi has been informed of the opinion of the Government of India and the situation that is operating in that part of the country. I want to bring two or three points to the knowledge of the House. It is true.... that there is not only nexus between ULFA and LTTE but there has been a close cooperation between these two. There have been six centres of ULFA in the

Tamil Nadu. I do not know whether it is with the connivance and knowledge of the Tamil Nadu Government. But this is the reality. It is also true that two of the ULFA leader were arrested from the Vellore Hospital and they are important members of ULFA. (Interruptions)I do not know. I do not want to take the names. They were interrogated and the information that they have given is quite disturbing. I also want to make it clear that Tamil Nadu is the place where you can get AK- 47 rifles at the cheapest rate. And in the centre for purchase of AK 47 for naxalites in Andhra, for militants in Punjab and also ULFA people.... But I want to say that when informed the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister about all these things, he assured of action...."

These analyses revealed the nexus and connection of LTTE-ULFA and RAW reported that ULFA had been in contact with LTTE for supplying the arms. For this purpose, ULFA representatives gathered in Tamil Nadu in the third week of January 1991 to discuss the terms of the proposed agreement and in this month some arms were purchased by ULFA from LTTE through the transaction either gold or narcotics. Some other Non-Governmental armed groups emerged in the Northeast and they have a link with LTTE. B. G. Verghese rightly pointed out nexus of LTTE with NSCN as well as KIA in his work 'India's Northeast Resurgent'.

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The LTTE and Indian rebel groups, especially in the north-eastern states, have a close relationship with drug trafficking in the region. According to the source of the information, about 3,000 kg of brown sugar has been smuggled every year mainly on Tuticorin coast. In fact, the amount of the heroin has been growing up. According to the Narcotics Control Bureau, the amount of supply had been increased in doubled in 1998 (Sangameswaran: 2001). Moreh has been a small town in Chandel which is a hill district of Manipur. There are various communities in this area. These communities are Marwaris, Punjabis, Nepalese, Kukis and Tamil who engaged in the legal and secret trade. It is governed by Tamils (Liyanage: 280).

Tamil Nadu was the base support of the LTTE. It has been strategically and politically important because Regardless of the use of it as a port for sending its weapons from different sources, a transit area of Tamil Nadu was strategically and politically critical for the communication between LTTE and other sources, for its heroin globally smuggling or training and financing non-state armed groups. Tamil Nadu is a small but important part of this network. The drug business of LTTE became a major source of funding for its struggle. The

purchase of LTTE's arms and smuggling was complexly connected with its shipping and drug network. The LTTE connected with the work of smuggling which was the principal source of economy and finance. It provided a wider connection of Non-Governmental Militant Groups worldwide. In the early of 1980s, it entered into the international black market and even taking a fair share of its weapons from Indians. This is why the LTTE was efficiently managing the IPKF after supplying the arms from India. Tamil Nadu provided the important port for supplying the arms from north-east of the island to the world. LTTE provided arms, ammunition, and funds to TNR and TNLA of Tamil Nadu. The clear connection embellished through the local networks and the local people's support. The RF was the first to connect with Veerappan. It was a Tamil Nationalist and separatist organization of Tamil Nadu (Subramanian; 2004). The Ltte-veerappan connection became stronger and it was revealed when Nagappa, a former agriculture minister was kidnapped. As the state government denied releasing the two assistant LTTE politicians from the prison, Nagappa was brutally killed.



Source: Veerappan and Sethukuli Govindan, pay homage to Tamilarasan, the founder of the TNLA, on his 12th death anniversary (September 1, 2002) under the common flag of the TNLA and the TNR. <<https://www.frontline.in/static/html/fl2123/stories/20041119008201700.htm>>

In this context, Globalization, commercial potential and some ideological divisions are essential by establishing a relationship between the LTTE and Non-Governmental Armed Groups of India. These links were very important results for the safety of both nations and tried to establish the collaborative or joint functions against mainstream political motion in the society. The safety and security cannot be understood only between state and other institutions of the state. So, the idea of security became complicated with the origin of the Non-Government Armed Groups in the region. The origin of these groups has an implication for the internal security of the state and challenges its constitutional legitimacy or sovereignty. This origination associated with the crisis of the nation-state in South Asia. The more interested in this work is the linkages between Non-Governmental Armed Groups in one country and Non-Governmental Armed Groups in another country. These links had been started for the general organizational needs, although different types of organizations can be integrated, sometimes due to the opposition, ideological commitments and globalization, it has become more effective which allows these groups to establish the trans-border connection.

The relationship between LTTE and Non-Governmental Armed Group in India had linkages and implications at several

levels. These links ensure the mutual understanding for supplying the arms to other groups to continue their struggle in the special zone/region. These linkages of LTTE originated in Sri Lanka and various armed groups in India produced annual revenue of \$200 to \$300 million of LTTE (Khanra: 287). The fund had been generated from the illegal sources for the struggle of separation and autonomy. The LTTE actually used the vast areas of India for supplying arms and drugs to the other region through the Non-Government Militant Groups. These local movements provided their necessary support and LTTE drug smuggling had created more than forty thousand narcotics in the northeast of India. Links and implications between Non-Governmental Armed Groups had a serious impact on the security of the states. As both India and Sri Lanka were being affected by the emergence of connection and mutual linkages of these groups, both countries required a joint mechanism of both states to counter the threat or insecurity.

5. Conclusion

Two main problems of the residents of relations between India and Sri Lanka could be identified and taken up in the study of conflict perception of the security. The first problem arises out of the concern of India about the security of the sub-continent and its fear that the presence of threats and emergence of the non-governmental militant functions in Sri Lanka would act as a threat to the overall peace and security of the region. The second problem is due to the spill-over effect of the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict in India and the subsequent Indian role in the domestic problem of Sri Lanka. India has changed its policy towards Sri Lanka and builds a strong bond with Sri Lanka due to the changing pattern of the global economy and collapse of the bilateral world war. Further, India gave emphasis on the strategic priorities in the Indian Ocean Region which has been considered as the strategic point of the world. In this context, India played an important role in Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict and had changed its attitude towards external actors through the cooperation of Indian counterparts to the international mediators and it has been clearly expressed that India is committed to Sri Lanka's peace treaties for maintaining the international image.

The emergence of Non-Government Militant groups and intra-state conflict or inter-state conflict had been considered as the frequent cause of insecurity or instability of the region as well as the world. On the other hand, these conflicts had turned into the lethal when more Non-Governmental Armed Groups use the extensive weapons of mass destruction in the society. The situations become more complicated for the development of relations between the Non-State Armed Groups across the border which made localized conflicts into regional and regional conflicts into international conflicts. As the result, the bomb explosion in the one part of the world may face disasters in the other parts of the world. No country in the world is protecting from this liquidity. The need to understand the complexity of the situation is to create a policy and to analyse the intensity of the threat which flows from one part to other parts of the world.

The bilateral relations between India and Sri Lanka were influenced and more or less determined by the threats of Non-

Government Militant groups and joint collaborative venture or mechanism of threats of both countries. So, the bilateral relations of Indo-Sri Lankan have been analysed in the new thoughts of analysis which challenge the traditional analysis of

the state. Therefore, the Non-Governmental Militant Groups had been important in the concept of 'transition from Intra-state conflict to inter-state conflict and simultaneously for the analysis of the bilateral relations.

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