

**A FEMINIST READING ON THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS OF TAMIL TIGER: BASED ON SELECTED WRITINGS**Aruni Samarakoon¹

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Abstract

The protracted civil war between the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) came to end in 2009 by defeating the LTTE militarily. Since 2009, the GOSL has focused on liberal peacebuilding through the policy of rehabilitation, reintegration and reconstruction (Thiranagama, 2011; Salter, 2015; Stokke and Uyangoda, 2012). After the war ended, the LTTE also became a spot of light in research stream. The narratives of the LTTE members basically reveal the everyday life of the rebellion in the liberation movement.

The key objective of this paper is to understand the narrations and perceptions of the former LTTE combatants on their lives and struggle. The paper, thereby, examines the LTTE point of view on human rights, peacebuilding and freedom. In addition, the paper explores how the women's role has been constructed in the liberation movement.

Research problem is that, even though, the LTTE was to achieve the emancipation of the suppressed group by a revolution, why the female combatants have subjected to gender-based discriminations within the movement? Two research questions are to discuss; how women have been placed on the LTTE movement? How the female combatants have pursued their liberation by the movement?

This is a library survey, asserting qualitative data, documented in the main two pieces of writings; Thamilini Jayakumarans, *Thiunu Aspitakatak SewenaYata* (2016), Niromi de Soyza's, *Tamil Tigress: My Story as a child soldier in Sri Lanka's bloody civil war* (2011) has been used to construct the argument of the paper. Also, the secondary data on civil war, the liberation movement and the LTTE members were used as evidence to support the argument.

The LTTE was an agent of reactionary politics, which formed to fight against state terrorism, political ignorance and isolation of Sinhala- Majority Government, injustice, suppression, economic deprivation and political exclusion in recognizing the identity of the Tamil community. Nirmoi and Thamilini both experienced violence of the state and lived with political uncertainty every day. Niromi however, noticed the dominance of patriarchal values even in the liberation movement which Thamilini took it as a necessary protection.

The literature of war, social movements and the confessions of freedom fighters have predominantly interpreted women as victims in the war than freedom fighters. Thamilini's testimony is one of the examples that locate women as just victims rather than the agents of changing the system. Niromi was able to build up women as a capable group to change the system. The political project of liberation and emancipation of women through movement, however, has failed because of the patriarchal hegemony in the movement.

Keywords: Female Ex- combatants, Feminism, Patriarchy, Women's rights

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