CHAPTER VI

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INTRODUCTION

The Indo-Sri Lanka agreement of 1987 sought to provide autonomy to the Sri Lankan Tamils under the Provincial Council (PC) system. The TULF, which was expected to play an active role in implementing the accord as a moderate and legitimate political party, failed to play any role in getting endorsement of the Tamils and thus, it did not even contest the PC election.

Between 1989 and 2000, the Party contested three parliamentary elections and a local body election. Politically, it faced opposition from the militant-turned political parties, which had drastic negative impact on the TULF vote bank. Since then, the organisational structure and political programme of the TULF are in disarray. At present, the Party’s leadership is shrinking; political mobilisation has stopped, and it has little popular support. TULF is even accused of acting at the behest of the LTTE.

This chapter seeks to evaluate the progress of the Party, based on its electoral performances in the four elections. The change of its support base by analysing one Provincial Council (PC) election, three Parliament elections and one Local body election in Jaffna district.

TULF AND THE CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACCORD

Implementation of the accord was the pivotal to the resolution of the 40-years old ethnic conflict. The success of the accord depended on four major factors: (a) Devolution of power in the necessary subjects, essentially with the legislative and executive power on the subjects; (b) Proper implementation of the devolution of powers on subjects allocated to the PCs from the centre; (c) United or coordinated action on the part of Tamil leadership in consolidating and exercising
the powers; (d) Efficient involvement of India to ensure the smooth implementation of the accord by removing the hurdles.

Hence, the success of the accord depended on the coordinated involvement of the Sri Lankan government, Indian government, TULF and the militants. As the moderate and recognised leadership, the responsibility to ensure the devolution scheme and coordinate with the forces of different interest for the successful implementation of the accord, with the support from India, fell on the TULF.

The devolution of power was incomplete while signing the accord. The clause 2.15 of the Accord says that the ‘residual matters shall be resolved between India and Sri Lanka’.¹ This clause was incorporated to prevent the Sri Lankan government from doing any harm to the devolution unilaterally and to make Sri Lankan government commit to finalise matters with the participation of India. Finalisation of the devolution to meet the aspirations of the Tamils was the key for sustainability of the solution, restoration of peace and the democratic political climate in Sri Lanka, especially, in the Tamil political arena. Tamil people, without knowing the details and the nuances of the devolution, had the general understanding that the PC system presented by the Accord was like Indian system. Therefore, it was foremost task for the TULF to prove its skill in using the support of India to ensure its own proposal realised.

Jayewardenne was cunning. He never kept his words. In the case of the Sri Lankan Tamil issue, this was a matter of concern. All the Tamil leaders and India knew that he would search for opportunities to work against the Accord, while overtly projecting himself as the one supporting the Accord. As the Executive President with five-sixth majority, in the Parliament, Jayewardenne instead of ensuring an acceptable devolution and its implementation, sounded rather non-committal. He did not ensure even the commitment of the Sri Lankan authorities in the implementation. On the contrary, his emphasis was merely to put an end to the ‘terrorism’. The response was a subtle indication of his sinister motives and an alarm to the TULF and the Indian government to keep a vigil on the drafting of devolution and his future political moves.

¹ See India-Srilanka Accord clause 2.15 The Accord was signed on 29 July 1987 in Colombo by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President J.R. Jayewardenne.
On the Tamil side, LTTE wanted the Accord to fail because the interest of LTTE was directly opposed to that of the interest of the Sri Lankan government. It has indulged in various disruptive activities that distracted and delayed the process of the implementation of the accord. Jayewardene's strategy included causing a rift between the LTTE and the Indian state in an effort to fail the Accord. This laid increasing responsibility on the TULF and the Indian state to tame the LTTE. One strong instrument to tame the LTTE was relevant political diplomacy to win the people in support of the Accord.

The question of powers in the devolution scheme, sincerity of the government in the implementation of the accord and taming the Tigers were the challenges that cropped up subsequent to the Accord of 29 July 1987. For all these questions, the answer was TULF and India. TULF propped up the Eelam campaign, thus instrumental for the emergence of the militants. Later, it gave up its own policy and gave the alternative proposal similar to Indian federal system as a permanent solution to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. India signed the Accord on behalf of the Tamils and assumed as guarantor to the implementation. Tamil people and the pro-Accord forces had full trust on India as it had the power and the necessary mechanism to succeed, by dealing with the different forces.

The Role of the TULF in Drafting Provincial Council Bill

The Task of the TULF was multifarious and required efficiency and courage in bringing three different forces to one line for the success of the India–Sri Lanka Accord. The devolution of power envisaged in the Accord was in the half way of completion while signing the Accord. TULF, in its pre-Accord meeting with the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, requested, 'A team of experts from India along with their counterparts from Sri Lanka draft the necessary legislation'.² This was agreed upon. TULF sent him a reminder after a week of signing of the Accord, in which Amirthalingam mentioned the status of the devolution scheme and the residual matters to be finalised. He mentioned, 'certain matters were not

agreed upon, certain matters agreed upon were not incorporated, and certain other matters referred to in our letter of 4 October (1986) to the Minister of External Affairs were not discussed at all'. While indicating the deficiencies in the devolution scheme, the letter requested to ensure the Indian form of federal system.

Amirthalingam from his experience was well aware that Jayewardene would use all possible opportunities to dilute the devolution scheme since he had agreed to the devolution under compulsion and not on his own wish. Moreover, it was not convincing to expect that the Indian negotiators must know all the nuances involved in the issues of the Tamils and the shrewdness of Jayewardene.

The core of the Accord is devolution and the key of the devolution is legislative and the executive powers to the PC, without which, any amount devolution would amount to mere decoration and would not be operational. Moreover, the anti-Indian and anti-Accord campaign of the LTTE and the war that cropped up between the LTTE and the IPKF required an effective instrument to counter the LTTE campaign and to win the people in support of the Accord. That instrument could be only the devolution scheme that could meet the aspirations of the Tamils.

In this backdrop, TULF, instead of taking active part in the finalisation of devolution scheme along with the Indian experts, completely delegated its responsibility to the Indian government, except sending one reminder to the Indian Prime Minister. After signing of the Accord, TULF seems to have lost the spirit. For nearly three months, the TULF leadership failed to meet the Indian negotiators and discuss the progress and to ensure the incorporation of the issues of importance. Between the signing of the Accord and gazetting the Bill, TULF was neither involved in finalising the devolution scheme nor visited to the Tamil provinces to mobilise the people.

Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) landed in Jaffna on the same day, the Accord had been signed. Within a week, the Tamil provinces came under the control of the IPKF. People were enthusiastic and hopeful by the direct

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3 Ibid, p. 152.
intervention of India. They welcomed the IPKF and saw them as their saviours. Until the presence of the IPKF, the LTTE had been the only hope to the people for their protection that was switched overnight to the IPKF. It is to be noted here that LTTE floated the campaign in the previous year that Indian army is planning to penetrate to Tamil areas along with the TELO and they would rape the girls like they had done in Bangladesh. Contrary to its campaign, people's on trust in the IPKF annoyed the LTTE.

Adding to the LTTE's anger, almost all the militant organisations that were banned by the LTTE landed in the Tamil provinces. Their supporters were enthusiastic. These militant organisations opened their offices and started preparation for re-establishment of their support bases to face the expected PC elections. LTTE could not tolerate the presence of other organisations for two reasons: firstly, politically, the LTTE's claim of sole representative came under challenge as LTTE realised that it cannot prove its claim in a democratic situation. Secondly, LTTE had acted so vociferously and cruelly to decimate other organisations, thus scared of revenge of other organisations. LTTE felt that the presence of the IPKF and other militants could be serious threats for its supremacy.

In order to re-establish its predominance, LTTE had to establish that India and the IPKF had not come to protect the Tamils, nor did they politically support the Tamils. However, since the peace process and the IPKF were popular among people, LTTE could not go against them openly. It formulated two-fold plans; one was, to gain India's recognition as the supreme force by obtaining major share in the proposed interim council. The other was, to push India in a delicate situation

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4 This was the justification of the LTTE for its marginalisation of the TELO. LTTE gave this justification in many public meetings from May 1986. Author's discussion with many such observers of these meetings.

5 LTTE knew that India would pursue the implementation of the Accord. If LTTE refused, it might be taken by the pro-Accord militants or the TULF or both. In such eventuality, LTTE would lose its recognition and it was scared that the Eelam cause would die down. Therefore, in order to keep the pro-Accord parties away, LTTE went along with India. Using Thileepan's death as threat to the image of India as bargaining chip, and gained majority seats with Chairman post in the Interim Council. It successfully prevented all other organisations from getting seat in the Council except the TULF. Once it got the leadership, sabotaged it by undue demands.
by portraying them as anti-Tamil. For both the aims, it has used different forms and different degree of cohesive methods with the IPKF. Prabakaran said that his strategy was to, 'provoke the IPKF to attack the Sri Lankan Tamil civilians, it would be so fine-tuned that it would not arouse any suspicion',6 Proving his words, he went to the extent of sacrificing 18 lives of its important cadres to ensure that people do not suspect LTTE. Thileepan died during hunger strike7 where as 17 others were made to commit suicide by swallowing cyanide.8

LTTE went on killing spree in repercussion to the suicide of its 17 members. It killed Sinhalese cruelly Jaffna and in Batticaloa. This broke the tolerance of the IPKF and got into the war with the LTTE. It was a situation when, 'Each party could pick facts selectively to fuel righteous indignation. Each party (militant organisations, Sri Lankan government and the IPKF) could maintain with some

7 LTTE sacrificed the life of one of its middle rank leader Thileepan. He died on his 11th day of hunger strike. He put forward five demands: (i) Those who were arrested under PTA and still in the prison and under custody should be released immediately. (ii) Government has to stop the Sinhalese colonisation in the name of rehabilitation. (iii) All the works under the guise of rehabilitation should be stopped until the formation of the interim government. (iv) Government has to stop opening police stations in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. (v) Weapons given to the home guards (Sinhalese) should be withdrawn under the supervision of the IPKF and have to close the army camps and police stations in the villages and schools. (Translated from Tamil) S. Pusparajah, Eela Porattathil Enathu Saatchiyam (My Witness in the Eelam Struggle), (Puthanatham, Tamil Nadu: Adaiyalam, 2003), p. 434. By this hunger strike it aimed to portray India as the one who had come to protect the interests of the Sinhalese and not the Tamils. With this sacrifice, LTTE successfully bent India in recognising LTTE as supreme force by gaining seven out of twelve seats in the proposed interim administration.
8 Seventeen LTTE men, including some high ranking leaders were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy in the sea while engaged in arms smuggling after declaring general amnesty. They were put under custody of the Palaly Police in the Air Base. Since few of them were wanted for pre-Accord crimes, Sri Lankan government wanted to take them to Colombo. LTTE protested that it was against the general amnesty. India was to take up this issue and ordered IPKF not to allow them to be sent to Colombo. However, Sri Lankan government used this as card to provoke the LTTE and put India in a fix. LTTE wanted to sacrifice them to prove that either India does not have voice to protect its cadres or would not go against the interests of the Sri Lankan government, hence, fix India with Sinhalese.
justice that it had acted rightly whilst others had ill-used and wounded it. Charity, patience and the sense of give and take were missing.  

Jayewardene devised an effective diversion strategy to distract the TULF and Indian negotiators from finalising the devolution scheme and drafting of the bill. He constantly fuelled the tensed relationship between the LTTE and the IPKF and created the war between the two. By all accounts, ‘The diplomacy of the Sri Lankan government was to create wedge between the Tamil militants and India’.  

Making use of the situation of distraction Jayewardene, gazetted the Bill and used his five-sixth majority in the Parliament to get the PC Bill passed without legislative powers and some of the subjects of major important such as land and police, contrary to the agreement.

Despite the fundamental importance of pursuing the devolution, the TULF simply got distracted from its attention by Jayewardene’s strategy and failed to alert the Indian negotiators to prevent the unilateral move of Jayewardene. While main responsibility for the failure of the making of defective Devolution Bill lies with the TULF, in order to escape from the blame, it mentioned in its letter to the Indian Prime Minister saying that, ‘The TULF, regrets it cannot recommend the contents of these bills to the Tamil people as being satisfactory, just and durable’. This failure, while shows serious political lacuna in the the approach and attitude of its overall function, the letter reveals the double-talk.

More than the war, the non-operational PC Bill has nearly defeated the accord, thus, indirectly legitimising the LTTE’s war against the IPKF. TULF, instead of taking up this issue with India and pro-Accord militants, merely sent a letter to the Indian Prime Minister expressing their disappointment, mentioning five important issues that were missing in the Bill, including the one dealing with legislative powers. Amirthalingam in his letter mentioned that, ‘Now the legislation is sought to be foisted on us without any Indian expert playing a part in

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11 Amirthalingam’s letter to the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, n. 4, p. 153.
the drafting'. TULF has opted not to publicise this serious deficiency, probably to avoid open defiance of the Indian government in order to keep the pro-Accord militants and the people unaware of this information. This attitude of the TULF shows that it had lost sight to find balance in maintaining the relations with India and to address the Tamil interests.

Considering the five-sixth majority in Parliament and the enormous power Jayewardene was enjoying as president both in the Party and, as head of the State, it was not a difficult task for the government to repeal the Bill and rectify the deficiencies. The Indian government also failed to take up the issue with the Sri Lankan government even after the deficiency was indicated by TULF. This shows the lack of due sensitivity on the part of the Indian negotiators.

By a simple strategy, Jayewardene made the two years' efforts and expertise of the TULF and the Indian negotiators meaningless. Without inducting the operational (legislative and executive) power, India took further three years of painstaking efforts to implement that the PC system. It raises questions on India's intentions in the resolution of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. The demands and the role and the approach of the Indian negotiators, the TULF and the Sri Lankan government in making of the devolution scheme and the drafting of Bill needs a separate study to have a comprehensive understanding of the making of the PC system and the failure of the India–Sri Lanka Accord.

**Dilemma of the TULF and the North-Eastern Provincial Council Election**

The Tamil leadership was divided in four categories subsequent to the eruption of the war. LTTE was in a full-fledged war with the IPKF. It was against the Accord and against the presence of IPKF. EPRLF took pro-Accord stand, raised people's issues and directed its activities in addressing those issues. TELO and the ENDLF also took pro-Accord stand but maintained low profile. EROS had subtle relations

14 Pro-Accord Militants believed that the PC system would be like Indian system. Since their attention was to protect their cadres from the LTTE and to consolidate their support base, they were under presumption that the TULF and India would see the devolution matter. Moreover, the intensity of the war and related issues submerged the issue of PC Bill and its details.
with the LTTE and PLOTE leader had the relationship with the Sri Lankan army. Both had understanding with the IPKF too. Hence, EROS and PLOTE were swinging between two coercive forces. The TULF was in disarray and desisted from taking any stance. It had both physically and politically distanced itself from the scene in this period. Its leaders were living in Colombo quietly.

Among other organisations, EPRLF was active in shaping of events. It exposed the politically unwise attitude of the LTTE through statements, interviews and public meetings. It proclaimed that the war had defeated the aim of the Accord and demanded for restoration of democracy by calling the PC election to reduce the heat of the war and to attend the mounting needs of the people. Unlike any other party, political activities of the EPRLF reached Tamil and some extent to the Muslim people of the Tamil provinces in general, and particularly in the Eastern Province. Its leader Pathmanaba visited a large number of villages in Batticaloa and Ampara, explaining the need to support the Accord to the people. EPRLF also formed Muslim–Tamil peace committees to prevent any untoward incidents as there were elements to create Tamil–Muslim conflict too as part of the sabotage programme of the accord. Adding to the political activities, PLA played important role with the IPKF in restoration of normalcy and kept out the LTTE from the Eastern Province.

Meanwhile, India engaged in negotiation with LTTE to end the war and to bring back it to the democratic process. It has offered power and large amount of monetary and material support for the rehabilitation and reconstruction in the North-Eastern Province. However, nearly one year long appeasement approach of the Indian government went in vain. In this scenario, India thought to go for PC elections and to support the elected government to improve the powers to the Provincial Government (PG).

The election was called in a situation when the war in Tamil areas, especially in Jaffna, had made strong wounds in the minds of the people. They were disappointed by India and the IPKF as the entire peninsula was unhappy with

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15 Author’s interview with K. Premachandran, Colombo, 10 July 2001.
16 Narayanaswamy, n. 6, p. 263.
17 Authors’s discussion with K. Pathmanaba, Trincomalee, December 1988.
IPKF, who they had taken as their saviours. Though LTTE was militarily defeated and bottled in the jungle, it took its anti-Accord and anti-Indian campaign to another form to isolate the IPKF, using the method of terrorising the people to keep away from the IPKF and assassinating those who had any dealings with the IPKF. LTTE continued to engage in sporadic violent activities such as throwing grenade at IPKF, or hit-and-run in isolated places to maintain the tensed situation and keep the army in war mood, as that would compel the IPKF to cordon the areas and screen the people and increase check posts to prevent the LTTE movements. Virtually, these activities would result in the harassment of people. Prevalence of such scenario increased the resentment of people with India and the IPKF. Other districts in the north were affected little, and in the Eastern province, large section of the people supported the presence of the IPKF. Since Jaffna was the hub of the Tamil politics and single largest vote bank for many Tamil organisations, it largely reflected the decision of many organisations.

The paradox of the situation was whether to restore the democratic climate first to conduct the election or restore the democratic climate through an election and implement the Accord first. Theoretically, former was ideal. However, the reality in this particular case, necessitated the later as the campaign of the LTTE could be effectively checked only through implementation of the Accord. Therefore, the election and the formation of the government gained paramount importance to restore the democracy, thus, free function of all the organisations. However, Tamil leadership was almost vertically divided behind these two questions.

India had strong conviction that the TULF would lead the campaign for the support of the India–Sri Lanka accord. However, TULF was the only party which did not openly reveal any reason for its denial to contest the election and rejected its main duty of getting endorsement from the Sri Lankan Tamils for the Accord. In its statement prior to the PC elections, TULF said, ‘TULF supports the election but in opposition to contest’. 18 Reasoning the decision, Sivasithamparam observed

18 Author's interview with Mavai Senathirajah, Colombo, 6 July 2000.
that, ‘We did not accept the 13th amendment’ (devolution scheme to the PC). Contrary to Sivasithamparam, Baheerathan’s statement shows that the TULF preferred to contest the election in an atmosphere that would favour its victory. Baheerathan observes, ‘to the TULF, it was desirable to have election after ‘four years functioning of the interim council’. If the election was held in such arrangement TULF would have contested.’ Indeed, the evidences show that the concept of ‘four years interim council’ emerged from its own party interests than the people interests. Because, in such case, TULF presumed to have single largest share. Using that power, TULF could have re-established its support base and the wounds of the war among the people also would have heeled in large extent. In the interests of the Tamils, Interim Council for such a long time in the face of the attitude of the Sri Lankan government might end with nothing. The accord stipulates Interim Council only for three months, if changes were to be made for four years, it could have been done only by the discretionary power of the Sri Lankan President. Such an arrangement would be highly vulnerable to change of governments. Sri Lankan President and Parliament, and Indian government might change in this long duration. Change of actors would seriously hamper the Accord. Therefore, such idea could not emerge out of the interest of the permanent solution. It was clear that TULF was not averse to be in power but it was expected that it should come to it without discrediting its image and taking risk. Its thinking was in terms of power and safety and not towards addressing the urgent issues of the people in crisis. Witnessing this thought of the TULF, Baheerathan said, ‘If the TULF decided to contest the election, they had to go to Jaffna for the election campaign. For Amirthalingam, since the IPKF killed hundreds of Tamil civilians, it was an occupied army. They (TULF leaders) did not want to go and stay in Jaffna under the guard of an occupation army.’ TULF stance of keeping away from PC election was serious disappointment to the Indian government. Baheerathan said, ‘India felt that the TULF stabbed in its back.’

19 Author’s interview with Sivasithamparam, Chennai, 16 July 2001.
20 Author’s interview with Baheerathan, London, 14 September 2000.
21 India-Sri Lanka Accord, n. 1, clause 2.8.
22 Author’s interview with Baheerathan, London, 14 September 2000.
23 Ibid.
EROS took the stand that peaceful situation was not prevailed to have free and fair election. PLOTE took the stand that situation was not conducive enough to have an election. EPRLF strongly believed that only the implementation of the Accord was the most feasible approach, as the LTTE's hit-and-run strategy would continue for long. As long as political solution is delayed, the war would rule the people and that would inevitably enhance the LTTE. Hence, whatever was achieved by the Accord, could not be consolidated. From this understanding, EPRLF, readily welcomed the election but wanted all the organisations to unite and contest the election and implement the Accord as the task of implementation of the Accord was enormous in the face of opposition of the LTTE and the sabotage attitude of the Sri Lankan government. Pathmanaba approached Amirthalingam and requested him to contest with an assurance that EPRLF would support to make Chief Minister; but he refused. India brought the ENDLF to contest the election as it was seeking recognition. TELO leader was inaccessible and thus decision to contest the election was delayed, however, it supported the election and cooperated for the implementation of the accord.

Finally, among Tamil parties, EPRLF and the ENDLF formed on alliance and contested the election. Apart from Tamil alliance, Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) and the UNP contested in the Eastern Province. Considering the resentment of the people and the LTTE's threat, observers predicted polling to be as low as 20 percent. However, EPRLF took pains to conduct meetings even in remote villages in the Eastern Province. EPRLF cadres also succeeded in building the courage among the people to vote against the LTTE's threat. This resulted in an appreciable turnout of the voters and the total votes polled in the Eastern Province.

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24 Author's discussion with Bala Nadaraja Iyer, one of the leading members of the EROS, Colombo, January 1998.
26 Author's interview with K. Premachandran, Colombo, 10 July 2001.
27 Ibid.
Province was 62.38 per cent. The voting percentage was almost equal like any other free and faire election.

Due to the absence of opposition, the panel of the EPRLF alliance led by K. Premachandran won uncontested in the Northern Province. In the east, while EPRLF alliance led by Kirupakaran and the SLMC shared 17 seats each the UNP won one. This reflected the awareness of the people in consolidating the political gains of the Accord and the desperation for representation to look after the developments and rehabilitations. (See Table 6.1)

Table. 6.1: Provincial Council Elections: North*-Eastern Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Votes Polled</th>
<th>EPRLF Alliance</th>
<th>SLMC</th>
<th>UNP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% polled</td>
<td>Seats Won</td>
<td>% polled</td>
<td>Seats Won</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Province</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Batticaloa</td>
<td>169802</td>
<td>73.58</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24.4</td>
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<td>Ampara</td>
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<td>31.31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>61.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>78032</td>
<td>52.89</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>44.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:* EPRLF alliance elected unopposed in all the districts in the Northern Province
Source: Compiled from The Sri Lanka Monitor, British Refugee Council, No. 9, November 1988

The election result was far more appreciable than expected. Other Tamil organisations realised that their observation on the people’s interest was wrong. While on the one hand this victory made other parties jealous of EPRLF, on the other it gave confidence to other organisations including the TULF. As a result, following the victory of the EPRLF and the style of political work, except the TULF all other organisations opened their offices in many parts in the North-

30 Kirupakaran was one of the Central Committee members of the EPRLF, Secretary for Battalion-Ampara Districts became the Finance Minister of the North-Eastern Provincial Council in November, 1988.
31 There was an allegation that the IPKF took money near Jaffna Kachcheri (District Secretariat) from people who came to file their nomination as independent candidate. It was fundamentally wrong as according to the election system, independent candidates cannot contest. Instead, for the Northern Province it required 48 member panel list to be nominated as Independent Group. There is no evidence for such group or such instances. Therefore, this allegation was probably made merely to discredit the Jaffna election, for that matter the EPRLF and the IPKF.
Eastern provinces and activated their party works. TULF had never focussed on building up its organisation. Further, the emergence of militant organisations swamped almost the entire youth and a section of the other age group from the TULF. Hence, it was left with only scattered supporters and loyalist, largely elders. In a situation when LTTE declared all other parties as traitors and sentenced them for death, TULF supporters did not have the courage to identify them. TULF had serious reservation in working under the protection of the IPKF. Therefore, the leaders continued to stay in Colombo under the police protection of the Sri Lankan government.


After the India–Sri Lanka Accord, TULF had to face three major criticisms from the people: (a) TULF propped up the Eelam demand, building up the hope among people and ran away without any response. (b) TULF encouraged the youth for violent means; it failed to give leadership to the struggle and left the militants undirected that led to the internecine conflict and failures in struggle. Even though majority Tamils reconciled themselves to be satisfied with federal system, a large section of the people had anger on the TULF as it betrayed the Eelam cause and felt the root cause for enmity among militants and the resultant tragedies, and thus, disunity among the peoples too. TULF also had bitter experience in facing the people in its election campaign for DDC in 1981 and Local Authorities' elections in 1983 in Jaffna. This tendency was spread all over the Tamil provinces later. Hence, TULF had an emotion of fear and guilt-feeling to face the people with PC system, especially a non-functional system.

All these fears were largely cleared by the Provincial Council elections, thus removing the hurdles on the way for the re-entry to the TULF to play active role in the Tamil politics again. The PC elections brought three messages that would remove the fear of the TULF. Firstly, the mandate that EPRLF obtained to implement the Accord proved that the people lost the hope on Tamil Eelam and

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32 The growing hope on achieving Tamil Eelam since mid-1970s began to decline from the LTTE’s attack on TELO and subsequently to other organisations.
were prepared to settle for a dignified solution. Secondly, except the LTTE all other organisations lost political ground to oppose the TULF. Finally, it shows that the people are ready for democratic practices and to have democratic representation. However, any political party, especially, the Tamil parties based in the North-Eastern Province had to work under threat of the LTTE. Therefore, free functioning of all the Tamil parties was curtailed. The question as to how the TULF would cope with this contradictory situation in still continuing.

**TULF and the Parliamentary Elections 1989**

Three months after the PC elections, in 1989 January, the government announced the Parliamentary elections. TULF decided to contest the election on its own. However, due to the persuasion of the Indian government, it decided to form alliance. Yet, it asserted its superiority by putting forward preconditions that alliance partners should accept the TULF symbol for the election and 50 per cent of the total candidates would be from the TULF and the rest would be divided by the alliance partners. Based on this, TULF, EPRLF, TELO and the ENDLF formed an alliance.

EROS contested the election with the tacit understanding of the LTTE. Its slogan was: 'vote for real and sustainable peace'. LTTE came out with the leaflet in Jaffna, dubbed the entire Tamil parties, except the EROS, as traitors, and requested or rather warned people not to support them. Meanwhile, in Batticaloa LTTE warned the people to face life risk if anyone went for voting. PLOTE contested of its own. Apart from Tamil parties SLMC, UNP, SLFP and the United Socialist Alliance (USA) contested the election.

TULF stayed in the safe houses which were virtually under the IPKF guard. Leaders' called their supporters to their places, had meetings and planned

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33 Author's interview with Pathmanaba, Trincomalee, March 1989.
35 Author read the leaflet with the emblem of the LTTE, Jaffna, February 1989.
strategies for campaign within limited space. They narrowed down their space by adopting a policy of not getting the IPKF protection to meet the people. They posted personal letters to all the voters requesting to vote for them. TULF hardly had anything to claim or to promise to the people. They could only claim the introduction of PC system in its low profile campaign.36

In the case of the EPRLF, it believed in its political stance according to the changing political scenario. They demonstrated optimism in choosing their path. Leaders did not hesitate to face the people and explain their stance. It organised many public meetings, both small and big in the North-Eastern Province.37 Its campaigns were centered on two issues: one was to expose the unwise political moves of the LTTE; and the other was to explain the necessity of strength in the Parliament to consolidate the powers to the PC. Even though EPRLF was the alliance partner of the TULF, TULF refused to share the platform with the EPRLF. However, Anandasangari contradicted by saying that EPRLF has isolated the TULF, he said, ‘EPRLF left us in the hotel and did their campaign widely’. Contrary to his own statement, responding to the question of whether both the parties had any discussion regarding common campaign, he said, ‘No, we did not want to share platforms that were under IPKF guarding.’38 It seems later the Party regretted such decision or had difference of opinion within the Party on this issue but not willing to openly accept it. LTTE used its channels such as Churches, Grama Sevakas and its supporters who campaigned for EROS. It was alleged that some of the candidates were included on the recommendation of the LTTE.39

36 Author’s interview with Gnanasekaravel, Jaffna, 30 April 2003.
37 Author witnessed the entire campaign process of the 1989 parliamentary election in Jaffna.
38 Author’s interview with Anandasangari, Colombo, 3 July 2000.
39 Personal discussion with Yogasangari, Jaffna February 1989. Yogasangari was one of the founder members of the EPRLF, who worked for EPRLF in its London branch. He was elected to Parliament from Jaffna in the 1989 election.
TULF had strong conviction that it would become the single largest party among Tamil political organisations. In an interview to the Tamil weekly, *Tuglak*, Sivasithamparam, under the presumption that TULF would win handsomely, said, 'After the election we will demand for the dissolution of the PC and for the re-election.' It reveals two aspects: one is the over-conviction of the TULF in its victory; the other is, contrary to its earlier position, the lust of the TULF to enjoy the power of PC that Amirthalingam refused to accept. The statement of Sivasithamparam shows the absence of statementship in the TULF. The PC system was absolutely new to Sri Lanka. EPRLF was struggling to build up the Provincial Council secretariat and administrative system of its own. It was in the process of creating a system from scratch amongst threats from LTTE and the non-cooperation of the Colombo government. In such situation, it needed a united effort to face the hurdles to build up such system in the interest of the people. But the attitude of TULF reveals its desperation to regain the lost power and the intolerance of the victory of any other party. Contrary to the hope, TULF was swept out in this election. (Table 6.2).

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Table 6.2: Parliamentary Elections of 1989: Electoral District Jaffna

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral District</th>
<th>Registered</th>
<th>Votes polled (%)</th>
<th>Total Valid</th>
<th>Vote share of parties in total valid votes polled (in %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>592210</td>
<td>44.76</td>
<td>239855</td>
<td>UNP: 2.28 TULF (Alliance): 25.02 SLMC: 3.52 IG (EROS): 62.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Seats Obtained: - 3 - 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of seats obtained: 1 2 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batticaloa</td>
<td>216574</td>
<td>78.16</td>
<td>155361</td>
<td>UNP: 7.28 TULF: 35.49 SLMC: 23.73 IG (EROS): 29.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Seats Obtained: - 3 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>152289</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>101578</td>
<td>UNP: 22.1 TULF: 12.56 SLMC: 17.61 IG (EROS): 24.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Seats Obtained: 1 - 1 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>265768</td>
<td>84.45</td>
<td>213714</td>
<td>UNP: 29.29 TULF: 20.32 SLMC: 28.69 IG (EROS): -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Seats Obtained: 3 1 2 -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: 1. TULF Alliance constituted EPRLF, TELO, ENDLF and the TULF which contested on the TULF symbol.
2. EROS contested as Independent Group.
The alliance candidates contested on the TULF symbol and the TULF fielded many of its stalwarts as candidates. Contrarily, all the candidates of the alliance parties were new to the parliamentary politics and not widely known personalities. Most of them had lived underground life as militants. Taking into account the election system and the size of the electorate, winning of unknown candidates was impossible. Despite these positive factors to the TULF and negative factors to the alliance candidates, TULF was wiped out in this election clearly shows the magnitude of the resentment on the TULF.

In this election, TULF alliance won nine seats. However, TULF could not win even a single seat. EPRLF won seven seats and TELO won two. As the General Secretary of the Party, Amirthalingam appointed himself as the MP from National List. In Jaffna, the alliance won three seats, all by EPRLF. Sivasithamparam the TULF leader lost, was pushed to the sixth position in the preferential vote. In Batticaloa district, the alliance won three seats that were shared by EPRLF with two seats and TELO one. Amirthalingam was pushed to fourth place in preferential votes. EROS won 12 seats apart from seat from National List. EROS swept the polls in Jaffna, where it won 8 seats out of 11 in the elections.

In terms of policy, both the TULF and its alliance partners had stepped down from their goal of Eelam and accepted the PC system. However, reasons could be attributed to the militant-turned political parties. Firstly, people believed that even the PC System was achieved by the sacrifice of the youth and not by the TULF. Secondly, the alliance partners were militant-turned political parties. They had active youth cadres to campaign even in the face the LTTE threat. Thirdly, TULF demonstrated its political bankruptcy as it failed to deliver any programme and thoroughly exposed its incapability to represent the people in conflict and crisis. The lacuna of the TULF was largely filled by the EPRLF and to some extent by other alliance partners. Finally, due to the LTTE threat, militant-turned political parties were given weapons for their self-defence, hence, they could move around and meet the people. TULF refused to accept the IPKF protection, and therefore could not be mobile.
TULF always showed duplicity in its policy and this practice was the most irritant aspect to the people and other parties. While it refused to have the protection of the IPKF, leaders were living in Colombo under the protection of the Sri Lankan government police. If there was no IPKF, TULF leaders could not even come to their electoral districts to contest the election. Instead of explaining the hard realities to the people and mobilising them towards the implementation of the Accord, TULF took populist approach and opted to go along with the emotional reactions of the people. While people returned to the reality, TULF has lost its steam to meet the expectations of the people.

Parliamentary Elections and the TULF 1994

The 1994 election was held in a different political situation. The period between the 1989 and 1994 witnessed far-reaching changes that had serious impact in the existing status of the parties in the sense of organisational strength, peoples’ support to various parties, party-to-party relation, and relations of Tamil parties with the Sri Lankan State and in the overall Tamil political scenario.

LTTE and the Sri Lankan government joined hands and agreed to talk and solve the problem within the country, without any aid from India. However, the hidden agenda of both was to send the IPKF out and to collapse the PC. For the LTTE, IPKF was threat to its physical survival and the PC was threat to its political survival or its cause of Tamil Eelam. Contrarily, the Sri Lankan government, IPKF and the PC working together was a threat to the Sinhalese rule over the entire island. The Sri Lankan government also had the agenda of enhancing LTTE to eliminate the pro-Accord parties and later eliminate the LTTE. Change of government, led by V.P. Singh in the New Delhi too was sceptical about the IPKF presence in Sri Lanka; thus, unmindful of the

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41 Sri Lankan President R. Premadasa told to one of his senior bureaucrats that LTTE was not the problem; problem is EPRLF and the TULF. He implied that they have to face LTTE militarily and that would be easy, and the other two make political moves that would be difficult to face. Author’s interview with Yogasangari, Colombo, November 1989.

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commitment of the Rajiv Gandhi, the outgoing leadership. The Indian government ordered for early withdrawal of the IPKF. EPRLF took efforts to prevent the withdrawal of the IPKF before the implementation of the Accord, by mobilising people in the North-eastern Province and pursued the ministers and various political party leaders in Delhi to oblige the Accord. The TULF leadership was reduced its responsibility merely with a statement. They failed to make any efforts of their own or support of the Provincial Government with the to prevent the withdrawal of the IPKF in the interests of the implementation of the Accord. TULF’s statements and few speeches that had no impact on the changing political scenario and was unable to meet the interests of the people.

IPKF was withdrawn in March 1990 that caused serious impacts in the Tamil politics and the nature of the Tamil political parties. Firstly, the implementation of the accord was broken abruptly and many powers exercised by PC were taken back by the centre. This made the enormous sacrifice made by the parties to consolidate the power futile thus, politically became bankrupted. This seriously affected the trust laid by the people on the EPRLF. Secondly, before withdrawal, the Indian government took hasty decisions to raise trained combatant force to protect the PC and to maintain the law and order situation that led to forcible conscription of youth in hundreds by the pro-Accord parties including the EPRLF. Thirdly, PG collapsed in the face of joint attack of the LTTE and the Sri Lankan forces, hence a large number of the EPRLF and the ENDLF leaders and cadres had to go to India for their protection. This largely weakened the functions of the EPRLF and the ENDLF was completely absent from the North-East.

Finally, all the Tamil political parties were left under the mercy of the Sri Lankan forces. The vengeance of the Sri Lankan army with almost all the militant-turned political parties for their previous military activities and the pro-IPKF

42 Rajiv Gandhi said, “India has the responsibility to implement the India–Sri Lanka Accord; India would not withdraw for any reasons until the implementation of the Accord”. Eelenadu 15 June 1989.

43 Eelenadu, 7, 12, 15 and 16 June 1989.
stand, left them vulnerable. Simultaneously, the LTTE eliminated all the leaders and cadres of all the Tamil parties at the behest of the government and army of Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, the LTTE broke the dialogue with the government and began the Eelam War II. Soon, it brought large part of the Northern Province under its control. Thus Tamil provinces got divided into areas of LTTE control and the areas of army control. This division virtually prevented the access of the Tamil political parties to the people and narrowed down their political domination. Many parties lost their potential support bases in the LTTE control areas. Hence the areas controlled by the army was exclusively appropriated by the other militant turned political parties.

In this process, islands adjacent to Jaffna were under the authority of the Eelam Peoples’ Democratic Party (EPDP), Vavunia was largely controlled by the PLOTE. Mannar was dominated by the TELO. In the Eastern Province, PLOTE and TELO were functioning with the army, exercising their authority. This exclusive territory model gave them both votes and protection and economic gains to run the Party. EPRLF had it offices in all the districts except Jaffna. Their work among the people were centred on the functions of their MPs. TULF had

44 Many EPRLF cadres, including a female member, a driver and bodyguard of an EPRLF MP Rajakuganeswaran were kidnapped and disappeared and some were tortured to reveal the location of arms haul given by the IPKF. Author’s interview with K. Premachandran, Colombo, 10 July 2001.

45 Sri Lankan Government used the LTTE to eliminate other Tamil organisations while having talks with the LTTE. Once LTTE turned the guns against the Sri Lankan army, the government wanted to use the victimised parties to eliminate the LTTE. Due to the LTTE’s threat, for their survival TELO and PLOTE began work along with the army as registered auxiliary force for salary and perks. EPRLF took policy decision that the party would not work with the army against the interests of the Tamils as it would ridicule the fundamental goal of the party. Ibid.

46 EPDP was formed by Douglas Devananda who was Central Committee Member of the EPRLF and expelled for his anti-party activity in 1987. He was put into jail under National Security Act (NSA) in Tamil Nadu for the charge of kidnapping a child for ransom. After the withdrawal of the IPKF, Devanandan and his friends went to Sri Lanka while out on bail. They formed the party under the patronage of Sri Lanka President, Premadasa. His group was given all the facilities and allowed to see the internal security of the islands under the overall guard of the Sri Lankan Navy in the islands in Jaffna. Hence, entire administration unofficially came under the EPDP.
only one office in Colombo. They did not have any offices in the Tamil provinces, especially, the leaders from the Northern Province continued to isolate themselves from the people by staying in Colombo.

The two elections undermined the LTTE’s claims of the sole representative to the Tamils. It did not want to leave any organisation or leader that could challenge its supremacy in future. LTTE began its elimination spree on other organisations by eliminating its members, particularly, the potential leaders.

LTTE, while having negotiations with the Sri Lankan government, assassinated TULF leader Amirthalingam and another important leader of the TULF, V. Yogeswaran in July 1989 in which the Party President Sivasithamparam, survived with serious injuries which made him non-functional.\textsuperscript{47} Amirthalingam was the only widely accepted most reputed and courageous leader of the TULF. TULF was left without any leader who would be acceptable to all in the party. TULF leadership opted not to condemn the LTTE for the gruesome murder of their leader and colleague. This could be seen as an indicator for their subsequent approach with the LTTE.

Soon after the withdrawal of the IPKF, LTTE, killed the EPRLF Batticaloa MP Sam Tambimuttu and his wife in give the year. Within two months, it killed 13 leaders of various ranks from top to middle, including the Secretary General of the EPRLF leader, K. Pathmanaba, Jaffna MP Yogasangari, and P. Kirupakaran.\textsuperscript{48} Soon after the beginning of Eelam War II, a section of the ruling UNP parliamentarians, SLFP, the USA and the EPRLF jointly brought the impeachment motion against the President, Premadasa. TULF took the neutral stand. Naturally, it was an indirect support to the President, who was responsible for the failure of the Accord and had brought the war against the Tamils to more devastating stage. Pro-Premadasa attitude of the TULF was further emphasised by its deliberate absence at the voting times of the extension of the unpopular emergency under

\textsuperscript{47} T. Sabaratnam, \textit{The Murder of a Moderate} (Dehiwala: Nivetha Publishers, 1996), pp. 1–4

\textsuperscript{48} Pathmanaba and his party colleagues were killed in Chennai on 19 June 1990. Kirupakaran was former North-Eastern Provincial Council (NEPC) Finance Minister and the leader of Batticaloa and Ampara districts.
which large number of Tamils were arrested and kept under custody for years, merely under suspicion. However, people were neither interested nor in mood of observing the parliamentary matters due to agony of the war. TELO and the ENDLF MPs were bribed with Rs 5,00,000 each and another duty-free vehicle to support the President. LTTE sent the EROS MPs from Jaffna to support the President Premadasa against whom they were waging war. The entire behaviour of the Tamil parties’ witnessed the degeneration of Tamil politics that was reduced from freedom fight to unprincipled survival matter of the political parties. President succeeded to buy off many opponents within the Party and from opposition prevented the motion. In this political climate and the positions of the parties, election was called for August 1994.

TULF, in its Election Manifesto, claimed that ‘the party was in the forefront in finding a peaceful solution to the Tamil’s problem since 1983’. It hesitantly asserted its achievements, that could have been most suitable for the previous election. The Party was scared to do at that time, probably to avoid refutes and condemnations. It said, ‘The India–Sri Lanka Accord and the 13th and 16th amendments of the Constitution were somewhat connected to this (peace process) effort. These amendments made the government accept that Sri Lanka is multi-ethnic and the government has the responsibility to protect their culture and uniqueness and the North-Eastern Province was the traditional homeland of the Tamils and the Muslims.’

EPRLF sought an appointment many times to meet the TULF leader to have dialogue and to form an electoral alliance. However, they refused to meet him. At least an alliance was necessary to prevent the non-Tamil parties win the Tamil’s seat. The reason, according to Thangathurai, was, ‘the Party feels that you (former militants) have stains (blood) in your hand. So joining hands with you would

49 According to the statistics taken in the late 1993, there were 2348 people under custody. They were arrested under PTA and Emergency. Among them, vast majority were Tamils. Election Manifesto, Parliamentary Election, TULF, 16 August 1994. (Translated from Tamil)

50 Author’s interview with Immanuel de Silva MP, Colombo August 1994.

damage the reputation of the TULF. Contrarily, the manifesto says, ‘In order to find a just consensus to the national problem and to build up people’s opinion and national consensus, TULF would join with any progressive forces.’ The statement raises two questions. Firstly, the manifesto gives a vague idea about TULF’s solution for the ethnic conflict. Manifesto failed to explain what TULF meant by ‘just consensuses’. If TULF came out with any concrete policy for the resolution of ethnic issue, it would amount to challenge the LTTE. Since TULF adopted an appeasing policy with the LTTE, it could not have its own policy. In the election campaign in Vavunia, Sivasithamparam stated, ‘Thambimar kastappatu poradukirarkal, nangal athai makkalukku payamulla vakaivyil nilai natta vendum’. (Our younger brothers are fighting amongst odds, we have to realise it for the benefit of the people). This statement clearly shows that if there was no fight by the LTTE, the TULF would have no politics to do.

Further, the manifesto pledges, ‘TULF would function with new speed and commitment to workout peace, justice and consensus’. Considering the role of the TULF in the making and implementation of the Accord and the role to protect the PC, which were effectively connected with the solution, shows the statement as mere election rhetoric. However, after 1977, TULF manifesto lost its importance among the people since it rarely reached the people. Rather, the ground realities such as the relations between the Party and the people and addressing the urgent issues faced by the people gained importance in determining election results as people were suffering due to war. Election results largely reflected this trend. Election was contested by the Tamil leadership in four divisions. TULF, EPRLF and the EPDP contested on their own. TELO, EROS and the PLOTE had an alliance. (Table 6.3)

52 Author’s interview with K.Premachandran, Colombo, 10 July 2001.
In sum, EPDP won nine seats, all from Jaffna. Muslim Congress won one seat in Jaffna. TELO, PLOTE and the faction of EROS alliance contested in Vanni District on the symbol of the Democratic Peoples Liberation Front (DPLF), registered political party of the PLOTE. Three Tamil MPs who returned from Vanni all were from PLOTE. In Trincomalee district, only one Tamil seat was won and that was by the TULF. Likewise, in Batticaloa, three Tamil MPs were elected (all from TULF). Ampara Tamil seat was lost due to the fragmentation of Tamil votes.

Except the adjacent islands of Jaffna (islands altogether form one Parliament Constituency) entire Jaffna district was under LTTE control since 1990. The population in the island during the 1990 Eelam War II was left to merely 9600. Among them, only half were voters. However the election for the entire Jaffna

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### Table 6.3: Parliamentary Elections 1994: North-Eastern Provinces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral District</th>
<th>EPRLF</th>
<th>SLMC</th>
<th>IG 1*</th>
<th>IG2*</th>
<th>TULF</th>
<th>DPLF ++</th>
<th>UNP</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>TELO+</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<td>Jaffna</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>79.71</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from PARLINE data, www.bee.lk, Inter Parliamentary Union 2001
Note: IG 1* constitutes EROS, TELO, PLOTE
IG 2* EPDP contested as independent
DPLF++ constitutes EROS, TELO and PLOTE
TELO+ constitutes EROS, TELO and PLOTE

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56 Islands were under overall security of the Navy. The population statistics here was under dispute at all levels. However, according to the records of the Jaffna Navy, based on the reports of the Gramasevakars of the island was 9600. This statistics appeared in the notice board of the Navy camp in 1994. Author visited the camp during the same period.
district was held in the islands only. The EPDP was with the government and this group was the de-facto ruler of the island with the support of the forces and the access to this area was highly restricted by the government; the mobility was minimal. Other parties were not able to move freely due to the terrain and rules of the Navy and the EPDP. Therefore, it was rather an EPDP and state-manipulated affair than an election.\textsuperscript{57} TULF lodged a protest in the courts to prevent the election in Jaffna, but failed. TULF did not contest in Jaffna. EPRLF and the PLOTE alliance contested but lost. Muslims won one seat, because the Jaffna Muslims were evacuated by the LTTE in 1991 were living in Puttalam and were was allowed to vote. Since the overall turnout was meagre, displaced Muslim votes gained one representative.

In the case of Vanni, as noted earlier, PLOTE had maintained hegemony in Vavunia and the TELO in Mannar.\textsuperscript{58} Sidharthan observes, ‘Our strategy is to win over the former TULF bases’.\textsuperscript{59} PLOTE members are living among the people in many pockets in the districts, hence, could cover wide range. They also spent a lot of money to woo the voters openly. However, if all Tamil parties or major parties contested together, they could have gained one more seat according to the proportion. As noted elsewhere, TULF leaders visited the Tamil areas mostly during the elections. They rarely visited and met the people between the elections. Since the Party had no permanent office and functionaries and had only some wealthy personalities as supporters or vote catchers, TULF could not win a single seat in this district.

In the case of the Eastern Province, Batticaola and Ampara were enormously affected by the Eelam War II in 1990. The war caused loss of life of many hundreds and enormous destruction of properties. Many hundreds were arrested, who disappeared. Demands for justice to the disappearance and destruction are still in the Tamil political agenda, which crops up at times.

\textsuperscript{57} For the details of the election process and the EPDP-state planning to conduct the election, see the Proceedings of the Jaffna Election case 1994–95. There were two cases: one lodged by the TELO and the other by the EPRLF.

\textsuperscript{58} Vanni Electoral District consists of Vavunia, Mannar and Mullaitivu Administrative Districts.

\textsuperscript{59} Author’s interview with Sidharthan, Colombo, 11 July 2001.
However, among the sitting MPs subsequent to the demise of EPRLF MP Sam Tambimuttu, TULF candidate Joseph Pararajasingam filled the vacancy. Other two MPs were not effective in addressing these issues, except Pararajasingam.

Further, TELO and the PLOTE were openly working with the army against the LTTE. Since the people had strong anti-State feelings, their ire was towards TELO and PLOTE too. EPRLF earned a bad name by the forcible conscriptions while in the PC. Moreover, LTTE continued to campaign through its street plays, radio programmes, portraying the EPRLF as pro-India and therefore traitor. Hence, people did not have a better alternative, other than TULF.

Candidates of other parties also were no match to Pararajasingam. Above all, Pararajasingam and the LTTE had tacit understanding that helped them to carry out undisturbed campaign and handsome victory. Two other elected MPs of the TULF came from Kalkuda and Kaluvanchikudy. Campaigning was impossible in Batticaloa without the support of the LTTE. In the 2003 Parliamentary elections, Joseph Pararajasingam lost his seat. However, LTTE persuaded an elected MP to resign and gave that seat to Pararajasingam. Since the election victory of 1994, speeches and the statements of Batticaloa MPs were in praise of LTTE. In the election 2003, except Pararajasingam, most other candidates were nominated by the LTTE, but Pararajasingam lost his seat, yet he was appointed by LTTE as National List MP.

The trend in Batticaloa had an impact in Trincomalee too. Moreover, TULF candidates in Trincomalee were popular and active. Candidates of other parties were no match to the TULF candidates. Like in other districts, fragmentation of Tamil votes cost one Tamil seat. Ampara district ethnic composition was the most delicate in the interests of the Tamils. Ampara Tamil Mahajana Saba requested all the parties to nominate a common panel in order to ensure their representation. While all other parties accepted, TULF rejected the request. Hence, fragmentation was unavoidable, thus TULF obtained largest number of votes among Tamil candidates, yet lost.
The fragmentation of Tamil votes cost six Tamil seats according to the ethnic proportion. TULF was blamed for the disunity as there were attempts by EPRLF and TELO for electoral alliance, at least in the districts like Trincomalee and Ampara were rejected. After the elections, TULF was blamed by other parties that its talks for Tamils was not genuine. To the TULF its own party interest was more important than the peoples’ interests. This criticism came from the Eastern Province Tamils too. However, TULF neglected the criticism. Considering the fundamental policies of the TULF, one of its major issues was loss of Tamil representation by Sinhalese colonisation on which the Party was built up. Contrary to its own policy, TULF demonstrated a high caste attitude and treated the militant turn political parties as untouchables.\textsuperscript{60} Attitude of hatredness towards other Tamil parties and the character of desperation for power shows the TULF, instead trying to establish a strong base by formulating clear-cut policy to the Party and reorganise the Party and activate the Party activities, war striving to exploit the weaknesses of other parties and strength of the LTTE for vote catching. This approach, in an abnormal political climate, where democratic practices are under threat, may give temporary victory and not ensure the sustainability of the peoples support to party.

**Performance of the TULF in the Local Authorities Elections In Jaffna 1998**

Local Authorities elections of 1998 were held in Jaffna after 15 years. From the withdrawal of the IPKF, Jaffna was under the de-facto rule of the LTTE until 1995. While Jaffna was captured by the army in 1995, all the sitting MPs of Jaffna belonged to EPDP. This party also was supporting the Chandrika-led government. Therefore, the first party that was allowed to have offices was EPDP. Other parties were allowed to have their offices months later. However, TULF did not have its open presence until the election. All the parties wanted to test their support level in the changing scenario, thus no alliance had been formed. Five Tamil parties contested in the election, in which EPDP had the state patronage. Elections were

\textsuperscript{60} Author’s interviews with Siddharthan, Colombo, 11 July 2001; and K. Premachandran, Colombo, 10 July 2001.
held for one Municipal Council, three Urban Councils and 13 Predeshyasabas. TULF contested only for Jaffna Municipal Council and one Predeshyasaba due to lack of candidates and unpreparedness for the election. EPRLF contested all but three Predeshyasabas that falls into the islands. TELO, EPDP and the DPLF (PLOTE) contested in all the local authorities. TULF won 9 out of 23 in the Jaffna Municipal Council and 11 out of 19 seats in the predeshyasaba and captured power. DPLF won two Urban Councils and two Predeshyasabas. TELO won one Urban Council. EPDP won 10 predesyasabas. (Table 6.4)

People were under LTTE rule for five years effectively disconnected from the mainland. They were denied electricity, phone, fuel, vehicles, fertiliser and many other basic needs. Therefore, the local authorities had to accomplish a daunting task. On the other side, LTTE would not allow people to get these facilities as they would lose the tempo of freedom fight due to luxury. They were more intolerant towards members of local government than MPs, perhaps they had the fear that these activities would put off the sprit among people. Hence lot of people would gain influential status in the society and that would hamper their authority and influence over the people. Within a few months, LTTE sent warning letters to the elected members to resign, and killed many elected members mostly belonging to the EPDP. LTTE also killed two Jaffna mayors one after the other belonging to the TULF. Hence, the function of the local bodies became defunct.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Local Government</th>
<th>Registered Voters</th>
<th>EPDP</th>
<th>EPRLF</th>
<th>TELO</th>
<th>TULF</th>
<th>DPLF</th>
<th>IG</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Votes</td>
<td>Members Elected</td>
<td>No. of Votes</td>
<td>Members Elected</td>
<td>No. of Votes</td>
<td>Members Elected</td>
<td>No. of Votes</td>
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<td>736</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>114</td>
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</table>

Note: MC- Municipal Council, UC – Urban Council, PS- Pradeshya Shaba,

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Parliamentary Election and the Experience of the TULF 2000

Subsequent to the 1994 election, TULF demonstrated increasing appeasing attitude towards the LTTE, despite the killings of two mayors, and Trincomalee MP, Thangathurai. TULF not only failed to condemn LTTE for any of these killings but it inflicted undue hatredness on other Tamil parties. Mavai Senathirajah said, 'All the parties are having weapons, we do not know who was involved in the killings'. While the TULF leadership wanted to earn the goodwill of the LTTE for votes, it hesitated to openly identify with the LTTE. However, the LTTE agenda threatened to swallow the TULF and its support base. Probably, as a strategy to bring the TULF and some other selected parties into its fold, LTTE while supporting the UNP in general, had tacit understanding with the ACTC that helped them to win a seat in Jaffna, and in Vanni. LTTE asked the people through its channels such as Churches, Gramasevakrs and its supporters to support the UNP, if not TEO. In Ampara, common list of all Tamil parties was nominated to ensure the victory of Tamil candidates, however, while his name was in the common list, TULF candidate openly supported to the UNP candidate. Probably, he was encouraged by the LTTE’s support to the UNP. UNP contested in all the Tamil districts and won at least one seat in all the Tamil districts after fifty years due to the LTTE’s green signal. EPRLF faced the split; thus, it had to contest as an Independent Group. All the parties contested separately like 1994. First time in the history, many Sinhalese parties contested in Tamil districts including Jaffna. Indirect LTTE dominance in this election was significant. (Table 6.5)

61 Mavai Senathirajah to the Australian TV. Personal Discussion with Shakthi, Colombo, June 2000. Shakthi was former member of EROS, working in an International NGO, Jaffna. He went with the Australian TV crew to the TULF office for the interview as guide.


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### Table 6.5: Parliamentary Elections 2000: North-Eastern Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral District</th>
<th>EPDP</th>
<th>TULF</th>
<th>ACTC</th>
<th>TELō</th>
<th>DPLF</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>UNP</th>
<th>NUA</th>
<th>IND 2</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<td><strong>Jaffna</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>32.03</td>
<td>10.24</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Batticaloa</strong></td>
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<td>28.77</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Trincomalee</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>% votes</td>
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<td>40.44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seats Won</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ampara</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>% votes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


TULF won three seats in Jaffna and two in Batticaloa. At first glance it seems to have improved, however, the factors for its victory were temporary phenomena. Among nearly one million Tamils who migrated abroad due to the war, a large number of them were from Jaffna and among them, many were youngsters. Further, around 1,00,000 people were killed, which included a large number of youth. Added to these facts Jaffna and Vanni electoral list was not updated since 1981, hence lot of youth were denied voting rights in this election. Therefore, among the voters, elders, particularly above 50 years, were unproportionately high and a section of that age group was of the TULF voters. Conversely, supporters of other parties were largely youngsters and they were disproportionately low in the list. This was one of the major reasons for the TULF’s good performance in Jaffna. Moreover, EPDP and the PLOTE were involved in some killings and the splinter group of the EPRLF was openly supporting President Chandrika while dominant trend in Tamil areas was supporting UNP. These attitude once again created resentment of other Tamil parties that enhanced TULF’s chances. Yet, EPDP’s overtake of the TULF shows that despite the positive climate, the people did not see the TULF as an alternative. The TULF could never win any seats in
Vanni and Ampara after 1977 and other victories were largely due to weakness of other parties and not because of the strength of the TULF.

CONCLUSION

Before 1983, TULF had to depend on its own strength to bargain for rights with the Sri Lankan government. Party had the fear of State violence against the people. When India was fully with the TULF, the Party could not succeed in the negotiation. The Party was unprepared to accomplish the task of even federal system. Fundamental problem of the TULF lies on its loss of alertness and courage to accomplish a mission on its own. When it planned to submit a proposal alternative to Eelam, it shifted from its policy of Eelam. The TULF lost the organisation and was reduced to a group of few like-minded personalities. The inability of the Party made India to perform all its tasks. As a party giving leadership to a minority community that was under the violent oppression of the State, it had to accomplish multifarious tasks. The party machinery had to be well set to perform such task. The TULF failed to foresee the organisational needs and work accordingly.

TULF could not perform anything concrete that could shape the events. Its role in India was almost like a supportive staff. TULF did not lead or direct the events. A Party that could not address the issues of the people effectively would be alienated by the people. This is what happened to the TULF. The four electoral performances show that the TULF's survival was dependent on other parties in an abnormal condition. It is losing its 'self' and becoming the mouthpiece of the LTTE.