

## **ABSTRACT**

Asymmetric warfare is an historical outcome of the warfare on land which influences war-fighting at sea. For an island nation like Sri Lanka, after evolving via experiencing an enemy who used asymmetric tactics and methods, these lessons of war-fighting offer many avenues for academic studies. In fact, many coastal states face a modern-day trial in trying to deal with asymmetric warfare at sea, irrespective of the might of their navies.

In the Sri Lankan case, the significance of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) movement was their incorporation of the maritime domain into their armed resistance by extending their insurgency to sea and by establishing the Sea Tigers. In addition, the LTTE insurgents successfully challenged the maritime jurisdiction of the Sri Lanka Navy's authority over its own territorial waters and seriously threatened the local good order at sea in the broader context. At this point, the Sri Lanka Navy made radical and drastic changes to overwhelm the LTTE threat by sketching out the spectrum of roles that contemporary navies are engaging in the world's ocean. In this research the researcher will examine how the Sri Lanka Navy succeeded by exploiting appropriate asymmetric warfare strategies—a process that deviates from the norms to obliterate the Sea Tigers in Sri Lanka, regaining sea control.

The research factors reveal that the thinking patterns and the overall mind-set within armed forces, diplomatic, intelligence, and law enforcement communities may need modification in order to meet and combat newly evolving patterns that include non-state actors and asymmetric warfare. Defeating the LTTE allowed the Sri Lanka Navy to learn some key lessons in defend the country at sea and these lessons can be very useful to policy makers, academics and practitioners of maritime security.

Key Words: Asymmetric Warfare, Sea Tigers, Sri Lanka Navy, Sea Control,

Maritime Security