



# Towards a Great India

A magazine of the Freedom Team of India

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## Care for India? Then lead India.

It will take at least 1500 high quality leaders to reform India's governance. India can be reformed and get an ethical government, but the best Indians must come together and agree to a common platform, first.

If you wish to lead India as part of a team of high quality leaders, consider joining the Freedom Team.

## Target/ achievement

Year	Number of leaders wanted (excluding observers)	Number of initial FTI members (including observers)
2008	100	38
2009	500	77*
2010	1500	
2011	2500+	

\*It is possible that not all these will join the Team now that there is a subscription fee from 1 September 2009.

**Join the war against corruption and bad policy**

<http://freedomteam.in>

[info@freedomteam.in](mailto:info@freedomteam.in)

## Message from the Team

[The original state of men in nature] **is a state of perfect freedom to choose their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit – within the bounds of the law of nature – without asking leave, or depending upon the will of any other man. – John Locke**

This state of nature, as described by John Locke (above) may be attractive on the surface, but as Locke himself added, it is 'a condition, which, however free, is full of fears and continual dangers'. These dangers, he pointed out, come from our chronic exposure 'to the Invasion of others' and from the corruption and 'viciousness of degenerate men'. The state of nature is thus prone to external threats and criminal tendencies within.

Thomas Hobbes, who had also observed these things, suggested that we need a strong state with a (usually implicit) social contract to preserve our life and liberty. This could take the form of a tribal chieftdom, monarchy, or a modern constitutional democratic republic. Anything but anarchy. Along with Lockean conceptions of democracy and the 1688 Glorious Revolution, these classical liberal ideas have brought unprecedented peace and harmony in the world relative to the mayhem of the past.

India became a liberal democracy in 1950 by adopting these classical liberal ideas in its Constitution. Had Nehruvian socialism not destroyed our liberties so badly, India could by now have been one of the world's wealthiest countries. Fortunately, political liberalism is now making a strong comeback in India, making huge efforts to re-claim its legacy and heritage and take over the mantle of leadership of this great country. Almost everything good about India today comes from its Constitutional liberal roots. Let us celebrate liberalism!

Sadly, there is no liberal political party in India today. But over the past year the Freedom Team has been hard at work, identifying high quality leaders with the aim of taking India to freedom. The first firm steps have been taken.

## FTI is now a legal entity

FTI became a [Trust](#) on 1 July 2009. Mr L.K. Kandpal settled the FTI Trust and has taken up the responsibility of Secretary. Mr Ajay Anand is our Treasurer. FTI's Rules include a [Code of Conduct](#) for members to comply with.

## Outreach program in Indore, July 2009

FTI conducted an outreach program in Indore from 2 to 9 July, led by Shantanu Bhagwat and supported ably by L.K. Kandpal and Ajay Anand. Altogether six FTI members participated. Four reports from Indore are published in this issue.

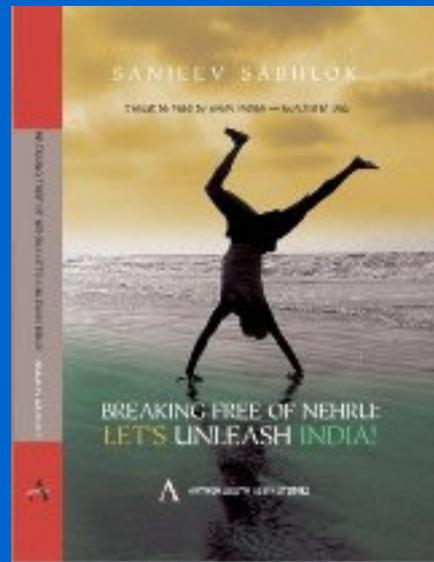
## How to contribute to FTI's efforts:

For opportunities to help us find good leaders, please click [here](#). We are in the process of establishing mechanisms for people to donate small amounts to FTI to extend this effort. We are not yet ready to accept donations, though.

**Join the Freedom Team, or ask your friends to do so. To subscribe to this magazine:** <http://groups.google.com/group/towards-a-great-india>.

## Recommended readings

1. **Capitalism and Freedom** by Milton Friedman
2. **Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal** by Ayn Rand, Nathaniel Branden, Alan Greenspan and Robert Hessen
3. **The Ultimate Resource II** by Julian Simon
4. **Breaking Free of Nehru** by Sanjeev Sabhlok
5. **Economics in One Lesson** by Henry Hazlitt
6. **The Use of Knowledge in Society** by Friedrich A. Hayek
7. **India Unbound** by Gurcharan Das
8. **On Liberty** by John Stuart Mill
9. **The Law** by Frédéric Bastiat
10. **Liberalism** by Ludwig Von Mises
11. **Two Treatises of Government** by John Locke
12. **The Triumph of Liberty** by Jim Powell
13. **Growth Triumphant** by Richard Easterlin
14. **Roots of Freedom** by John W. Danford
15. **Good to Great** by Jim Collins



**Breaking Free of Nehru – Let's Unleash India!**  
The book introduces the idea of a Freedom Team and proposes some policies for such a Team.  
<http://sanjeev.sabhlokcity.com/breakingfree.html>

## Indian institutes that promote liberty

India Policy Institute ([indiapolicy.org](http://indiapolicy.org))  
Centre for Civil Society ([ccs.in](http://ccs.in))  
Liberty Institute ([libertyindia.org](http://libertyindia.org))  
Janaagraha ([janaagraha.org](http://janaagraha.org))

## International institutes that promote liberty

Ludwig von Mises Institute ([mises.org](http://mises.org))  
The Mont Perlin Society ([montpelerin.org](http://montpelerin.org))  
Institute of Economic Affairs ([iea.org.uk](http://iea.org.uk))  
Centre for Independent Studies ([cis.org.au](http://cis.org.au))

## Political parties broadly aligned with policies of liberty

Lok Satta, Jago Party, Bharatiya Democratic Party, Yuva Party, Lokayat

**Note:** FTI does not necessarily endorse all policies of these parties.

## Articles by Team Members

**Only FTI members write for this magazine** (if you are not a member and wish to write on policy issues, please write for [India Policy Update](#)). To encourage freedom of expression, and given resource constraints (all FTI members are volunteers), articles published here are un-edited or lightly edited. Views expressed in these articles may not necessarily represent the views of the Freedom Team.

## Press coverage of the Indore Outreach Effort

Details of the program and press coverage (quite extensive) are provided on FTI's [website](#). A few thumbnails shown here, to whet your appetite:



## 1. Report on the Indore outreach effort - Report 1



Ajay Anand works in BVM Microsystems, Indore, and is the Treasurer of FTI. This is a slightly edited extract of an email Ajay sent to the FTI Google Group after the outreach.

Just a short while ago we concluded the outreach effort. Shantanu completed his last engagement at Swami Vivekanand College on a very high note. Even though from Indore, personally it had been impossible for me and LK to attend all the meetings with Shantanu.

On day one, the first meeting I attended (it was also LK's first meeting) was at the **Indore Management Association**. It consisted of a group of about 35 businessmen, ex-servicemen, and students. The session included four FTI members – Shantanu, LK, myself and Col Anand. As soon as Shantanu began, the audience seemed spell bound with whatever they were seeing and listening. But being business leaders, they posed intricate and questions ranging from why a top-down approach and not a bottom-up approach, why a new party, how long will we take to get started, and, isn't socialism the right choice. One participant was also from Shiv Khera's party which is now non-existent, and showed great interest in joining FTI. A participant was constantly discussing and wanted to know a detailed road-map for FTI. Shantanu answered all the questions to every participant's satisfaction. Several members from this group have been calling Shantanu and would like to discuss further and join FTI.

The next meeting which I attended was on Friday evening at the **Abhyas Mandal**. The audience consisted of the senior citizens with experience of distinguished service to the society and youngsters who were bubbling with enthusiasm. Amongst FTI members, besides Shantanu & LK who was the chief guest, I, Col Anand, and Dr Farooqui attended the meeting. After Shantanu was introduced to the audience, the talk began in "shudh Hindi" without any presentation. It was an interactive session, and, the audience was constantly coming up with questions. At one point the organizers had to request the audience to let Shantanu complete whatever he had to say and then ask the questions which ranged from why are the socialist policies bad, to Shantanu's opinion on the new "Gay law". The end result - a group of at least twenty youngsters voluntarily offered any help that was required by us, and, said you lead and we will follow. Besides that, several other people also showed keen interest in joining us.

Friday's last meeting was at the **Rotary Club** of Indore – Indore Uptown. It was the installation ceremony of the club, and, I, LK and Shantanu reached even before most Rotarians reached. They had especially accommodated this talk by Shantanu in their program. Shantanu was conferred honorary membership of the Rotary. He was only supposed to speak for around 15-20 minutes. And, Shantanu, in this brief talk described well - what he expected from the audience.

Saturday's first meeting was at the **Indian Institute of Management** for which we were joined by Rahul. I, Rahul, Shantanu, LK and Col Anand attended the IIM meeting. It was one of the most intelligent audiences, whose queries were well answered by Shantanu and as and when required by Rahul. Questions posed included: how will the Railways continue to be a common mans transport if it is privatized, or, health care in Liberal societies is the most expensive, and, how does FTI expect that the liberal policies may not cause the health-care to be out of reach of the common man.

After we returned to Indore, LK, Rahul and Shantanu went for a talk – show for **Bhaskar TV** – the theme being Kapil Sibal's recent move on the 10<sup>th</sup> board exam. After that, they attended the meeting with the **I Lead India group** – which also included a great audience.

Sunday Morning – the four of us went for a meeting jointly organized by **YJI, JITO and JES**. It was the first time that the meeting was held jointly. The audience was amazed when Shantanu talked and posed some really good questions. A lot of people from this group have volunteered to join FTI and we should see these requests come up soon.

Sunday afternoon, the most awaited meeting was our visit to the **Simrole village**. We were joined by Col Anand for this meeting. Since Simrole is about 45 minutes drive from Indore, we drove in the same car to discuss some other matters regarding FTI. Simrole was a great experience as we had to interact with the villagers directly, and, we had to justify why we were there and how could we solve their problems. Shantanu, LK, Rahul and Col Anand addressed the village folk. A lot of their representatives came up with their problems and we tried to answer them. One interesting part was that the "Thana In-charge" who had probably been facing a tough time interacting with the villagers and had several

requests to make to them, also got a platform to speak and convey his requests to the village folk. He also ensured that he will be organizing a meeting every Tuesday – when the villagers could come and actually speak with him or any of his team members, and, he would try his level best to solve their problems. LK would be arranging the facilities to teach the interested children computers and he would also be teaching them English for two to three hours every weekend. I would try teaching them computers. The meeting was followed by a lovely lunch with some of the village folk.

The last meeting I attended was a special meeting organized at LK's insistence by Mr Sachin Bhatnagar. Some twenty odd **leading educationists** were part of this meeting. After each one of us introduced ourselves, Shantanu introduced FTI to them. Most of them have whole-heartedly expressed that they will be joining FTI. But, they have ensured that they will be having one such meeting every month.

**What we gained out of Indore outreach:**

- a. It tested mine and LK's ability to work as a team and organize the program, and, hopefully we have been by and large successful in doing so.
- b. It was a platform that brought together more than three FTI members together and they could interact and share their thoughts freely.
- c. It introduced to the people of Indore – the Freedom Team of India
- d. It made us realize that it is not only the internet where we can get the FTI leaders. **There are people around us who think similarly, but, really don't know that there exists a platform like FTI waiting for them.**
- e. It also gave us a platform from where can spread further rapidly.
- f. It gave us the confidence of organizing several such out-reach programs in the future, with at least once every month.
- g. It gives us the confidence to offer – organizing the proposed first FTI convention in Indore.
- h. **We came to know about the existence of an under-current amongst fellow-country men – by way of which they too look forward to such concentrated and sincere efforts to bring about a change.**
- i. We know that once we take this effort full-force and for several months on a continuous basis, we will definitely succeed. And, hence, we should not be looking beyond 2014.

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## 2. Report on the Indore outreach effort - Report 2



Shantanu Bhagwat, a former India Foreign Service officer, currently works in London and is a member of FTI. This article is cobbled from two of Shantanu's posts on his blog and an email on FTI's Google Group

**First post on Shantanu's blog, 2 July 2009:**

Landed just after rains had hit the city...It is cool with a light breeze...could not have asked for better weather...

Spoke to two groups this morning and several conversations on the side... This can be pretty exhausting... I have not spoken so much in a very long time... worrying about a hoarse throat... Wonder how "real" politicians manage to go through an intense election campaign packed with meetings...

Quick impressions:

- \* **The young have an amazing sense of optimism in the future of the country...**
- \* It is very refreshing and energising to start the day by talking to a group that has hope in their eyes and self-confidence to achieve their dreams
- \* The education system (in general) needs to encourage students to ask questions... I wonder if the present set-up stifles natural curiosity
- \* For a lot of people, "Politics" is still something that you read about

## Second post on Shantanu's blog, 9 July.

**8th July:** Have been sleeping an average of 5.5 hrs a day for the last 8 days. Am completely exhausted and drained... **but feeling very positive and hopeful - more than ever before that change can happen**

**7th July:** The last few days feel like an incessant series of phone calls/ meetings/ discussions; I have found myself talking for 14-16 hours every day; Throat finally succumbed on 7th July afternoon; LK pitched in for part of the interactive session at **Vivekananda Institute**.

### Highlights of the visit:

- Interaction with 50-odd villagers in **Simrole** (a rural area on the outskirts of Indore)
- Presentation to students at **IIM-Indore**
- An extempore speech in Hindi at **Abhyas Mandal**, Indore (my Hindi is at its best in the last several years)
- Presentation to employees of **Impetus**
- Interaction with a small group of very active and extremely well-read politically conscious citizens (**Lok Maitri Samooh**)
- A private dinner with a select group of 20 very successful professionals, businessmen and businesswomen in Indore
- A presentation to **Indore Management Association**

### Other notable meetings:

- A combined meeting with **Young Jains** of Indore, **Jain Engineers Society & JITO** - very interactive
- Discussion with students of **Daly College** and 3 other schools
- Discussion at **Kothari Institute** with some bright and energetic students from Indore and nearby towns

**Surprise of the week:** The sarpanch of Simrole Panchayat concluding his speech with my tag line: Jai Hind, Jai Bharat!

**Best Vote of Thanks:** Dushyant Kumar's unforgettable line: Kaun kehta hai Aasman mein surakh nahin ho sakta, Ek paththar to Tabiyat se uchchalo Yaaron ... *Rough translation: Who says you can't make a hole in the sky, how about hurling a stone at it with conviction?*

**Saddest Sight of the last 8 days:** A young girl of 8 or 9 yrs of age, selling balloons at a traffic crossing in Delhi; Time: Midnight.

**Most Inspiring Meeting of the last 8 days:** A brief meeting with a young physically handicapped school teacher who commutes 40kms on his mobike each day to teach children at the government school in Simrole village (He does not have to. The government in MP offers physically handicapped teachers a choice of schools in any city/town they wish). **There is hope.**

### Later, in an email to FTI

Dear All: ... here are my brief impressions ... following the Indore outreach effort.

### Learnings/ First Impressions

- There is a very strong under-current of dissatisfaction in urban India and amongst youth; **The youth are sceptical and will not be swayed unless they to see a serious and credible effort, with high calibre leadership at the helm**

- Our strategic road-map is too high-level and will need to be filled in with a lot more detail (e.g. how and when do we expect to get from 70 to 1500)

- Our policies need to be displayed more prominently on the website – even if they are work in progress

- We will need to have a very clear and credible strategy regarding fund-raising so that potential supporters can believe that they are backing a credible and "likely-to-win" team (this perception is very important, as I am sure all of you realise)

- "Feet on the ground" will be/are critical as we build our organisation. How are we hoping to get supporters (not just leaders)? Why would they join FTI? [Adharshila](#) will help, I feel but it has been

slow so far. Should we be devoting more time to it, I wonder?

- Slides generally do not work well (in most cases). They are not very useful if one needs to rouse an audience; Even if they are used to convey information, brochures/pamphlets may be more helpful.

- A good grasp of the local language is \*essential\*. This helps in breaking the ice and creating a strong emotional connection which may not happen with English (even though the audience may be well educated and fluent in English)

Thanks all – especially to Ajay and LK without whose support and effort, this would have remained a pipe dream. I am also truly grateful to everyone who contributed and supported in whatever way they could.

### 3. Report on the Indore outreach effort - Report 3



L.K. Kandpal, Principal of New Digamber Public School, Indore is Secretary of the FTI Trust. This is a slightly edited version of an email from Mr. Kandpal to the FTI Google Group.

This was FTI's first-hand experience. The response was positive. People were supportive and appreciative of the move. **They shared that many of them had been thinking of doing similar things.** We felt that an under-current was there. Most of the participants from all age groups **agreed that there was a need for change but they were unsure how it could be brought about.**

Our efforts can bear better fruits if we can create a brand for FTI. FTI should show a united front in a group of 8 to 10 for such out-reach activities. That creates an impact. We should now start deliberating on the next out-reach strategy. We can preferably target North East, IITs, IIMs and other medical and professional colleges.

#### Concerns raised by audiences

- Multilingual business cards and brochures [i.e. not just in English].
- No road map. Most of the people were not clear about what after more members join - their responsibility - what after 1500 members? How to enrol 1500 members, how to ascertain the suitability of those joining, how many of them do possess the leadership quality, how many keen to contest elections, any strategy stepwise, etc.
- Not sure about the role particularly the younger lots. They asked what about their bread butter if they join FTI.
- Lack of clarity about the term classical liberalism - some matured citizens wanted to know whether it was confined to economics. They were skeptical as to how equality of opportunity can be dreamt of in absence of yawning gap between various classes/castes prevalent in the existing society.
- Some of the audience shared their experiences that in the past such efforts have been made but they fizzled out. In the beginning all parties come out with attractive ideology/programs but eventually all political leaders become corrupt when they are inebriated by power. It was difficult to convince them though we made an effort that the systems and mechanisms created by FTI are so strong that corrupt people would have no place in our organization.
- Some of them were keen to know whether we have a plan to be registered as a political party [**Note by editor:** FTI is a not-for-profit Trust, not a political party. However, FTI members are keenly interested in a political movement once sufficient number of them assemble].
- Implementation - some members observed that merely good policies were not guarantee of good governance. They were apprehensive as to how we are going to implement these policies when at all implementation level there is corruption.

#### Conclusion

It is a small beginning but a lot needs to be done.

## 4. Why are the capitalists a hated lot?



L.K. Kandpal, Principal of New Digamber Public School, Indore, is Secretary of the FTI Trust.

There is a misconception in the society that capitalists exploit the poor. They are equated with the industrialists and businessmen, who lead a luxurious life at the cost of the poor. They are blamed for the poverty and other backwardness in the society. There cannot be greater fallacy than this. Imagine of a situation when there are no capitalists. Do we, in that case, assume that the entire poverty and backwardness will be eradicated? I think, this kind of image has been created by some misguided social thinkers, who claim to be the well wishers of the poor.

### **Power equation in the society**

Human beings are a part of nature, where there seems a struggle for supremacy. This struggle is visible among all species both within and with other species. This is how nature perhaps maintains balance. This struggle is essential for our own better and higher skills. Can we visualize a stage when we all take the things for granted? So this struggle is in a way a desire to excel. All our advancement is the result of this thirst for excellence or supremacy. Interestingly, this struggle for survival is also based on the principle of coexistence even in the realm of nature. There seems to be an inherent law of nature, which guides and controls this entire phenomenon. So while there is struggle, there is coexistence as well. When we accept this struggle in nature, we should also accept that there will be struggle and competition in the society. In a way, the concept of equality is myth. There will always be difference- of opinion- of intelligence-of skills and of status. Also, there will be some of us who are more enterprising than others. To me, the capitalists are enterprising persons.

### **Money vs. Wealth and Capital**

Money is a medium of exchange for any kind of payment for trade between two or more parties. When money or currency came in circulation has not been documented but right from beginning, with the advent of human group, there was a kind of tacit understanding among themselves for exchange of some service or commodity. This may be the beginning of the barter and exchange system. The development took further turn when some silver, bronze, copper, gold etc. was used as currency for exchange. Bank notes are known to come in to circulation in Europe in 1661.

As stated earlier, when there is competition, there is enterprise. I also believe that the capitalists are the men and women of enterprise. It means the enterprise creates wealth and prosperity in an atmosphere of competition and competence. As there are human differences in terms of our ability and capability, there shall always be a gap in the social status of the people. The more intelligent, hardworking and enterprising we are, the more prosperous we shall be. As we all cannot become Shakespeare or Einstein, we all cannot become capitalists. We need gift, skill and diligence for achieving any thing in life. Otherwise, we shall remain poor in a particular field.

### **Capitalism and Freedom**

When we analyse critically, we shall find that capitalism strongly supports human freedom and enterprise. It believes in equality of opportunity to all. It believes that we all are capable of enriching the society in our own way. What we need is a competitive environment and a safe and secure society for our talents to flourish.

Capitalism supports the idea that the means of production, material, land and tools amounts to the overall capital, to which every individual can have access and ownership according to his/her enterprising skills. We need the entrepreneurs who can handle these resources efficiently and bring more wealth. As an investor, he/she has every right to earn profit and to distribute the profit to those who have worked for him/her. He/she can increase production and profit depending on his own resourcefulness. Similarly, he/she might like to employ the workforce of his choice to earn maximum profit.

### **Industrialists and Workers**

As discussed above, there seems a misunderstanding that industrialists exploit the poor working class. This may be true to some extent but this is true in all aspects of human life. There is a kind of exploitation everywhere in order to survive. This survival instinct is common in all species and as stated above, it is a healthy sign for richer growth.

The relationship between industrialists and workers is somewhat sweet n sour. The suspicion can be

removed if there is transparency and ethical governance. The relationship should be defined through a mutually agreeable contract. In this scheme of things, every individual has the opportunity to show his/her skills. There is freedom to excel. May be, some of the workers excel as great industrialists. In fact, there are many instances, where ordinary workers have risen to become big industrialists.

### **Ethics and capitalism**

There is a common belief that capitalists are unethical people. To the contrary, they are the people who have highest integrity. There are unethical people in every field. Hence, we cannot altogether deny that some of the capitalists may follow an unethical approach in fulfilling their objectives. But, this is applicable to all of us. I think, we all are selfish and greedy if opportunity is given we all are endowed with a kind of wealth we all are endowed with a kind of wealth. What is needed is strict guidelines and agreement, which is well defined. Human nature is fickle and it needs some checks and balances in terms of systems, which cannot be tampered with.

### **To sum up**

We all are endowed with a kind of wealth. We need to invest it for better productivity. Let us all be good entrepreneurs and active participants in the generation of wealth. We all can contribute in our own way. By enriching our human capital only, we can create a richer society to live in.

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## 5. Report on the Indore outreach effort - Report 4



Rahul Pandit, a Director in SITI Corporation, is a member of FTI. This is the unedited email Rahul sent to the FTI Google Group.

It gives me pleasure to write my first-hand experience during Out-reach effort. Before I proceed further; would like to convey my gratitude to Shantanu to let me participate in the event actively. It was great learning for me. Although my visit was for only two days, I have enough material to quench your curiosity.

At **IIM-Indore**, It was Shantanu's 3rd day and my first visit at out-reach. We landed somewhat behind schedule; were excited to find about 70 students of mostly fresh batch at the seminar hall eager to listen to Shantanu. LK and Ajay were also present. Post introductions - While Shantanu was at helm-of-affairs I noticed every student paying utmost attention to Shantanu's slides. Soon post-presentation the anxious students started pouring in questions such as 1) How we are different 2) How would we be successful while there were many such initiatives which died eventually 3) Why liberal , how does it help country's economy 4) Why new political group. All-in-all questions were aptly posed; the excellence more than what we expected from Fresh Grads.

We left the campus and proceeded towards next meeting. While on way, we felt that limiting our outreach initiative to onboard 1500 MP level candidates would not be a best strategy. We have to think of leaders of assembly constituency level too. After all the developments in the assembly level needs a co-ordination from local MLA. Having understood this we amended our pitch stating the Outreach attempt was to congregate 1500 leaders initially followed by further penetrated search for Legislative Assembly leaders. *[Note by Editor: Candidates who are either not nominated in parliamentary elections or fail to get elected, could contest assembly elections. Also, after the momentum of the first round of parliamentary elections, it should be easier to find many more good leaders for assembly elections. Either way, the main thing is to find 1500 leaders first!]*

We were given a warm welcome by **iLead India Group**. As Shantanu cruised thru his slides many eyebrows raised. We faced the same set of questions during Q&A. Audience seemed well involved and was looking forward to be associated with FTI. With this we wrapped up our day 3 in a positive mood.

On day 4 we met the eminent members of **Young Jains** of Indore (YJI ), **Jain International Trade Organization** (JITO) and **Jain Engineers Society** (JES). Shantanu was given a traditional welcome. This was a versatile group of members seemed exited about the initiative. They wanted to understand our road map and training initiatives for proposed parliamentarians. It appeared that many had desire to do something similar but only lacked a platform. We are hoping that many from this group would join us. We were also asked as to how FTI would maintain harmony in such a large group

Following this we visited **Simrole village**. LK took initial lead and addressed the gathering of 50 Villagers. Following this rest of us did short speech (Shantanu being first). The audience comprised of attentive Children, Youth, elderly. We discovered that villagers were facing Water inadequacy problem. Youth seemed to be interested in more avenues of employment. School children wanted

career guidance, computer literacy, training for fluent English speaking and sports infrastructure.

Our final meeting on Day 4 was with **Lok Maitri Samooh** members. This appeared to be a small group of senior socialists and came across knowledgeable as far as political history is concerned. We had limited opportunity to convey our thoughts they seemed extremely cold to our vision and thought process. Time was not in our favor. We also realized that we should have senior members in our group to speak the same wavelength to set warmth in the discussion. One of their members criticized for printing FTI cards in English. We learnt that we should have distributable material in printed in regional and Hindi languages too.

We did come across few teething problems but were not prominent enough which could disallow a course correction.

#### **Few more things we learnt from Indore outreach.**

- 1) We were subject to audience with extreme thought processes. Typically people who may not subscribe to Liberal approach and lack trust on our initiative. We certainly need a strong vocal team with versatility to address and create warmth in our discussions for subsequent meetings.
- 2) We need to have the catalogues and cards printed in local language and Hindi besides English.
- 3) We need to reach out villages and rural crowd equally. I strongly feel we should talk about choosing corporation level leaders from rural areas thru voting system. We will have to device a process for the same. (Let's debate on this).
- 4) We need lot more preparedness in terms of future road map to success.
- 5) The effort to reach out masses (Vote Bank) would be much more intense than leadership out-reach. Limited monthly/quarterly meetings would not help us win hearts of people.
- 6) FTI clearly needs to intensify its efforts on out-reach for the 1500 goal and get the political party tag followed by extensive mass-reach.
- 7) We need few amendments on Shantanu's slides and discourse i.e. it should not merely quote recent incidences (such as Mumbai Blasts) as reason for FTI effort. It would be much better if we talk more on potential our country has/had and wasn't able to capitalize due to poor/ill governance. While in discourse we need to orchestrate a process which would help detection of corruption within FTI members.
- 8) We will have to allocate 30-45 mins for Q & A. We had to leave many questions answered due to dearth of time which can risk us loosing few high-quality individuals. We need to have an hour gap between meetings to accommodate pulled meetings and thus avoid pushing of scheduled subsequent meetings.

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## 6. Educating our children: A free market in schools



Sanjeev Sabhlok, PhD, former member of the Indian Administrative Service, currently works as a public servant in Australia. This article was published in the July 2009 issue of *Freedom First*.

In the May 2009 issue of *Freedom First* I suggested that in addition to ensuring defence, internal security and justice, the free society must commit to equality of opportunity (EO). Delivering EO requires removing discriminatory obstacles to achieving public office, ensuring a good universal school education system, and guaranteeing a social minimum.

#### **School education as a key element of equal opportunity**

No child's future should be jeopardized because its parents happen to be poor. We must guarantee good school education (including vocational training, where appropriate) to all children who want to study to year 12 (or age 18). Twelve years of education has now become a minimum given the complexity of technology that must be mastered in order to become a productive member of society. Such education will generate an enormous economic dividend for India through positive externalities including social capital formation.

In this article I outline how we can successfully deliver high quality school education at a relatively modest cost to the taxpayer (details are available in my book, *Breaking Free of Nehru*, Anthem Press, 2008).

### **A fully privatised school system**

Children from rural areas or slums cannot even dream of equal opportunity today. These luckless children are destined for a lifetime of failure by the inefficiencies and corruption entrenched in our government school sector. The best these children can hope for is to get some patchy education in government schools where such schools exist (many government schools are found only on paper, or teachers are paid without attending school).

But why does a government need to operate schools? Managing a school is a hands-on exercise, much like managing a business, and governments are terrible at managing anything that must deliver value. Government officials and teachers have little or no incentive to deliver world-class education at the lowest possible cost. In comparison, the private sector can only survive if it delivers value for money. Therefore, parents who can afford it, prefer to send their children to private schools. Governments are also unusually soft on their own failures. A Director of School Education in a state government will demand stringent standards from private schools even as he ignores the shoddy education provided by the government's own schools. Governments should therefore not directly manage schools. However, they could regulate school standards, noting that self-regulation by a body of experts is the preferred way for such a task.

As a first step, our governments should stop building, owning, and maintaining schools. That would include an end to the appointment of lakhs of school teachers, an activity that is a source of great corruption and favouritism. School assets (bundled with a long-term lease on the school's land) should be auctioned to educational consortiums that are at least partially owned by local teachers and residents. I have suggested a transitional mechanism for this in my book that will protect existing teachers.

This will immediately ensure that the incentives of school managers are better aligned to the needs of the local community. Further, the lands and buildings belonging to schools will also be much better maintained and utilised.

### **Customised vouchers for each child**

Privatisation is only the first part of this model. Parental choice is the other part. School education vouchers would be issued by the government for each child and mailed out to parents. Children of poor parents would be issued high-value vouchers. Rich parents will not get any vouchers. The lower economic classes may get vouchers, depending on how much it costs to deliver good education. All parents would thus be empowered to send their children to almost any school they want to. All they would need to do is to pay a top-up amount over and above the value of the voucher. Under the current model, government schools receive funds unrelated to the size or nature of their enrolment(s) or educational outcome(s). In the new model, they would get money based on a reimbursement of vouchers. They would therefore need to enrol as many children as they can. They will have to go out and literally beg the poorer parents – such as the parents of child labourers – to send their children to school. Where necessary, schools would provide a breakfast for these children: anything to ensure that parents agree to send their children to school. Enrolment rates would therefore shoot through the roof.

Second, schools would need to ensure that the children they have enrolled achieve the required educational standards. Only then will they be able to invoice the government against these vouchers. The more the number of children these schools enrol and pass out at an agreed, independently tested standard, the more the money they will receive.

Note that through high-value vouchers for poor parents, schools in economically backward areas will be able to afford high salaries for teachers and potentially attract even better teachers than schools in wealthy urban areas. Good schools would thus emerge in rural areas and slums for the first time in India's history. This would dramatically increase both the quality of education and competition in the school market. Very little central planning or quality control will be needed as the market will sort out good schools from the bad. (A self-regulating body of school experts would help.) Above all, the preferences of parents in selecting the right school for their children will be honoured, and who can be a greater well wisher of a child than its parents?

### **Raising money for the vouchers**

It is true that defence, police, and justice must take first priority for any government. However,

universal high quality school education must receive a high priority as well. The system outlined above will not cost too much because the current funds allocated to tertiary education would be shifted entirely to school education. In the tertiary education sector, students would be asked to pay their fees through loans issued by the government (I'll talk more about this topic in a separate article). Second, funds needed beyond that could be raised through capital markets as a long-term investment loan. This should be easy, given that there is nothing in any society that yields higher returns on investment than good school education. Third, schools will be permitted to use their land and buildings for commercial purposes after school hours, thus using their assets more productively and keeping the fees in check.

A free market in schools of the sort described above is guaranteed to deliver high quality education – as guaranteed to succeed as India's current socialist method is guaranteed to fail. There is an open and shut case for change.

### **Freedom Team of India**

Sadly, this simple and effective model will remain a pipedream since ruling politicians in India currently use the school education system almost purely to 'mint money' for themselves. Education is simply not their goal. Money making is. To implement such a system liberals will need a mandate from the people of India to form an ethical, liberal government. The Freedom Team of India (<http://freedomteam.in>) is pushing ahead in that direction. I would encourage you to find out more about the Team.

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## **FTI's Code of Conduct**

The first version of the Code of Conduct of the Freedom Team is being published here for your information and comment. This Code will be reviewed in the coming months. The disciplinary rules are linked [here](#).

### **4.1 Concepts underpinning the Code of Conduct**

4.1.1 FTI believes that the Indian people are entitled to the highest standards of integrity from their elected representatives. Their representatives must act with integrity, fairness, accountability, responsibility, and with due regard to the public interest. Public office is a public trust, and not a private fiefdom. Since members of FTI aspire to public office through elections, they must ensure that their conduct is, at all times, both in fact and in appearance, in accordance with the highest standards of integrity and good citizenship prescribed by this Code of Conduct.

4.1.2 FTI will vouchsafe the integrity of its members who contest elections to the people of India that its members to the extent that (a) they meet the requirements of this Code and (b) FTI has processes in place to investigate and take action in relation to any breach of this Code.

4.1.3 FTI commits that should any of its members fail to meet the standards specified in this Code of Conduct, any citizen of India can lodge a complaint with FTI at discipline AT freedomteam. in and FTI's Disciplinary Committee will cause an investigation of the matter promptly as per a process specified elsewhere in these rules.

4.1.4 FTI notes that the conduct of an FTI member prior to joining FTI will not be scrutinised by FTI to the same extent as conduct after joining FTI. However, such conduct may have a bearing on two things, to ensure that FTI's reputation is kept in tact:

4.1.4a Such conduct would be considered by FTI before accepting a person as a member of FTI. FTI members are expected to disclose upfront in a legally valid document, upon applying to join FTI, whether there is anything (that they are aware of) that FTI should know regarding their past which could adversely impact FTI's reputation. This would include disclosure of past or pending criminal cases, if any. Since it is possible that some such cases may have been lodged falsely against a member, FTI retains the discretion to exercise its own judgement about such matters.

4.1.4b Decisions of the Disciplinary Committee in regard to any complaint received, or on a matter initiated *suo moto* by FTI.

4.1.5 Members of FTI shall ensure at all times that their personal conduct is consistent with the requirements of the reputation and integrity of FTI.

### **4.2 Compliance with key principles**

4.2.1 *Integrity*. FTI members commit to comply with the highest standards of personal integrity.

4.2.1a They (FTI members) commit to acting honestly and reasonably, with due consideration of consequences. This includes strict honesty in public dealings, and rules out any corrupt

activities or illegal actions such as tax evasion (e.g. dealing with black money). The latter would include not providing (or having provided) active support to political parties which collect and use black money. Such active support would include things like directly dealing with election campaigns of such parties.

4.2.1b They commit to ensuring that they do not come under any undue financial or other obligation to individuals or organisations and are able to independently exercise their judgement as citizens and members of FTI.

4.2.1c They commit to carefully watching the pecuniary and other private interests of their immediate family members, and advising FTI about potential conflict or apparent conflict of interest should any such situation arise.

4.2.2 *Compliance with the laws of India.* Members of FTI commit to adhering to the Constitution of India in all its detail, despite differences of opinion with some of the provisions of the Constitution, and upholding the laws of India at all times. FTI members would be able to break a particular law, should they choose to do so, but only by making the relevant authorities fully aware of their deliberate non-compliance with the law. No law of India will be broken in secret by any FTI member. Breaking the law to lodge a protest with the authorities is a kind of civil disobedience and would need authorisation by FTI. Members of FTI could face immediate expelled for breaking *any* law of the land.

4.2.3 *Decency.* FTI members commit to a level of circumspection and moderation in their actions commensurate with public behaviour commonly expected of good citizens.

4.2.4 *Responsibility.* FTI members commit to speak and act as responsible citizens at all times, aware that they are individually accountable for their personal acts. Self-restraint must be the hallmark of an FTI member.

4.2.5 *Freedom of expression:* FTI members have unfettered freedom of expression including expressing differences of opinion on various draft policies of FTI. However, FTI members will endeavour to abide with, in their public statements representing FTI, the agreed policy positions of FTI *after* these are formally agreed (including being electronically signed individually) by a Convention comprising at least 1500 FTI members.

4.2.6 *Being mindful of FTI's reputation at all times.* FTI members commit to taking responsibility to ensure the reputation and standards guaranteed by FTI to the people of India.

4.2.7 *Public scrutiny.* Members of FTI commit to a higher level of public scrutiny and explanation than an ordinary citizen.

4.2.8 *Organisational objectives.* Members of FTI commit to meeting the obligations set out in this Code of Conduct and other rules and procedures of FTI. Members commit to making a contribution of their personal time and energy to FTI and to learning about good policy.

4.2.9 *Other matters.* Members of FTI shall deal with foreign agencies including civil society organisations with great caution and exercise care that India's national interests, foreign policy interests or national security is never compromised.

### **4.3 Standards to be committed to before contesting elections**

4.3.1 While this sub-section of these Rules is not operational at the moment, it is included as guidance to potential new members. In the future, members of FTI may contest elections, and in doing so may wish to use FTI as an accreditation agency. For FTI to allow its logo and brand to be used by any candidate during elections, members of FTI will need to commit to higher levels of scrutiny that would include things of the sort indicated below:

4.3.1a Members will need to declare in a legally valid document and register all their *relevant* personal assets and pecuniary interests including sources of income, publicly.

4.3.1b They will need to declare in a legally valid document and register all the *relevant* assets and pecuniary interests including sources of income of the immediate members of their families with the Board of FTI. This will not be made public.

4.3.1c They will need to notify the Board of FTI of any significant change in any of these interests within fourteen days of the change occurring. Failure to declare or register a relevant and substantive personal interest with FTI would constitute a serious breach of this Code of Conduct.

4.3.2 If elected to a public office, they will also need to register with the Board of FTI any personal interests including assets held by them in companies/businesses which could give rise to a conflict with their potential public duties. This will include, where relevant, registering such interests of the

directorships of public or private companies and businesses that could be even remotely construed to create a conflict of interest in the discharge of their potential duties. Further, such members will need to divest themselves of investments and other interests in any public or private company or business other than public provident funds or publicly listed managed funds or trust arrangements where the investments are broadly diversified and the member has no influence over investment decisions of the fund or trust, and the fund or trust does not invest to any significant extent in a business sector that could give rise to a conflict of interest with the member's public duties, if any. The principle here is of good judgement and each case will be considered on its merit to ensure that FTI members who are elected to public office are *seen* to be above board, as well as being above board.

#### 4.4 Standard Operating Procedure

This procedure is to be followed by FTI members, observers, partners, and general supporters in relation to the Code of Conduct:

##### 4.4.1 Raise Your Voice

You have an obligation to raise integrity/ ethical/ moral concerns about any FTI member. If you have a concern about any member's compliance with FTI Code of Conduct, you have a responsibility to raise that concern. Raising a Code of Conduct concern protects the FTI and will help India ensure that only good leaders step forward to lead it.

*Raise concerns early:* The longer you wait to address a concern, the worse it may become.

*You may remain anonymous if you like:* However, FTI will form its own judgement on whether a complaint is genuine or not if an anonymous complaint is received. Identifying yourself will help to find relevant evidence and FTI will also be able to follow up with you and provide feedback.

*Confidentiality is respected:* Your identity and the information you provide will be shared only on a "need-to-know" basis with those responsible for resolving the concern.

*Retaliation violates FTI policy:* FTI forbids retaliation against anyone for raising or helping to address a Code of Conduct concern. Retaliation is grounds for discipline up to and including dismissal.

##### 4.4.2 How to Raise a Code of Conduct concern

- Write to discipline AT [freedomteam.in](mailto:freedomteam.in)
- Send an email to any FTI Director (see list on the FTI website)
- Send an email to any member of the FTI Disciplinary Committee (see Attachment A)

##### 4.4.3 What happens when the concern is raised?

The Disciplinary Committee of FTI looks at the concern and takes action according to the FTI Disciplinary Rules.

## Please pass this along!

Let's join hands to break the cycle of apathy among educated Indians.

**Supporting FTI is simple:** Just pass on this magazine to all your friends and relatives in India so they can help us find the leaders India needs.

Surely, India has 1500 leaders who believe in freedom!



**Photographs from Simrole Village** (52 photos are available on [FTI's website](http://freedomteam.in))

