

# The Freedom Team of India\* invites you to lead India to freedom

A movement to defend our freedoms and bring good governance to India

## We are committed to:

### Equal freedom

- Freedom of thought and action, subject to each citizen being accountable

### Equality of opportunity

- Efficient delivery (public or private) of primary and secondary education and basic healthcare
- Help eliminate poverty
- Absence of discrimination

### A strong, enabling government

- Effective justice and law enforcement
- Infrastructure for sustainable economic growth
- Good governance; no corruption

### One India

- Responsible, vigilant, and tolerant society
- A strong sense of nationhood and pride in India



## Contents

The Heaven of Freedom	2
An open Letter	2
Our core beliefs and vision	3
About us	5
A journey for change	6
Who can join?	7
What can you do?	8

<http://www.freedomteam.in>

\* The Freedom Team of India (FTI) is a forum for policy, strategy, and leadership development to promote our freedom. FTI members are committed to contesting elections in India under the banner of freedom.

## The Heaven of Freedom



*Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;  
 Where knowledge is free;  
 Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow  
 domestic walls;  
 Where words come out from the depth of truth;  
 Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;  
 Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary  
 desert sand of dead habit;  
 Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and  
 action—  
 Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.*  
*Rabindranath Tagore (Gitanjali)*

## An open letter to every Indian citizen Wanted Citizen-Leaders!

Dear Fellow Citizen-Leader:

India's governance shows no sign of improving, stumbling from one crisis to another. Our security is threatened, our economic growth stumbles every few years, we have terrible infrastructure, and one of the lowest standard of living in the world.

The Freedom Team of India is a team of leaders who identify with freedom and everything it implies, such as:

- Enforcement of rule of law
- Law and order, and equal justice
- Accountable government
- Equal opportunity for all
- Tolerance of all but pandering to none
- Prosperity through free enterprise and minimal regulation

The **system of natural liberty** we want to see in India is radically different from the socialist form of governance that has been imposed on India since 1947. That model is seriously flawed, damaging all incentives for excellence. It has never worked anywhere. It is time to change it. Now.

The Freedom Team is looking for leaders to come together to lead India to freedom. We want leaders with impeccable integrity and commitment to liberty; ready to lead the nation from the front. FTI is not a political party. So it doesn't matter if you are already a member of a political party; you can join us if you believe in these ideas.

This booklet is an invitation to leaders. If, upon reading this, you are convinced about the goals and processes of the Team, please join us. We look forward to working with you to herald a truly free and great India.

*The Freedom Team, 26 January 2009*



## Our core beliefs and vision

At the outset, it is worth noting that everything in this document is subject to change and improvement as more leaders join us. Therefore the language proposed in this document is not 'final'.

It is important that the Team shares similar core beliefs. For instance, what does freedom mean? What is our vision for India? Outlined below are some of our beliefs. We begin with our proposed vision for India.

### A proposed vision for India:

**An India where everyone is guaranteed equal opportunity and equal dignity, and has the freedom to pursue his or her own happiness under an accountable and participative government.**

#### **An India where everyone:**

"Everyone" will really mean *everyone*, every citizen. All citizens will truly be able to seek justice under the laws of the land. The right to life and liberty (including property) will be guaranteed to each citizen.

#### **is guaranteed equal opportunity and equal dignity:**

FTI will strive towards a government which does not use caste, sex, physical handicap, economic status, or any other categorisation to discriminate between citizens. This also means not pandering to any particular group. No atrocities from anyone or any group will be tolerated.

#### **and has the freedom to pursue his or her own happiness:**

The dreams, aspirations and goals of each individual are different and it is their fundamental right to define these themselves, subject to being accountable for their actions. The truly representative and just government FTI seeks will provide an environment for each individual to achieve his or her aspirations through talent and hard work. This also means not interfering gratuitously or paternalistically. The government will restrict itself to the defence of the realm, to the maintenance of law and order, and the provision of some commons.

#### **under an accountable:**

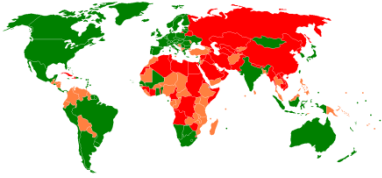
Freedom is exactly balanced by accountability. A government must be fully answerable to all citizens. Corruption is rampant in India because our governance system lacks virtually any accountability. Recruitment to government service, payment, and promotion, must be based on merit and accountability. Market based processes in government would be used to ensure that citizens can influence the level of provision of services and the appropriate payment for this service, through their demand.

#### **and participative government.**

We believe that each citizen is inherently honest, upright and will care for the less privileged members of its society if the government does its designated job and then gets out of the way.

## Our core beliefs and vision

Are we truly free, even though the Freedom map says so?



Paternalism by government functionaries demeans citizens and unravels the social contract under which the government is a **servant**, the citizen the **master**. The level of participation in government needs to be increased at all levels, including local. The government's responsibility is to create a framework of just laws and ensure that such laws are implemented fairly and uniformly. The citizen should influence all decisions to the extent possible.

### A further exploration of these ideas

#### *Maximising equal freedom subject to accountability*

All of us aspire to live our life in our own way, based on our values and beliefs. We desire to be free of needless impositions and barriers imposed on our liberty.

And so, we come together as a nation to ensure that our life and liberty are defended. The goal of a society must be to maximise our equal individual freedoms subject to accountability. This means we must be free to choose subject to our being accountable. Freedom includes all freedoms of action, including the freedom of expression. This also includes the defence of our property rights, which is necessarily a part of us. The system of freedom is a system for justice. A free society must ensure our ability to seek redress of injury or injustice. Free (but accountable) markets are another part of the system of freedom.

Equal freedom means equal opportunity. Not only must our individual dignity be equally protected, the criminal and civil laws must apply uniformly to every citizen. Equality of opportunity also means that there cannot be discriminations, either 'positive' or 'negative' in favour of any citizen without personal merit being at stake.

#### *Delivering equal freedom and justice*

To deliver equal freedom and justice, we need strong institutions of governance and justice. To provide good governance without corruption, the Freedom Team will take an evidence-based approach to policy. We aim to adopt world-best practices and policies while remaining open to continuous review and improvement.

#### *Examples of policy implications*

Overarching objective

- Freedom of thought and action with accountability

Strong, enabling government

- Vigilant protection of our external borders
- Effective and efficient law and order within our borders
- An uniform and efficient justice system
- Infrastructure for sustainable economic growth

Equality of opportunity

- Help eliminate poverty
- A goal of universal primary and secondary education, delivered through private channels
- Provision of basic healthcare and health insurance
- Abolition of reservations and favours to religious groups

## About us

<http://www.freedomteam.in/aboutus.html>



We are a group of ordinary Indians who believe that India can become a land which is proudly honest, immensely prosperous: a land of opportunity. But our governance has deeply entrenched corruption. Due to the lack of good governance and the continuing apathy of many of our educated citizens, India is composed of islands of plenty surrounded by poverty and penury. We believe that India has the potential to become a global leader if people of impeccable integrity can come together on a common platform and work to take India to glorious heights of freedom.

There are many people like us, disillusioned and frustrated with the inefficient and inadequate governance systems of India. We believe that, if given a platform, they would dedicate their energies to the task of re-building India in the image of a modern, prosperous and just society.

We have named this movement as “Freedom Team of India”.

Some of you may well ask – why ‘freedom’, as India is already a free country? Yes, India is free from its colonial masters, but that only means that we are an independent nation. Freedom, we believe, means the capacity to pursue our ambitions and happiness to the best of our abilities, without being encumbered by unjust rules, even as we remain fully accountable for all our actions. It implies creating a society where everyone can live with self-respect and dignity, and can achieve to their fullest potential. It is also a state where all the citizens are equal stakeholders in determining the rules of society. Further, freedom cannot exist amidst ignorance, illiteracy, and penury, and so these must be banished. We have frittered away our independence and failed to convert it into an opportunity to achieve freedom.

Our emphasis is on the word “team” because all members in this group are equal partners in the design and delivery of its activities and governance, and work as a close-knit team, each member respecting and considering others’ opinions. We have no elected ‘leadership team’ for everyone on FTI is a leader. There are no ‘presidents’ or ‘general secretaries’ on this team. The formal leader of the team will be elected once at least 1,500 members have joined and agreed to a detailed plan of action. In other words, this effort is not about us. It is about a Great India. We are merely citizens taking responsibility for our country.

We believe that politics is a field for the attainment of the highest faculties of man – including vision, compassion, knowledge, and the ability to deliver. It is also a noble vocation, to which the best people of the country should aspire. Politics, in a free nation, is not the haven for the corrupt and shameless as it has currently become in India through our neglect. To change this image of politics, YOU will have to come forward! We are unable to offer you a seat as a spectator, whereby you can complain and blame others but do nothing. You have to enter the ring and fight! All people with commitment to India’s freedom and prosperity should come together. The time for watching from the sidelines is long past.

## A journey for change

### 1,500 leaders wanted

Even the biggest event has to start from an idea. The idea here is to bring together at least 1,500 outstanding leaders – individuals of unimpeachable integrity and sound liberal thinking – who are willing to lead and contest elections in the coming years.

### Why 1,500?

We believe that the number of 1,500 leaders mark a good starting point for action. It will mean we have roughly three outstanding leaders for each of India's 550 parliamentary constituencies. For each constituency, if one of the leaders can not contest for unavoidable reasons, then two others will be ready to stand up. If (and this has to be faced as part of the reality of Indian elections) the second one is killed, then the third will stand up.

Through repeatedly offering good leaders to Indian voters to choose from in each election, we believe that good governments will begin to be formed at the national level. Those leaders who did not get to contest the parliamentary elections will contest the state elections, and the leadership team continuously enhanced.

**It is our hope that the core group of 1,500 good leaders will be relatively easy to find among our billion plus population.** The Freedom Team also believes that women should form half our membership, but we do not believe in a system of quotas either within or outside this group.

However, good leaders do not fall from the sky. It won't do to sit by and wait for leaders who will liberate us from our ills to arise spontaneously. We also have to stop criticising and blaming our existing politicians who are doing the best they can given that good competent people refuse to lead.

**The only solution is for each of us to take up the leadership challenge.** This has to be based on a movement where ordinary citizens decide to rise to new heights and take up leadership roles. No one else exists. You must lead India to greatness.

About thirty leaders of high calibre have already joined. A few high calibre observers have also joined, to provide advice. If you believe that you can lead India, if you wish to reform and transform India, do consider joining the Freedom Team today. Right now! The sooner 1,500 people commit to a shared action plan, the sooner the reform of India can begin.

You do not have to leave your existing group or political party: please continue with it. But you should also join the Freedom Team if you believe in its underlying ideas. If you don't like being part of this team, please start your own team. Let a million flowers bloom. But **do something**. Do not wait for India to change on its own, which will never happen. This is our only plea: you should take on your responsibility as a citizen.



*To facilitate the coming together of leaders, an initial electronic platform has been established on [www.freedomteam.in](http://www.freedomteam.in) at: <http://freedomteam.in/blog/content/381>*





To join the Freedom Team of India,  
please go to:  
<http://freedomteam.in/>

Also have a look at:  
<http://freedomteam.in/mag/>

## Who can join?

Any Indian citizen (or Overseas Indian Citizen committed to returning to India and regain his/her citizenship under appropriate circumstances) can apply to join the Freedom Team of India, subject to the following criteria:

### Membership criteria

- You must be committed to contesting parliamentary and state elections (as allocated) and promote the policies of freedom
- You must have impeccable ethical standards which are grounded in freedom and liberal values
- You must be wholly committed to the advancement of freedom and fully understand the philosophy and logic of freedom. The group would follow the highest standards of internal democratic decision-making and public disclosure of all sources of its funding and expenditures.
- You must be a clear, cogent thinker and be able to formulate clear-headed policy on complex issues, consistent with the logic of freedom.
- You must be capable of dealing with challenging problems, if you were to assume future ministerial responsibilities, without panicking and opting for shortcuts or politically expedient solutions.
- You must be at least a Level 4, if not Level 5, leaders: leaders who are very bright but humble enough to listen to others and assimilate and build on their feedback.
- You must be willing to admit mistakes, and willing to change your mind on the basis of new evidence.
- You must be a great team player, willing to work in any capacity, recognising that groups or teams comprising of expert individuals are generally wiser than isolated geniuses no matter how brilliant.
- You must be willing to consult with citizens widely on all policy issues.
- You need not be perfect (no one is), but you must be transparent about yourself and willing to expose your thinking and practices for public scrutiny.
- You must have an unwavering determination to overcome the greatest adversity in order to achieve your and the team's goals.

More details are available at: <http://freedomteam.in/whoshouldjoin.html>

Your request to join will be vetted by the Team. You may be, for instance, asked to furnish broad details of your interest and past activities.



## What can you do after joining?

### *Current activities of the Freedom Team*

Once you join the Freedom Team you can do whatever you think is appropriate as a leader. In particular, you can:

1. Discuss (and help decide) core beliefs, policy snippets and policy positions. This includes conducting research on policies and educating each other (and others) about them. Read about world-best policies and share the results with others. Write draft policy brochures and policy blueprints, internal process documents, etc.
2. Discuss the action plan, resource plan, communication plan, media strategy, website development, brochure design, advertisements, and a host of other internal processes.
3. Reach out to others:
  - Write short articles for the FTI magazine (soon a blog will be available for each member to communicate to his or her chosen audience)
  - Start 'Freedom Families' locally to reach out to your local constituency
  - Carry out ground work you feel is appropriate as 'citizen policemen/journalists'.
  - Write books and contribute articles to the press.

## Have questions?

### *Not sure how the Team will succeed?*

It is inevitable that many questions will remain in your mind. How will this team grow? How will it get funding? How will it reach out to the public more generally? These are pressing matters and need some kind of a strategy.

Some initial responses to such questions are available in the FAQ section of the Freedom Team's website.

Some discussions are also found at Shantanu's blog at:

<http://tinyurl.com/8ure4d>.

If you still have questions, you can write to the Freedom Team at [info@freedomteam.in](mailto:info@freedomteam.in)



# Freedom Team of India