Promoting Values of a Liberal Society

Terms of Reference

Background

More than a decade ago, monarchy vanquished as the second People’s Movement in April 2006 ushered the country to a Federal Republic, paving way for the writing of a new constitution and an overall expansion of political freedom and civil liberties. Despite the gloom and doom, the country endorsed democracy and a wave of socio-political freedom, while its long and constant struggle for economic freedom continued.

In 2015, Nepal witnessed a new Constitution that adopted federalism and replaced the erstwhile unitary structure of governance. This long-awaited change charted out hope for economic freedom. When the ruling Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) (CPN-UML) and Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) joined to form a combined communist force and went to garner a two-third majority in the Parliament, the country ventured a new era of political stability. Since then, the government has focused its efforts towards setting up the right policy and legal frameworks to enable the smooth transition into and for the implementation of federalism. The political leadership now faces the challenge of crafting hundreds of new laws and amending equally many.

However, in a bid to expedite the enactment of such laws, the government has imposed arbitrary rules on its citizens challenging freedom at all fronts. In an unprecedented move, the newly introduced criminal code curtails press freedom as the law prohibits releasing of private information, satires or disrespecting government officials. The Information Technology Bill empowers government authorities to restrict social media access by imposing penalties for posting ‘improper’ content on social media platforms. Moreover, the moral policing of the government by arresting popular singers and comedians for promoting ‘anti-social values’ has threatened the civil society space. In the economic front, the institution of the contribution-based social security scheme has deprived individuals from the choice to utilize one-third of their funds.

All of these instances substantiate the fact that the economic, political and civil space in Nepal is not just shrinking, but the ideals of democracy - personal autonomy and individual rights, freedom of expression, rule of law - are facing the hammer of draconian laws and rules. This absence of of a free society and a space to creatively project and test ideas will eventually hinder the prosperity of the nation. Therefore, this requires immediate intervention.

As an organization whose ideals are rooted in freedom, we intend to play the role of a watchdog to sensitize the civil society regarding the spread of anti-democratic practices. Samriddhi strongly believes in the creation of a free society in Nepal because it is only in a free society with different value systems that one can freely contest their ideas in the public sphere and policy can be robustly formed without any undue influence.
Opportunities

As Nepal turns into a Federal Democratic Republic with seven states and 753 local governments, there are new opportunities to work with the sub-national governments to promote and defend liberal values at subnational level as a way to check the encroachment of the federal government on the space of civil, political and economic freedoms. There are likeminded organisations and groups/individuals besides local media houses at subnational levels who have dedicated themselves to hold their local and state governments accountable and answerable to their constituencies. With targeted orientation engagements, some of these groups could be molded into becoming defenders of freedom. More importantly, there is an opportunity to feed professionals who are well-trained on the ideas of liberty and economic freedom into these organisations.

Samriddhi has also engaged a number of individuals and groups by way of training them on investigative journalism-type research and different advocacy methods like consultative dialogues to video making on local and state policy issues and social media engagement to raise awareness and influence sub-national policy making.

As such, Samriddhi is well positioned to engage its network of likeminded agents at sub-national and even federal level in order to create a critical mass at the ground level to defend the shrinking sphere of liberty and values of a liberal democracy.

Program: ‘Promoting Values of a Liberal Society’

Through the “Promoting Values of a Liberal Society” initiative, Samriddhi Foundation attempts to advocate for an enhanced political, social and economic freedom of Nepalese people and intends to educate a wider mass whilst facilitating a discourse among them. For the same, Samriddhi will use two distinct kind of techniques – seminars and colloquium.

Samriddhi will identify young professionals and engage them in deliberations covering the principles of a liberal democracy, Nepal’s fight for democracy, the importance of protecting liberal values in the society, and how to become an ambassador to defend Nepali people’s liberties. The graduates of these programs will also contribute to promoting economic freedom in Nepal and work to remove regulatory bottlenecks in the system.

The first of the two techniques is the ‘Promoting Values of a Liberal Society’ seminar which will be a residential seminar dedicated to training young professionals into core principles of liberty and sensitizing them about economic freedom and policy regime. The seminar will help young people explore alternative ideas for Nepal’s existing problems; to help young people understand the value of liberty, and inject new ideas into the public discourse for promoting liberal values in the society.

In the year 2020, **two 5-day residential seminars will be organized to train and educate young people.** Seminars will incorporate 20 participants from all over Nepal. These residential seminars will be developed in a “youth friendly” interactive way for higher impact. The seminars
will be a combination of guest lectures, working sessions, case studies, interactions, some skill sessions, documentary screening etc.

A full-time seminar moderator for each seminar will be hired to facilitate the event and relevant individuals and professionals will be invited as guest speakers on a per-session basis. They will share their knowledge, experience and lessons and prepare the participants to promote the values of a liberal democracy within their own realms. For example, graduates coming from new think-tank background could expand this advocacy of Samriddhi through their works like research, articles, blogs, social media contents, public discourses, etc.

The second technique is a colloquium. Samriddhi believes that a free society requires a dialogue among active minds freely engaged in pondering the ideas that have shaped human civilization in general and the free society in particular.

After the two aforementioned seminars, Samriddhi will host one 3-night-2-days colloquium (‘Promoting Values of a Liberal Society’ colloquium) which will see 20 participants (selected graduates of the two earlier seminars) who understand and believe in the role of reading/learning and active dialogues in shaping societies, spend a number of days discussing selected classical liberal texts with an experienced and knowledgeable moderator. The event will encourage exploration of ideas through informal, yet serious, discussion among a small group of individuals from a range of disciplines and expertise. Participants will be shared a list of articles around the theme which they will read and sit at a round-table setting to have a moderated Socratic discussion on. The purpose neither has to be to convey a doctrine nor to reach a consensus. Yet, for Nepal, such dialogues could help shape the future courses of Nepalese democracy.

**Output, Outcomes and Plan of Action**

**Outputs:**

- Two ‘Promoting Values of a Liberal Society’ Seminars. The seminars will be 5-day residential events.
- One ‘Promoting Values of a Liberal Society’ colloquium. The colloquium will be a 3-night-2-days residential event.

**Outcomes:**

- Participants will have an access to works of a wide array of classical liberal thinkers
- Participants will have a platform to learn about alternative ideas to common development narratives
- Participants will have a platform for intellectual engagements to defend the space of liberal democracy in Nepal
- Participants will gain an access to a network of intellectual minds across Nepal
- Participants will be equipped with ideas to contribute to contemporary policy discourses through an alternative lens
- A pool of prospective hires for like-minded groups and organisations that are promoting liberal ideas and economic freedom at sub-national level will be prepared.

**Plan of Action:**

- The seminars and colloquium will focus on ideas like:
  - Principles of a liberal democracy
  - Nepal’s fight for democracy
  - Lessons from liberalization era of the 1990s
  - Understanding the nature of Nepalese markets
  - What drives Nepalese politicians
  - Doing meaningful investigative journalism
  - How to use social media platform as an ambassador of liberal democracy
  - Promoting economic freedom in Nepal
  - Advocating for breaking regulatory barriers to promote entrepreneurship in Nepal.

- Samriddhi will engage experts from following backgrounds:
  - Policy-makers
  - Lawyers
  - Senior economists
  - Senior journalists
  - Retired bureaucrats
  - Senior standing bureaucrats
  - Senior public intellectuals and opinion makers

- Samriddhi will engage young professionals like economists, students, private entrepreneurs, think tank professionals, etc. as participants.

**Measurables**

As Samriddhi engages with likeminded individuals and engages a number of young idea enthusiasts through these seminars and colloquium, Samriddhi hopes to have instilled in them an affinity towards liberal values. Samriddhi will continue to engage with them in the future to track what kind of positive changes have been noted in them in terms of them becoming ambassadors of liberal ideas and promoters of civil, economic and political freedom in Nepal.
Samriddhi will gauge the success of the event on the basis of following measurable:

- Articles and blogs written by the graduates of the seminar and colloquium.
- Their future association with likeminded organisations that promote ideas of liberty.
- Their participation in other seminars and forums like those hosted by ATLAS Network or CCS or even FNF in future.
- The ideas and opinions they share in public forums in future.
- Any change in their social media content before and after participating in the seminars and the colloquium.
- Any research work conducted by these graduates in future, either independently or in association with other organisations.
Call for quotations

In order to deliver this project, Samriddhi invites quotations from interested consultants for the following tasks and responsibilities. Interested individuals or consulting agencies are requested to send in detailed quotations including estimated costs, and detailed resumes to:

Either info@samriddhi.org via email, or,

via post to Samriddhi Foundation, PO Box No.: 8973, NPC 678, Kathmandu, Nepal, or,

hand deliver the quotation to Samriddhi premises at 664, Bhimsengola Marga, Minbhawan Kharibot, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Kindly mark the positions that is being applied for on the cover of the envelope. The quotations should reach Samriddhi by 28 February, 2020, no later than 5.00 PM Nepal Standard Time. Contract award will be communicated by 6 March, 2020 to all the applicants.
Position: Curriculum Development Consultant

The Curriculum Developer will be responsible for:

- Develop a comprehensive curriculum covering the following areas as per the program objective:
  - Principles of a liberal democracy
  - Nepal’s fight for democracy
  - Lessons from liberalization era of the 1990s
  - Understanding the nature of Nepalese markets
  - What drives Nepalese politicians
  - Doing meaningful investigative journalism
  - How to use social media platform as an ambassador of liberal democracy
  - Promoting economic freedom in Nepal
  - Advocating for breaking regulatory barriers to promote entrepreneurship in Nepal.
- Develop individual sessions including session objectives, scope, methodology, span, and necessary logistical preparations
- Build expert-led lecture sessions and work closely with Samriddhi Foundation to ascertain lecturers for the said sessions. Experts should include people from the following backgrounds:
  - Policy-makers
  - Lawyers
  - Senior economists
  - Senior journalists
  - Retired bureaucrats
  - Senior standing bureaucrats
  - Senior public intellectuals and opinion makers
- Develop pre and post training tests for the participants.

The consultant should have the following qualifications:

- Have a Master’s degree or higher in Social Science (preferably public policy),
- Have at least 5 years’ experience of working in Nepal-based organisation studying public policy,
- Have an understanding of policy process in Nepal,

Preference will be given to candidates who have participated in policy reform process in the past.

Duration: The Consultant will work on this project for 10 man-days.

Remuneration: Negotiable. The Consultant is required to offer their quotation first.
Position: Seminar Moderator

The Seminar Moderator will be responsible for:

- Conducting the five-day residential seminar on “Promoting Values of a Liberal Society”
- Implement the adopted methodology and seminar schedule
- Moderating the sessions of the seminar as designed by Samriddhi Foundation through external curriculum developer,
- Work with external lecturers to align their lectures with the seminar objective as well as seminar status
- Assign and oversee in-seminar exercises for the seminar participants
- Host sharing sessions within the seminar and offer constructive feedback on the works turned in by the participants.

The Session Moderator should have the following qualifications:

- Have a Master’s degree or higher in Social Science (preferably public policy),
- Have at least 5 years’ experience of working in Nepal-based organisation studying public policy,
- Have an understanding of policy process in Nepal,
- Prior experience of having moderated trainings and seminars

Preference will be given to candidates who have run trainings and seminars in the past

Duration: The Seminar Moderator will work on this project for five man-days.

Remuneration: Negotiable. The Consultant is required to offer their quotation first.
Position: Program Coordinator

The Program Coordinator will be responsible for:

- Work with the organisation to select participants for the seminar
- Make all logistical arrangements throughout the seminar period
- Coordinate with all external lecturers and ensure that their sessions run smoothly
- Assist the seminar moderator throughout the seminar period
- Procuring materials, and coordinating printing, and, dissemination activities.

Candidates applying for Program Coordinator position should have the following qualifications:

- Have a Bachelors degree or higher in Social Sciences and,
- Past engagement in and understanding of coordinating trainings and seminars.

Preference will be given to candidates who have worked in program assistant capacity in other projects.

Duration: The Program Coordinator will work for 12 man-days.

Remuneration: Negotiable. The Consultant is required to offer their quotation first.