



CCS Change Makers

The Brave Souls

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Rosemary Abraham
LSS Trivandrum, 2004
Professor of Economics, Assumption College, Changanessary, Kerala

My tryst with CCS

When Mr. Babu Joseph, the former Principal of Ranni St. Thomas College handed over to me the brochure of LSS Seminar, I just smiled... It was meant for students! And unfortunately I was a teacher... But anyway sir told me he can recommend my application considering the fact that I just joined the college and is yet to receive my M.Phil result...At that time though I was a liberal on the personal front, I still had not lost faith in Socialistic policies...In a way my entry into LSS Seminar was much like a communist's entry into a religious retreat center!!! Just to check what is happening? What they are teaching? To verify whether there is any indoctrination or corruption of minds? I took a bunch of students also with me to the LSS seminar... In the train I warned them, scanning the list of topics... "Humm... these people are going to say, liberalisation is the only option left for India... LPG is for the good etc... ya.. hear it!... but keep an open mind...and don't allow yourself to be indoctrinated"

The first day!!! I did not appreciate it much.... What kind of people?... What extremism! I really felt they are corrupting these young minds... I could not tolerate the viewpoints of some market extremists who commented that government should be thrown away... There were some energetic students from Trivandrum side, ardent leftist... [In Kerala that is normal, being a citadel of leftist movements]... We together launched an open fight... We raised a lot of questions... But it was not a questioning for the sake of belittling the other... It was genuine!!!

I hope you know the climax, all four of us mellowed down towards the end, though we could not completely agree with CCS on certain issues... "ya.. there is some truth in what they are saying" ... that was the general feeling we had...

And I think all four of us went back to read more...One among us [who fought the most] even went on to attend ALSS. I purchased a copy of *Morality of Markets*, [edited by Parth J Shah] my pet topic and finished reading it during the examination days in the College... [We teachers sadistically enjoy our examination supervision days, while students struggle with our tricky questions; Reading is the only way to kill the boredom in the examination halls...] The book captured my imagination and it culminated in the presentation of a paper in one of the National Seminars.

After a few months I received a call from Mana to attend the CFW at New Delhi... Since it was during our vacation I did not hesitate much... But to be frank I think I was scared a bit... I had not fully come to terms with the CCS ideology... I just wanted to get an assurance or to be precise, freedom to be on my own... I just wanted to make sure that I am not being bought by an organisation... However, from CFW I grew up to take a session in the next LSS held at Kerala on "Property rights"... At present I have with me a bunch of inquisitive students from various disciplines- FOF... and it is really fun to be with them, to promote logical thinking among the future generation... In all the forums I share the ideas & concepts I

received from my LSS and further literatures... It ranges from classes for the government officials [local body members] to local community gatherings to my own students at Assumption College... Everywhere I see new Rosemary -ies sprouting...Now I realise, entrusting everything to government is self-denial; I believe in the power of individuals to do good in a society. Then only India becomes truly democratic...

I am not saying I have become a market maniac... But the phase of market phobia is over... I think now I look for "the unintended consequences of the so called good laws and good intentions"... I enlighten my students also into this new arena of literature... Though sometimes it is forcefully done through assignments or project works or suggested readings, I know in future my students would only thank me for introducing them to this line of thinking...

Jaganath Sankaran
LSS Mumbai 2004
Research Assistant, Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland
(CISSM), School of Public Policy, University of Maryland, USA

Rudimentarily obvious, and definitely essential - a comprehension of how the society functions or dysfunctions; yet so exiguous is this knowledge that I never had the opportunity to know of anything vaguely with the same thrust and objective as the Liberty and Society Seminar. The experience, to me was educating. The erudition of the speakers and the bailiwick of Parth and CCS fellows in getting their message through are profound. It is always more interesting to hear and learn from the practitioner than the preacher.

As an under-graduate in a NIT there is little leeway to learn and understand these issues. As a scientist I was surprised to hear the varied facets of operative socio-economics at the seminar. The lectures break a certain mould that is constructed around the Indian psyche. It was engrossing and most of all provided for me a beginning to explore and understand these issues further. After a few years at the defence R&D, I am now at the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, College Park involved in the investigation of the dynamics in the evolution of space weapons. I do believe that the experience at the lectures and the subsequent interactions with the organisation (CCS) was a factor towards my gravitation to the policy school.

To assert that I completely have taken to the views of the organisation would be to miss the forest for the trees. I would rather state the experience as being a precursor for me to explore and arrive at my own but better ideas. It has been my fortune to apply these ideas to my work and to my interactions with the society in a smaller fashion. I would certainly propose the lectures to anyone, for I have benefited from it.

Dipayan Baishya
LSS Kolkata, 2001
Business Journalist, *The Economic Times*

My background:

I studied economics at Presidency College, Calcutta and graduated in 2002. I was associated as a business journalist, first with Business Today and then with The Economic Times in Bombay. I am currently working on a book on an Indian entrepreneur.

My association with CCS:

I attended LSS in 2001 in Calcutta and Advanced LSS in 2003 in Bombay. Much as I would like, I haven't yet been able to directly help CCS in its activities, due to work constraints. I look forward to working with CCS more closely in the near future and more importantly contribute to its thought leadership initiatives.

What I have gained from attending LSS:

I came from an educational background that largely focused on the left-liberal interpretation to economic and policy developments. Both Presidency College, Calcutta and Jawaharlal Nehru University, from where I dropped out from my Masters course in economics, are known to be hotbeds of left-liberal thinking.

I think, LSS opened up an entirely new window to my understanding of economics and policy. It showed me a new way of interpreting economic and social policies and provided an alternative to what I was taught in school and in college. It gave me the ammunition to intelligently denounce things I didn't believe in.

Going forward, in my role as a business journalist, I was able to interpret business and economic trends in far more holistic manner. My understanding of free-market economics and libertarian thoughts has definitely had a major impact in all the work that I did as a journalist at leading publications. Be it while reporting trends or analyzing business developments, I was able to provide a far more objective analysis of the issues at hand.

I think CCS has provided the biggest intellectual influence on my thought process and its impact on my work is quite evident. Ideas first discussed with Parth, Sauvik or with Yazad are there in every thing I write or every discussion I get into. I have tried my best in whatever small manner its possible, to spread the thoughts and ideas that CCS stands for. I think, the purpose of CCS is best served when people at an individual level consciously work towards spreading libertarian and free-market ideas.

Having been associated with CCS and having closely tracked it, I think, CCS has played a stellar role in shaping a public debates at a national level. I am not sure whether it is fully acknowledged, but the impact of CCS at a national level is very evident. The population debate in India has come a full circle and credit for it must go to Parth and his team. Its impact on policy decisions in primary education and urban development have the potential to bring about a paradigm shift in the way we live and work. Keep up the good work!

Dhanuraj D
LSS Cochin, 2003
Research Associate, CCS
Chairman, Centre for Public Policy Research

Civil Society

It is a great moment for anyone when asked to review the past and suggest the future plans. It is a privilege for me to understand the importance of a review process and being a part of a larger movement. I hope my sharing would help this movement and I hope I will be sincere in my effort.

My home town is Cochin, industrial town of Kerala. From younger days onwards, I have been fascinated towards the social issues especially the political developments around the world. In a state where socialist ideas have a deep root, it has been a natural tendency to get aligned with the left stream. But the concepts and ideas have been questioned and challenged as I grow up. I did my M Sc Physics from Mahatma Gandhi University, M A from Madras University and Post Graduate Executive Diploma in International Business from Lyola Institute of Business Administration, Chennai. In between I completed PGDCA also. During this time, I did not lose any opportunity to travel around this country. More exposure means more knowledge, information and clarity of ideas. In the mean time I got opportunity to work in IT industry for a few months. This has enabled me to understand the work culture of a fast growing industry. Another major incident influenced my life are the days I spent in three years in Indian Institute of Science as a fellow for three years. It was the time India, detonated nuclear bomb in Pokhran. I could understand how science and politics are interlinked.

My association with Centre for Civil Society starts in LSS Seminar in Cochin in 2003. I attended the seminar and found interesting. It was a great experience especially for in the Kerala context. Thesis - Anti Thesis continued there and I found anti thesis has a CCS version and has an upper hand over the other. After attending the seminar, I found myself being different in my thoughts and ideas. Later I realised that it is an ongoing process and cannot be assimilated easily. It was the time I was doing my post graduation in Political Science. So the ideas were fresh and livid in the mind.

Fro younger days, I was interested in research. I wish to be a researcher. By that, I meant I can answer the troubling questions in my mind. LSS experience proved to be another adds on to the search for answers. After attending, I wished to do internship under CCS and I applied for the same. Fortunately, I was got selected for internship in April - May 2004. I did work on two projects namely; the viability and necessity of commodity boards and the community management of fishery resources. I did reasonably well, the two projects at that time.

In July 2004, myself and six of my friends came together to form Centre for Public Policy Research. It was in our mind since we left our college days in 2002. We in fact, want to promote research entrepreneurship. It took months of discussion to start it and register it. During this time, I met Parth at various places and continued our discussion through emails and telephones. While I was in Chennai I

was involved with the study on street hawkers and organising a seminar on the same topic. At that time, I was entrusted with handling Friends of Freedom activities in Chennai. It was a learning time for me. I started working as CCS Research Associate since August 2005. Since then I have been involved in research projects that are carried out in Chennai and in Kerala. At the personal level, it is a challenge when getting into a new topic and I really relish it. I hope this will be a beginning for a successful career. During this time, whatever we have worked at the social level along the CCS lines is shared mutually among CPPR and CCS. Other than CCS research projects, I have been personally involved in Tsunami rehabilitation assessment in and around Chennai coast for the last one year. Other major projects I am involved are; academic research project on the personality study on Justice V R Krishna Iyer for documentary film on him, rehabilitation project of beggars in Tambaram (suburb of Chennai) area, development plan for Udayamperoor (village) development council etc. I assist and some times involved in RTI campaign that is going on for some time in Kerala. Other than these programs, I am a member in a school governing council, member to ethics committee of Sacred Heart College, Cochin and similar social activities. During this time, I have travelled extensively in the last one year. I have been exposed to various social issues and concerns and mingled with people from all walks of life. I cannot forget the days I spent without any provision for taking any food at the remotest of places I worked!

LSS was a turning point in the association with CCS. It was the most appealing one for me so far. I have attended not many programs of CCS other than the ALSS at Pune in 2005. The style, patters and demeanour of CCS always attracted me.

CCS gives opportunities to work on the ideas. CCS website is a facilitator on this regard. It opens the window to the similar organisations. As I mentioned earlier it is a tussle. It may take time. At personal level, I try to read and get the opinion of every good writer and speaker before coming to a short term conclusions. I hope may be over the years, I will have a stringent stand on what I believe and practice. The research work I am involved is a nice tool to explore. During the last one year, the student community we are associated at different places is another mechanism where I can discuss and debate over various issues. From the gradual increase in the number of students in the groups I can satisfied with my arguments. It is an open mind which helps to understand the ideas and thoughts with more clarity and élan.

Being a part of a powerful civil society has been always my dream. CCS ideas have always redeemed my belief. Especially after getting into research and getting exposed to the realities around the world and in recent times after involving in RTI campaign, I am optimistic that the days are not far off to expect for a better dawn. The discussions and debates on CCS platforms always lead to the better understanding of healthy and vibrant civil society. May be I am a trigger in this part of the world for that change but that time would tell.

There are many instances I am personally proud of on my contributions even though small and tiny. The sphere of contacts is growing everyday. It includes people from all walks of life. May be because of my involvement and open mindedness, political leaders noticing our activities by and large these days.

Our mission is a great one. We plan to undertake and involve in more activities that will definitely be helpful in building up a new society. Our focus group is youngsters and in fact, I am credited with locating a few youngsters who are committed and responsible and required for a civil society. I am sure in this part of the world; people are looking for new ideas and alternative solutions. We can build a strong society by targeting youths of this country. It requires continuous and sustained effort. That is what the country wants today.

Mohit Joshi
LSS Delhi, 1998
HSBC Bank, Gurgaon

Tell us your story: Share your journey from the CCS program which you first attended to what you are doing now. Your background, what you studied, where you have worked, any social work you have engaged in.

I was a first year college student at Hindu College, Delhi University when I attended the first-ever LSS in the winter of 1998 (Dec, I think). CCS was barely a year old and I was about to turn 18. This was followed by a hiatus of about 1.5 years when I got out of touch but reconnected before the summer of 2000 when I applied to the first-ever summer internship program. 2 months at CCS helped me appreciate the organization in greater depth. I went on to finish Eco Honors and joined the MBA bandwagon that took me to IIM Lucknow. While at IIM L, it was my good fortune to have helped coordinate 2 editions of LSS in 2001-02. From IIM L, I joined HSBC Bank and have been with them for over 3 years, with the base moving from Kolkata to Pune to of late, Gurgaon.

What were key take-aways from the CCS program which have stayed with you/ appealed the most/ moved you most even now?

What CCS programs instill in students is quite unequalled by any other learning program or institution that an Indian goes through. I could summarize the impact in two points:

a) Skepticism: Not in the negative sense of being unduly pessimistic but in the hallowed philosophical sense of feeling the need and urge to question *status quo*, conventional wisdom & lastly, good intentions. Like CCS often quotes '*The road to hell is paved with good intentions*'.

b) A new world-view: Indians are often brought up on the staple of an over-arching government and distrust of profit motive. CCS belabors to prove (quite convincingly) that most of our points of view are a result of post-independence propaganda and our conditioning. By giving robust arguments and concrete examples from across the world, LSS made me believe for the first time that there is a sustainable model for curing the woes we see around us and the road to the Shangri La is paved with free market & private enterprise.

How did you (if you did) come to terms with the new ideas that you become acquainted with? What was the process of self-exploration/ self-doubt/ confusion like?

Does not apply. I did not go through any overly painful process of coming to terms. Since my mind was more akin to *tabula rasa*, the libertarian thoughts did not replace anything, they just occupied free room. Having said that, I have often critically compared the ideas against real problems but they have survived the thought process. This lack of self-doubt perhaps stems from the fact that I am not

an outright anarchist and I don't believe that free market is a panacea - it is just the better option in most situations.

**Has it changed your perception of yourself as a member of the civil society?
Has it made you more confident in the power of the individual to bring about change in the civil society?**

Yes, it has in some sense. However, I would more readily rely on the invisible hand than on idealistic power of individuals to bring change in the society.

Do you see yourself as a change-maker now?

Not yet.

Have you caused any change (it could be something very personal like your relationship with friends or the change you caused in your academic/ work/ societal sphere)? Please share these instances with us.

Nothing spectacular. The changes that I may have effected would be largely confined through my discussions within my immediate circle of acquaintances or with my friends.

On a subjective note, are you a different person today (personally/ professionally or as a citizen of civil society) because of your association with CCS?

Definitely. I would not say I have had an affair with CCS the way Parth has had or lately Mana, but it has been a very steady association, something that I personally cherish.

CCS has provided some very exciting intellectual fodder that I often use in my professional discussions and my personal life. I can very easily credit CCS programs for ensuring that I can look at various social issues in a different light today that is often more rigorous than it would have been otherwise. CCS programs therefore have contributed to a certain tectonic shift in the thinking process.

Ayoob OK
LSS Cochin, 2003
Infosys, Mysore

It was a kind of shock which made me feel like, what to do? What to do? The philosophies which I believed that there is a hope seemed to be so stopping now. Not more than two weeks after attending a mass protest by a student political group, felt like the picture is not clear. What these people telling is wrong somewhere, just need to find where exactly!! What is this How can I be wrong, how will the Indians feeding the Cow who's milk will go to US help India to grow. What will the monopolies do to exploit or wealth and resources? Not very clear about what actually I am confused of. But for sure, I am confused !!! In fact drowned in it though I keep on trying to believe that there is something wrong with this people, might be they are funded by capitalist monopolies to spread their roots over here.

A flash back to a small portion of my thoughts after my first ALSS in Cochin. Being in hot, heavy and interesting discussions (fights) for almost four days since then, it was the ALSS at Cochin which opened a new door of thought to me, a world though very familiar but not aware at all (Liberalism) now seemed something, on which I need to learn and the issue is so urgent that I am on the same track, moving opposite ☺. Being a part of communist thoughts in my college I had appreciated the spirits behind it and how the revolution had happened with the mighty thoughts of Marx and Engels. From my school days itself I used to participate various organizations engaged in environment protection, art and culture etc. I had gathered a very good and healthy circle of friends where I (we) can discuss everything below the skies and sometimes above too. Two weeks exactly after the seminar - I was in a perfect confusion-excited state.

I pulled back from some of the activities with the college students union. The thought revolved so much that I slowly came thinking about many real life scenarios where the roads to hell being made with good intentions. Though before attending the seminar I have strongly advocated for individual freedom, I never had a theoretical or say philosophical support from a market point of view to express it. The seminar made me decide to go for further learning on the discussed topics. The people I met there where really good to work and discuss various issues. To be very specific its only after the seminar I came to recognize the impact of economic decisions of nation and real life. I can say that, after the seminar I started reading with a purpose to meet rather than my habit of flat-nowhere reading.

I read the material given in the seminar many times; I was slowly making my mind towards libertarian philosophies. Later I attended the Advanced L S S at Delhi.

The five days of heat again ignited my thought s and I had come out of it being a libertarian. From then I completely withdrew from the union activities though it was very less in my college. The return trip from Delhi was excellent and was one of the most remembered moments ever in my life. At some point of journey I reached in discussions regarding politics and sports then fortunately!! I thought

about Sachin's Ferrari, which he bought to India without paying tax. I said, Sachin being rich doesn't need such a tax exception really.. some one around came up with saying that he is not just like every one and all.. Then I said the other part of it, the poor in India, the tax they are paying, the facilities they are getting, their struggles, the levels of their problems, the governmental miseries and all. The talk went through many routes. And at the end, I can say " the happiest part of it" .one lady, who was passively participating in the discussion said " its good that collages are sending students for such seminars, minimum we came to know all these things" .

Back in my college, I was very determined to discuss and share what I had learned so far. You may know about the levels of agitation in Kerala against liberalization of Markets and schools. I did many discussions (organized and unorganized) in the campus on Liberalization, privatization and globalization. I was successful in getting many supporters for this too😊. I read the works of Ayn Rand (now my favourite) and some other libertarian thinkers

Conducted one session about "L - P - G" by Parth J Shah, one about "liberalization and International relations" by Cristopher Lingle in the campus. One discussion in OISCA (a Japan based environment organization, where I am an active member) with senior members of the OISCA Calicut chapter about the liberal views in Nature and wildlife protection. I took one session about Liberalization of education in the collage and also in OISCA. When CCS came to Calicut (my home town), for LSS, I was there with the group in doing some small part of it. Joined hands in organizing a session by Parth in Calicut IIM. Ya.. Forgot to mention - got 2nd in Liberty in Life essay contest By CCS 😊 .

Most important of all - I started a group in my home town - Group name "Listeners" - where listening matters <log on - www.listenersindia.org >. The group basis on listening to the world, without any discrimination and accepting what is acceptable to one 😊

The knowledge I acquired after CCS programs was immense, it gave me new doors and windows which I did used and I changed very much. The idea of freedom had changed the way I am thinking, the way I see the world, the way I will work and behave in this world. I can tell u ." Not only just I have changed myself, I have changed some others too 😊. Now I see myself as a change maker, I can see the level of scope for me in the scene. One instance - the interest in economics and joining for Masters in Foreign Trade had happened as I think, is because of my exposure to libertarian ideas.

Right now , working in software firm though I am not able to part with the activities I wish to ..I am sure that I will come back once and do my level best for what I feel should be done.

Honish Zaveri
LSS Ahmedabad, 2003
Business Analyst, Verizon Data Services (P) India

My Journey with CCS

The first time I came in touch with CCS was in Ahmedabad in November 2003, when I attended their Liberty & Society Seminar(LSS). Before coming in touch with CCS & meeting Parth & Mana personally, I had already read a lot of articles & material on liberalization, economic reforms etc & was completely convinced about their need & rationale. While its true that I was pro-reforms, pro-liberalization even before I attended the seminar, that is only half the story, the other half is that the 4 days spent with CCS team at the seminar, not only strengthened my conviction in liberalization, but also motivated me to study issues related to liberty & reforms in greater detail, so that I could put forward my case strongly in front of others who are deeply suspicious of the market economy. In true sense, my journey from a liberal, whose understanding was only limited to economic issues to a complete libertarian who strongly believes not only in economic freedom, but also in complete personal freedom started due to the profound impact CCS had on my life during the 4 day seminar.

The next time that I got to meet the entire team of CCS was in Dec 2004 when I attended their Advanced LSS in Panchgini. Meeting Parth & Mana after such a long gap in itself was a source of great happiness for me. While there were many interesting topics discussed at the seminar, one issue that interested me the most was "Law Reform". This was for the first time I realized that Indian laws are so absurd & ridiculous & why their reforms are so important for India to prosper. Just like my previous experience I went back from this seminar, a more enriched & a more knowledgeable person.

It's been close to 3 years now that I have been in touch with CCS, & they have helped to broaden my horizons on libertarian issues every time I have met them. While its true that I have never really formally worked with CCS, because of my personal compulsions, I have never lost touch with Parth, Mana & the activities that CCS is involved with. Till today I make it a point to visit their website atleast once every alternate day. I have read several of their publications, & they have always helped me out in case I needed some information about something. Only recently Mana mailed me a presentation on Environmental Issues I had requested for. In conclusion I only want to say that CCS is doing a commendable job in fighting for the cause of liberty in India, something we as a nation sorely lack. My best wishes are always with them & now I am also trying to contribute my bit to the local chapter of CCS, here in Chennai.

Makarand Bakore
LSS Mumbai, 2004
Research Associate, Centre for Civil Society

After spending a couple of years in corporate jobs, I was looking forward to doing something more meaningful and emotionally satisfying, and that's when CCS happened to me. I noticed the LLS poster at a chance visit to my college in Mumbai. My application reached CCS in the last minute and luckily I was selected to attend the LLS at Navi Mumbai. It was my first formal exposure to public policy and brought a fundamental shift in the way I viewed the world. The four days at LSS were mentally stimulating as well as enlightening. I had a chance to attend the Advance LSS at Panchgani a month later, that brought me in touch with more like-minded people. I listened to great speakers and watched informative documentaries. As I was looking for a change for the corporate sector, I explored opportunities to work with CCS. I was interviewed at Panchgani and was asked to send writing samples. After a month, I found myself in Delhi with CCS in the position of a Research Associate. I was to work in the area of governance, my field of interest.

Its been a year and a half since I have been with CCS. I have had the opportunity to work on many interesting projects such as advocating decentralisation in urban governance and reforms in public administration. I co-edited two books with my President. I have met many fascinating people through my association with CCS as well as attended events that have added to my understanding of public policy issues.

Currently, I am working on the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). CCS is the co-ordinating agency for the state of Delhi. Various reforms advocated by CCS are covered in JNNURM. We hope that state governments adopt these reforms as they are vital to cope with the growing urbanisation.

I have very inspiring and passionate colleagues at CCS. They come from diverse backgrounds and bring a wealth of experience with them. Brainstorming with them is always a good learning experience.

The programs team at CCS is a very young and vibrant. It has assisted me in everyway in the events I needed to organise.

My President, Dr. Parth Shah, is a constant source of motivation and commitment.

I hope to be able continue to contribute towards CCS' mission in the time to come.

Mayank Wadhwa
LSS Ahmedabad 1999
Tata Consultancy Services, Mumbai

Tell us your story: Share your journey from the CCS program which you first attended to what you are doing now: your background, what you studied, where you have worked, any social work you have engaged in. My journey with CCS began through Ayn Rand! I had met with Parth and Yazad through an attempt to start an 'Ayn Rand Forum'. The Forum, was to discuss and debate objectivist ideas, bottomline - we learnt a lot, had loads of fun and made some great friends.

Later, had more interactions with CCS, I attended a LSS (in Ahmedabad) and later two successive research internships with them in 2000 and 2001. Most people would write, how they were conventionally a socialist at heart, and were awe-struck when they heard ideas like 'population is not a problem', 'sell the rain-forests'; but for me the debate was always between the degree and practicality. Choosing between anarcho-capitalism or limited government (I can imagine Parth smirk at this saying 'so many years and this guy still hasn't been convinced about anarcho-capitalism'). Thanks to CCS, I also managed to write an article (editorial) for The Economic Times, and got excellent recommendations for higher studies.

I don't know who coined this term "Social Work", but some how CCS and Social Work in the same sentence makes me uncomfortable. I have never been involved in social work, and will never be. Currently I am working in a corporate, but someday I'll be back in economics & policy research and work in a think-tank, guess that's where my heart is!

What were key take-aways from the CCS program which have stayed with you/ appealed the most/ moved you most even now?

The biggest take-away for me was understanding the practicality of affairs. One doesn't need to be in the government to influence changes. Earlier, if you didn't want to be in the system, you had only one option and that was work for a private corporate. It showed me that there is a practical and effective way of influencing change.

Has it changed your perception of yourself as a member of the civil society? Has it made you more confident in the power of the individual to bring about change in the civil society?

One's perceptions changes everyday! But your line-of-thought doesn't, what CCS gave me was a clearer way of thinking. And of-course it has made me more confident in bringing about change in the civil society.

Do you see yourself as a change-maker now?

Not yet... I would be a change-maker once I am hands-on involved in a project or activity. But I do feel that I am equipped to be a change maker.

Have you caused any change (it could be something very personal like your relationship with friends or the change you caused in your academic/ work/ societal sphere)? Please share these instances with us.

Yes, by way of promoting a more rational approach to policy. I am a very strong proponent of private partnership in key industries like: education, infrastructure and healthcare, and never shy away from an argument in proposing these ideas.

Renu Pokhrana
LSS Pune, 2002
Masters Student, Chennai

My association with CCS goes back to 2002 when I first came to LSS in Pune, and since then, I've been in awe of the organization and the principles that it stands for.

The LSS was an eye opener for me since I was a strong believer in the idea of government influence for bettering the world and the ideas presented at the LSS were absolutely challenging my pre conceived notions, a challenge that they ultimately won as my interaction with CCS increased by means of the e group and of course further work through 'Friends of Freedom' and now starting a branch of CCS in Chennai.

I feel privileged to have been associated with an organization as dynamic as this one and hope that it continues to grow and make a difference at all levels of governance.

Thank you CCS!

<p>Sushmita Pratihast LSS Delhi, 2003 Research Associate - Governance Research Internship Coordinator</p>

CCS: An unending journey!

Year: 1999-2000

College: too many metaphors to describe it - fun, responsibility, studies, bunking classes, political epic centre, extra-curricular and many others. Economics department of my college was one of the most active departments of Hindu college and we always had speakers coming from various walks of life to speak to us. Once I saw a notice on the board saying, "Economics in one lesson" speaker Parth J Shah, President, Centre for Civil Society. I shrugged it as any college student, thinking if I will have the time and if I remember it, I will go for the session. Incidentally, I did manage to attend it. One the few sessions where I did not quietly pick up my bag and walk out due to rhetoric and boredom. However, this was one stray mid-morning. I went back thinking about the approach of what I had heard. At the same time, someone suggested reading Ayn Rand and I became addicted to it. All the beliefs that laid buried in the layers of sub-conscious finally got affirmations in the periphery. I inherently became a libertarian; however, the link to that old class session I had attended was blurred.

Year 2000-01

I am walking back from my maths tuition class at Calash Colony and I met two of my seniors, one being Omit Joshi. I asked him where he was heading to. He described that he was going for a meeting with Centre for Civil Society and told me what an exciting place it was. I thought to myself "some intellectual place it would be" I don't know what they do"

Year 2002-03

Life went on. I graduated and decided to take a break from studies. I started working for an online publishing house and library, EBSCO. After some 9-10 months, the work became so mechanical that I felt I could not go ahead with it. By this time, I was an avid reader of Ayn Rand and had already read all her novels and most essays. I quit my job and started thinking what I would do next. Rather thinking what I want to do. And then I remembered that CCS had a LSS. I was reminded of all the experiences my classmates had shared with me when they came back from LSS. As I had time on my hands, I thought of experiencing it. Never had I known that it would change my life forever. I went through the process and I got selected. I was excited, going out of house for 4 days, meeting new people and experiencing something different and new. Those 4 days gave me new affirmations, things that I always thought, wanted to share and talk about but didn't know how to define it. That was LSS: a redefinition of beliefs, axioms and an exposure to the world which I never thought existed.

I came back and just after few days, Maven Mandela, one of the Research Associates at CCS called me and informed me of a project at CCS called "Delhi Citizen Handbook 2003" and an urgent need of a sub-editor who would edit the

content and format the publication. As I did have an experience in content editing, I agreed. I would say, that one month was one of the most amazing experiences of my life. I realised that when you are doing what you really like doing, there is no stress, there is no fatigue and above all I realised what passion means. I would work from 9-10 in the morning to 9 in the night, return home and then want to get up again and go back to work. I worked with a people who were driven to make this a success. CCS was quite small then, just one office with few computers, yet everything was right. Every revelation gave all of us a better reason for doing what we were doing. I knew I wanted to do something in public policy. I identified with ideologies and wanted to explore and the best part was, there was so much to explore!

Still it did take me a year after that project to fully realise it and here I am working with CCS and thinking of doing something similar in my life ahead. I know that I am happy doing it. Today when I go back to the same LSS as a faculty and I see people experiencing the same that I had few years back, the feeling comes a full circle and reaffirms what I am doing, I know that there will be other compulsions in life and I would have to strive through them to keep doing what I am doing. Whatever I do finally, I have realised the difference between millions who just like what they are doing and few who end up doing what they love doing. I owe this realisation to CCS and especially to those 4 days at LSS that steered my life into it.

Shourie Anand
ISPP Delhi, 2006
BA Student, Delhi

First of all, I would like to say that ISPP has changed my whole perception of life and given me a new direction and I will always be indebted to CCS and SRTT for giving me this chance.

It all started when my friend Krishna forwarded me the mail to apply for ISPP, at first I was not inclined because I would then have to miss my MBA coaching classes. But then at that point of time, my life was in shambles both from a professional and personal point of view and I was slowly slipping into depression; so I thought why not give it a try! I have completed my schooling from St. Anthony's School Kureong Darjeeling, and +2 from DPS Ranchi. I am presently pursuing Political Science (H) from Maharaja Agrasen College Delhi University. What I experienced at ISPP was so wonderful that it can't be described in words. It not only helped me tide over my personal problems but also made me a more conscious, alert, logical and a concerned citizen.

I learnt a lot from CCS, and the few things that appealed to me the most was their idea of liberty and having faith in the capacity of the individual, looking at India's problems from a different perspective, "Why is India Poor?" and what alternate methods we have to solve our problems.

It really took me some time to accept the new ideas as stereotypes can't be broken so easily, and to be frank I still have some confusions.

It has definitely changed my perception towards civil society, now I have realized that even a small effort on my part will go a long way to bring about change, and definitely I am more confident.

I do see myself as a change maker because after all society is nothing but collection of individuals. And if we change society changes.

I have caused changes, at least I think so. At personal level, I have become more calm and composed, I have started doing things for people without expecting anything from them, learnt to respect their views not encroach on their lives, learnt to control my anger, love unconditionally and above all being true to my self and others. At a professional level, now I analyze everything critically, try to identify the root cause of the problems facing us, I now strongly believe in the freedom of the individual right to choose and the scope of government's role in our lives. I did file two RTI applications and got an immediate response, the water supply in my house greatly improved, working with my friends in Prabodh encourages me and I am confident that we can make a difference.

I have changed a lot though not completely, I hope to become a better human being and try not doing anything that will hurt others. As a citizen the association with CCS has taught me that if we just sit down doing nothing and put the blame on others and the government things will never improve, it's high time that we use our rights and freedoms in a proper way to create a better and free society.

“Life Without Liberty Is Like A Body Without Spirit.”

---Kahlil Gibran

In my journey of transformation from a dreamy schoolgirl to a ‘soldier of the second freedom struggle’ -I revert back again to take refuge in poetic reverie of Kahlil Gibran. So much has happened in 2005 in my life and what amazes me is the fact that it inevitably revolves around a single pivot- Center of Civil Society.

I attended LSS in 2003 and it might sound clichéd now, but it did change my life forever. I am sure by the time you will reach the end of this document you will nod in agreement with me that liberty and life have been inseparable from my life ever since.

After my LSS, I was determined to my internship with CCS and I did so in the same year. I also followed it up by attending ALSS in 2003. I was curious about the radio broadcasting scenario since I had already done some base work at college about it. It dawned upon me that the media with the greatest potential to penetrate in a democracy is so heavily regulated by the government. The internship gave me a chance to explore my hypothesis in a greater depth since I spoke to a lot of experts in that field, gathered and compiled data under the guidance of the research associates and Dr. Parth J Shah at CCS. This particular paper was well-received and published widely. I resolved that the research findings would not be confined to only those who chose to read my article. Research has to be backed by active advocacy. My conviction took me places. Literally, as my essay based on this paper titled "**Community Radio: Play on the songs of Liberty**" was selected from 1000 videos and multimedia presentations from all over the world in an international competition and I was selected to attend *ISC-Symposium* in May 2005 at Switzerland. It was my first opportunity to interact with a global business community about the theme of the seminar “Trust, Liberty and Responsibility”. I was also one of the 20 meritorious students selected for an interactive session with Sir Ratan Tata at this occasion. It was a great moment to meet this corporate messiah. I got a chance to speak to him on diverse issues that concerned his company, his life and India’s positioning in the global corporate world.

Just after landing back to India I attended Austrian Economics Seminar (AES) - which was another amazing experience in itself! At the AES I got to know about the Austrian school of thinking about economic problems. This school can be described as “economics for real people” because the Austrian economists do not reduce “Homo economicus” into mere digits in statistical analysis. As a follow up to AES, my book review on the book ‘An Introduction to Austrian Economics’ (Thomas C. Taylor) was published in Hindustan Times Next on 8th October 2005.

‘Friends of Freedom’ is a forum for all those who wish to take the ideas of liberty forward. In an informal setup, we got together with like-minded people to discuss how we can further them in our own special ways.

As a part of this, I helped co-ordinate a lecture on “**Capital Markets**” by Prof. **Christopher Lingle** at my college’s annual finance seminar “Nexus 2005” at PHD Chambers of Commerce. His lecture was an eye-opener for many from my college to get exposed to CCS’s ideas and many were enthused to participate in LSS.

My article on careers in government relations and lobbying was published in **Economic Times** (“Under the Center’s Skin” 12 September 2005). I was excited to see it published in the national daily, especially because I wanted to share the opportunities that I came across after my research internship with CCS. No doubt these are niche professions but I tried to provide a plug for the undecided to envision the plethora of career-ops.

In continuing my efforts of reaching out, I went as far as Argentina to introduce the concepts of Liberty at the *South American Business Forum*. I was the only person to attend the conference from any Indian university. I am grateful for CCS’s support in this endeavor because without their financial and moral support, my journey across so many continents would have been impossible. I discussed about CCS’s activities with the directors of the event and gifted them some publications of CCS. I even suggested “Liberty, Law and Livelihood” as the topic for their subsequent forum. I participated actively in presentations and group activities and spread the idea about importance of “economic freedom” one of the group sessions.

To share my experiences at this international conference, I wrote an article which got published in a new Delhi-based newspaper “News Announcer”. In November, I was one of the 15 semifinalists for **India Habitat Young Visionary Award**- a national award. I had presented my paper on “Moral Policing- Limits of Reason” to audience at IHC. The audience and judges at the events were very impressed when I argued that “morality ends when coercion begins”. Of course, Dr. Parth helped me polish my arguments as a run up to the competition, for which I am eternally grateful.

As the editor of **eCatalyst**- the e-newsletter of CCS seminar graduates I have tried my best to bring out issues every quarter. Needless to say, the enthusiastic response from the readers prompted us to start a contest for the best literary contributor as a part of its anniversary celebrations. This time, Dr. Christopher Lingle wrote a book review as a guest columnist for eCatalyst. We have plans to publish eCatalyst print form, so it reaches to even greater numbers and can be even mailed.

Writing all this, at a threshold of a new year gives me immense joy. The promise of a new year and a greater opportunity to forward the ideas of liberty really makes me excited. My next step would be in line with my past achievements, for I cannot rest on laurels alone. I will not follow the path to where it may lead. I will continue to tread where there is no path and leave a trail.

Arun Mascarenhas
LSS Chennai 2001
Coordinator, Mangalore FOF
Rittle Friedholm LOH Group, German Manufacturing Company, Bangalore

I was selected for the LSS workshop in Chennai in the year 2001. After that it was all the radical ideas in my mind and I wanted to spread it. We were a group of 4 who wanted to do that change in Mangalore. So we invited the CCS team in the same year.

After that we started "Friends of Freedom" I purchased a VCR & DVD player and played the videos every week in my house, I also went to the extent of purchasing a small 14inch TV to show case the videos in the hostels for the students. It was a great going.

We four Arun Mascarenhas, Sushanth Salian, Manmohan PN and Raghava HS started the movement. Slowly we spread the movement in other districts and called Mr. Sauvik Chakraverti to give talks in other districts. We had FOF in 5 districts of Karnataka: Mangalore, Udupi, Coorg, Shimoga, Chikamangalur. We had 22 active members to arrange the logistics and other equipments at a call. We also arranged for tie up with School of Social Work Roshni Nilaya, Mangalore. We started the street vendors workshop and presentation. As of now Prof. Rita Noronha has coordinated all the movements. In November 2006, we are having a mega rally of street vendors in Mangalore.

Sumandro Chattapadhyay
LSS Ahmedabad 2003
MA Student, JNU, Delhi

My name is Sumandro Chattapadhyay. I have finished BA(H) in Economics from Visva-Bharati, Shantiniketan (<http://www.visva-bharati.ac.in>) and have topped my class. Presently, I am pursuing MA in Economics in Centre for Economic Studies & Planning in Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi (<http://www.jnu.ac.in>).

I first attended the Liberty & Society Seminar in Ahmedabad (November 2003). After that I have been the local coordinator for the Liberty, Art & Culture Seminar held in Kolkata (November 2004), participated in the Advanced Liberty & Society Seminar in the same year and spoken on Praxeology: The Austrian Method in the Austrian Economics Seminar (August 2005). Other than these above mentioned seminars organized by the Center for Civil Society, I have also participated in the Environment & Society Seminar organized by the Institute of Humane Studies in Seattle University (July 2004) and the Mises University organized by the Ludwig Von Mises Institute in Auburn (August 2004). I was also invited to present a paper in the Austrian Student Scholars' Conference (November 2004) but failed to do so because of financial constraints. I have presented a paper titled Social Exclusion and the (Dis)location of the 'Poor' in a National Seminar organized by Loyola College, Chennai (February 2006). I was awarded the first place in the 'Liberalism in Life' contest organized by CCS among the LSS graduates of 2004.

The first LSS I attended had a large impact upon me the person and the student. It would not be an overstatement to say that it was the singularly most important factor that got me interested in the discipline of economics. The experience opened up windows that allowed me to see how economic ideas are used and abused in shaping of policies, how the specific incentive structures affect human behaviour in day-to-day life, the wonder of the law of undesirable consequences etc. Exploration of these fundamental ideas has advanced with my further readings and experience, as well as through the seminars I have attended later on, in India and abroad.

From my early days of graduation I have been very interested in studying the alternative schools of thought within economics and in this context I am grateful to CCS for introducing me to the Austrian school of economic thought. I was able to further my interest in Austrian school by attending the Mises University organized by Mises Institute, which is the centre of Austrian academia in present world. This enriching experience was possible courtesy to CCS without whose financial help it would have been difficult for me to attend this session. CCS also allowed me to evaluate myself on the subject concerned when it asked me speak on the subject of Praxeology in the Austrian Economics Seminar.

Ideology-wise and hence opinion-wise I have never been a purist, partially because of my lack of understanding of any issue in its totality and partially because of my lack of belief that any issue can be understood in its totality. Hence throughout my adult academic life, I have jumped from one discipline to another to find answers to the questions haunting me. Seminars organized by CCS and conversations with

various persons directly or indirectly associated with CCS have proved to be a wonderful bouncing board for this mass of disjointed ideas of mine, against which I had the opportunity to evaluate my ideas and hence to evaluate myself. I sincerely hope that this treasured relation of mine with CCS will continue to be such an inspiring one in the future as well.

Megha Aggarwal
LSS Delhi 2004
BBS Student, College of Business Studies, DU

What is liberty for us? Is it free thinking, open thinking and standing out? OR
Is it the freedom to break rules, thinking out of the box, jumping red lights at traffic signals, smoking in public areas, indulging in fights to prove oneself always correct?

I learnt the true meaning of the word 'liberty' at LSS. People mould its true meaning to suit their needs and hidden desires. But is it justifiable? Is it acceptable that each individual does what he/she wishes for using any unethical, illegal means. LSS was one of the most fascinating experiences in my life, followed by AES and looking forward to more learning experiences with CCS. Great thinking comes when one is occupied by great noble thoughts.

"Live your life such that the undertaker has tears in eyes when you die."
A strong quote but this is what I felt after reading Ayn Rand's 'Fountainhead'. I will consider it as one of the biggest libertarian book. Reading imbibes humanitarian thoughts and makes one a good listener. To be a good speaker is an amazing quality but to be a calm listener is an exceptional, extraordinary quality.

Who loves rules and regulations? Who loves restrictions? But for nay individual, any organisation or any economy to work smoothly order and consistency are utmost requirements. Order can be defined in two ways:

- Order in its earliest era meant an organised, stable, smooth functioning of an economy, an organisation or an individual.
- But in the modern era we see order as a binding and rigid set or rules and regulations.

Freedom is a critical in the process of achieving order in society because we cannot predict which rules will work and which will fail. The creative powers of man is the main key to our progress and evolution. Imposing restrictions hampers creativity and thus inhibits growth and development. Creativity can be fostered by liberty and free methods.

To impose defined set of activities would force thinking in one direction and cease free flow of thoughts. Open up-two golden words, would enable healthy growth in this era of globalisation and liberalisation.

I believe that most essential aspect for the progress of an orderly society is the distribution of power among its citizens, participants as opposed to the concentration of power in the hands of the state. This allows society as a whole to experiment with the rules, formulated by its very own citizens and not by few wealthy central controllers.

The process of trial and error is very advantageous as it limits the impact of mistakes to a segment of society only where it is introduced and implemented. Rules that work will be observed, and absorbed into the social framework and thus

after its successful acceptance drafted as a law at a later stage. Risk-taking and rule-breaking are virtually impossible in small, intimate rural societies (India being a rural and agro-based economy where around 70 percent of our population still resides in villages).

The key question thus arises is 'what needs to be done', and 'how it can be done'. We all need to be more receptive towards change. 'There is nothing more permanent as change itself '. The media today is a compelling agent of this discourse and should continue to be so in future. At the current level of society, we need to question, discuss, debate and rethink some inherited traditions, their credibility and relevance in current scenario.

We need to question and engage ourselves in a constant rational and lateral thinking and rethinking of everything we feel blessed for or we take for granted. This would also bring the responsibility back on us, and not encourage us to put blame on the larger structures that we are associated with and are apart of blindly. It would make us accountable for everything we do, and with conscientiousness would come a sense of duty towards ourselves and towards a better and a greater world.

'Einstein once said that even if we store all the knowledge available in the world, we use only 1% of our brain.' So much is the power of one- kilogram of weight we carry around on our heads all the times.

If there are three words that are magical, they are: Ambition, Motivation and Competence.

- The first is easy and we all have it.
- The second is harder but if you can see into the future and have enough ambition, it is not too difficult to be motivated.
- The third is the hardest since it involves things beyond one's control. However, with hard work, it too is possible.

At LSS and being associated with CCS for more than 16months now, I have realized the importance of words-competence and consistency. I am self motivated and confident to raise my voice, and helping others too. CCS is a platform organising events for all interests-social arts, culture, economics, dramatics etc. I would follow-up with CCS to keep my spirit alive and my enthusiasm burning to make a change. I have been a regular respondent to e-catalyst, sending articles on money markets, sensex boom, bull run and have even corresponded with Christopher Lingle regarding the movements in Indian economy. He's been an upward learning curve in my financial career. What more can I ask from CCS.....

Well as we libertarians believe 'greed enhances development'. *The CCS is not just the centre for the civil society but epicentre for libertarian, humanitarian and equal society.*

I would be committed to e-catalyst by regularly sending my articles, briefs and notes, organising and helping in any events (especially for noble cause regarding investor education in Indian markets).

LSS - Plus (Leadership for Successful Self - Purposeful Learning for Universal Synergy)

Rarely does it happen that as you look into the mirror, you find a new person staring at you. It may set you thinking who must have changed or rather what must have changed. You are sure that it could not have been the outer skin as there are no visible signs. Though it is the outer skin that you are never tired of touching and will go to any lengths to change. You somehow feel the change in the inner skin that you never tried to touch and didn't even think existed. It takes only one event in a lifetime to make you feel that.

With your world turned upside down, you are then left wondering whether it was your earlier view of the world that was topsy-turvy. I immediately knew that I had to somehow make sense of the ever-dynamic milieu and needed a handy reference model. Also, I wanted this understanding to arrive with finger-snap quickness. The Liberty and Society Seminar (LSS) was the place I had least expected the juggernaut to start rolling.

Much before LSS had worked its magic on me, I had participated in the Jeevika documentary competition organized by the Centre for Civil Society (CCS). This was my first exposure to a Livelihood Issue. Stepping into a railway porter's slippers, I could observe the redness in the porters' weary eyes that made their red uniform paler in comparison. The load carried by the porters seemed much lighter than the burden of helplessness weighing on their minds. It was at LSS, where fed on a staple diet of livelihood documentaries, I could for the first time relate to my own research work. Suddenly, the porter seemed much more humane than what the caricature of a Coolie had allowed him to be. Even today, I retain my enthusiasm for observing the way people earn their living. I can now connect on an inexpressibly deeper level with the bus conductor, the milk vendor, the auto rickshaw man, the cycle rickshaw man, the barber and the cobbler. Their trials and tribulations are no longer their own, but reflect on how others and I have been perceiving them for ages.

On the road of awareness in my journey through life, LSS has proved to be a major milestone. The best part was that this milestone infused greater confidence to navigate the trip ahead with increased control and poise. Trained to be a journalist, I already had five assistants - What, When, Where, Which, Why - working full-time for me. However, I was paying more attention to the first four assistants. I had been giving step-brotherly treatment to my fifth assistant 'Why'. LSS has helped me regain my respect for this assistant and also made it my most beloved. Now, I not only gather the facts like a gold-digger, but also refine them like a goldsmith.

As a stepping-stone, LSS helped me reach out to the ladder of progressive ideas. The ladder provided a jumpstart to my ambitions by helping me stretch the arms of inquisitiveness towards the ever-widening horizon of knowledge. Economic freedom as a concept was not anywhere within the radar of my realization.

Unknowingly, I was a significant benefactor of The Tragedy of the Commons. Interaction with assertive speakers and peers, and inner action with myself during the exhilarating sessions at LSS, put things in the right perspective.

Post-LSS, I worked with an NGO on the Right to Information campaign. I was part of the team that visited a few public hospitals and audited them on several parameters including visitor-friendliness, information-readiness, user-navigation, etc. Owing to non-availability of proper information, chaos was the only thing seen to be prevailing in these centres of health. I was also part of visits to several communities where I listened empathically to members of the community voice their concerns. Adequate water, regular electricity and availability of ration were the issues that came up time and again. If the administration could not make people have access to even the basic amenities, then expecting decent educational standards and security for the citizens shall only be a distant dream. Reforming of perceptions along with useful information dissemination can create a new reality. But, can people be shaken out of their ennui of letting the status quo prevail? Will people act differently if they knew their rights? I was forced to look at my own life for answers. How was I approaching the unpleasant situations in my own life? It was at this time that I recalled and was able to apply the lessons I had learnt from the 'Researching Reality' field exercise and the working groups at LSS.

Though as a one-off experience, LSS may be transient in nature. However, as a guide to liberty consciousness, partly as a teacher of social dynamics and significantly as a mentor of individual personality, LSS is indispensable. It is the way a catalyst works; it initiates the chemical reaction and then steps back, and allows the reactants to mix on their own to create the products and the various byproducts. Surely, I wish to carry the chain reaction forward. Cleanliness in public places, disposal of electronic waste, developing a sustained fundraising model for NGOs and designing a legislature-electorate interface are the issues I am committed to. I want to use the platform provided by CCS to reach out to both the youth as well as the youthful.

Frankly, I did not choose LSS; it chose me and I am glad for it. I had walked into Jamia Hamdard with expectations galore and thoughts aplenty. I walked out of Jamia Hamdard with blooming questions and brewing ideas. This has made all the difference.

May a million thought-leaders blossom in the garden called 'LSS' mindscaped by CCS!

I was a student from Bangalore, hailing from a middle class family, who always thought that the inflow of MNCs into India was for the benefit of everyone because I saw its benefits reaching my family and people around me. But, my entry to LSR College changed it all. It opened my eyes to the 'atrocities' committed due to open borders. This was the time when I applied to LACS.

Being the ever inquisitive I am, my four days at the seminar was spent throwing questions at all the speakers. How is life after LACS?

I am still questioning. I will be eternally thankful to CCS for showing me the other side of the picture. I aspire to be a journalist, it is very important for me not to be swayed by one ideology/stream of thought. I have tried to research more about all the topics we discussed during those four days. I have read umpteen books, and held discussions running into hours with my classmates and friends. I always find that after these discussions and debates I become a new person with more knowledge and so do my friends. There are many people who make fun of our small 'debating society'. LACS has not only changed me but even my friends who had not even heard of it!!

I write regularly for various publications. The articles I wrote after I attended the seminar, my teacher said, had a slight slant towards the right! It was unintended, of course. However, this goes to show the effect LACS had on me. This was the time I understood that it is important to have a stand on a particular issue and be conscious of the slant rather than attempt at being balanced.

I'm a part of another organization, outside college, which invites eminent people to talk about various issues concerning us, in this globalizing world. My fellow mates here are surprised at my questions and so were a few 'bigwig' leftist speakers. This ability to hold up the positives of liberalization when it is brought out that there is none, is thanks to LACS.

I have always believed that inter-personal, casual talk held in a bus stop, play ground or parties has always had more effect on people than a formal conference, seminar or lecture. In most of those 'petty talks' I find that I have changed many minds about their perception on today's changing times.

The biggest benefit that LACS has done to me (as a student of media) is, that it has opened my eyes to many fantastically made movies. It was a delight to watch so many movies. The first thing we (Nishtha, another LACS graduate and me) did was to collect more movies by eminent film makers and screen them through our film society, Projekt. It was amazing how many movies we found which exposed the flaws in the governance and how various governments around the world have made laws which have adverse effects on its citizens. Some were direct references others were not, but we were trained enough to catch subtle references.

Another thing that has drastically changed since LACS is the outlook towards poverty and helplessness. Now, we look at poverty as a relationship and not a condition. The knowledge of the fact that the government's policies have been anti-poor, while they claim to be the exact opposite has helped me a great deal because I work with an organization called Udayan- which provides shelter to more than 14 homeless children- where my orientation towards those needy children has seen a sea change.

However, I must admit that I have not completely given in to the idea of capitalism; I now know that it is inevitable, given the global trends. I will always be thankful to CCS for opening a new window of myriad ideas, which would have never reached us otherwise.

Parashar Kulkarni
LSS Bhopal 2003
Researcher, CENTAD, Delhi

With the growing linkage of the academic constructs of liberalism to its allegedly repulsive forms such as multinational imperialism and hegemonist capitalism, we as students are in complete chaos as to what liberalism stands for? Our fertile minds are so often sown with hybrid and genetically modified seeds that the true untampered seeds of the subject are far from what is projected.

Then came LSS Bhopal 2003, my first sincere exposure to the realms of liberalism. The basic tenets of individual freedom, limited government, freer markets and private ownership began making sense when placed parallel to license permit raj, public-money guzzling public sector enterprises and government intrusion in all aspects of individual life; from saffronising textbooks to regulating public display of affection.

After Parth's session on "Why is the chicken not endangered", I wondered why didn't anybody think of this when the dodos were nearing extinction. Applying the same principle of looking at market based interventions in social and economic problems I wrote an article for e-catalyst, which looks at how artists can use markets to promote creative art over commercial art in order to prevent dilution of their original creative expressions.

While working at CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics and Environment, I read the pre budget 2004 articles quite enthusiastically. A particular issue that engaged my attention was how different stakeholders in the edible oil industry; the importers, solvent extractors, refined oil producers etc, were demanding revisions in the government's edible oil policy by regularly publishing petitions on how the current policy, especially import tariff policy was ruining their business. Observing the chaos, I along with my senior ventured into understanding the current situation, and after some analysis wrote a big editorial in a leading business newspaper, on the current policy dimensions and how the government should stop being protectionist and look at the benefit of consumers at large (another libertarian principle of freer markets). The editorial was much liked by interested readers and along with other letters we also received a commendation from the President of the national edible oil producers association that our article was an eye opener. Interestingly the final policy that emerged was quite close to the one we recommended.

Subsequent to LSS I have ensured that we at CUTS bring a libertarian angle to our work, and avoid the rhetorical anti capitalist mindset that engulfs most development NGOs at some point in their trajectory. I have ensured that our library consists of books such as *Morality of Markets*, *Friedman on India*, *The Law* by Frederic Bastiat and also those which apply market based principles to environment protection, sustainable development and trade policy so that my colleagues are aware and open to thinking of libertarian oriented solutions to address policy issues.

I have also studied how our cross-country projects can use libertarian ideas. In the CUTS advocacy document on South-South trade I encapsulated the fact that we have to move away from trying to promote trade using the tools of trade agreements (involving government interventions) towards trying to push the private sector to reduce transaction costs, increasing information flow and making government trade control activities more simpler and predictable. This clearly applies libertarian ideas of promoting perfect knowledge, reducing government interventions and promoting private sector initiatives.

As I delved deeper into what I learnt at LSS, I realised that libertarianism was just not about economics and governance but a mindset, a new approach towards leading one's life. The documentary "Role of greed in society" at the LSS was truly an eye opener. The typical mindset that one cultivates as a social researcher; adulation towards those who leave earthly pleasures for helping the poor (read Mother Teresa) and contempt for the profit minded businessmen (read Bill Gates), was buried by realising that more employment, more income, more access to resources and more poverty alleviation is created by these allegedly greedy people than by any form of charity. Accepting people, as objectivist self-gratifying individuals and reducing expectations from people to display unnecessary virtuosity are some of the life long lessons, which to an extent, I can attribute to LSS.

In the future I intend to contribute to CCS publications as I have done before. I will also like to participate in CCS seminars as a presenter, so that I can provide examples of how we have used libertarian concepts in our research and advocacy interventions. I intend to persuade my organisation to organise a CCS training activity for our research staff, which work on several policy consulting, research and advocacy projects. Finally I intend to drop by the CCS office for some free tea and biscuits, which I haven't done so far since I have realised that there is nothing called a free lunch, another lesson from CCS.

I attended the Liberty and Society Seminar (LSS), Delhi from Oct 28 to 31, 2004 and oh boy, it made for some exciting experience! Considering it a privilege and an honour to have been invited to such a 'residential seminar', I proudly announced my absence from college to my friends for these couple of days. But I was simply clueless as to what the seminar actually held in store for me and 40 other such undergraduate students. From the itinerary I somewhat gathered that the seminar would discuss issues related to economics and politics and which a final year student of economics from Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi University must attend. And thus I reached Jamia Hamdard, Convention Centre, Seminar Hall-2 to meet people, listen to new ideas and debate issues that would remarkably alter my life and thought process.

What happened at the seminar is very well known and is by now, of course, history. But what happened thereafter is what makes up the subject of my essay.

The Liberty and Society Seminar with its intelligently designed schedule encouraged us to think 'out of the box'. And this bee stung me so hard that not only did I realize my being a liberal always but that I emerged a greater liberal than before.

At the very beginning, I considered it important to share with the teachers of my department the valuable experience of the seminar and the novel ideas I came across. Understandably, I got a mixed response. And interestingly, at just about that time we were being taught capitalism as a market form in one of our papers called Economic Systems and so the discussion was rather well timed. Several of my friends and also some teachers came up with very strong arguments as to why the market cannot resolve all issues and cannot be resorted to for answering several important questions. In fact, to be honest, I almost felt my new ideology to be threatened at certain times. Yet I persevered and did manage to share with my friends in the tutorial classes the benefits of globalisation, how law intends to do good but does more harm because of the 'law of the invisible hand', how the market can flourish and genuinely cater to the needs of the people by not only providing the required goods and services but also providing them with a comforting, enriching and enhanced experience.

Thus I invited Dr. Parth Shah to make a presentation on the Economics of Environment for the students of the Economics Department. The presentation was well received and has created several enthusiasts who are now eager to hear more of the liberal ideas and wish to attend the forthcoming seminars.

In keeping with the momentum, I as coordinator of the society, Academic Forum, invited CCS to screen 'Greed' by John Stossel and follow it up with a discussion. Shruthijit and Saumya indeed managed to get the audience talking, several of whom despised the idea of big business houses making so much money. Yet they managed to get the message across that making money should not be considered a

sin but impressed the fact that it actually works as a wonderful incentive to improve performance and genuinely deliver.

Our trip to Deepalaya was the most moving experience. It truly showed the power of civil society where the sincere will of people can really move the mountain. Deepalaya, a school for underprivileged and handicapped children launched by a non profit organization showed how the needs of the society can be met by the collective participation of the people and without any government help or coordination. The success of this school made us question the efficiency of the government run schools and also made us discuss the education system in India. This made for a rather hot subject at my college where even a very rudimentary survey I did showed the discontent students feel about the current education system, their skepticism about its privatization and yet the former outdid the latter. For issues like this and several others like privatization of prostitution and the use of censorship (though there are a few converts), the debate between my friends and me goes on....

A thought that struck me most during the seminar was that India has lived the first 57 of its independent years under so much regulation of the State and yet it has failed to become a developed nation. This clearly shows that there is something wrong in our approach to development and questions the effectiveness of our dependence on the government. This definitely set me thinking and made me discuss this issue with my teachers at college. They made for very patient listeners and after much discussion and pondering I am of the opinion that India could not have afforded to be a purely capitalist society with the State playing only a minor role in the initial years of its independence. The British literally left our country in shambles and probably the government only could have done the work of putting the nation together. But now of course the time is right (and in a way it's 'high time') that we allow the market forces to determine the allocation of resources and keep the participation of the government to the minimum i.e. to those key areas where the efficient distribution of resources is entirely beyond the reach of the market.

Ever since I attended LSS, I'm more attentive about every little transaction I enter into. Even buying a ticket in a blue line bus is no more just another of those routine mindless tasks because I think about how efficiently the bus or rather the public transport system functions, whether they make enough profits, why are the buses unclean, why some buses manage to care for their riders and others don't, why do buses plying on the same route tend to overtake each other etc. etc.!

But the ideas I picked up at LSS also caused me some distress. Because it made me debate with myself about everything I ever chanced upon to do. For example, I did a six weeks law course at college called 'The Rights of Women under Law'. There a session came up with a thought that 'capitalism actually reinforces patriarchy'. To some extent its true and I'm wondering if such a form of capitalism is possible where both the sexes are respected equally and have equal opportunity to participate in the functioning of any organization or economic set up. Maybe CCS can consider addressing the relation of liberty and gender in its future seminars.

Likewise, I sometimes find myself running into odd situations where I do tend to question the viability of such a libertarian option but I'm sure its only natural ('cause change is inevitable and hard to accept!). In fact the seminar itself gave rise to situations, where in the wake of heated and furious arguments between the scholars, my beliefs and opinions were put to test. And that is where I was able to realize that my conviction levels about certain issues are just so high. I truly owe to CCS these moments of revelation. (I'm sure CCS would remember me the next time it discusses the relevance of Mother Teresa and recollect that moment of high tension and drama!)

Despite the debate and discussion that is now part of my life, I'm glad that CCS has managed to initiate a new line of thought and has definitely been successful in its endeavour. 'An independent think tank' which has taken upon the challenge to change mindsets and suggest alternatives in dealing with pressing issues, it has definitely found a loyalist in me. No wonder I'm proud to consider myself a part of the new-found liberal family where entrepreneurial abilities are acknowledged and respected and making money and profits is no more looked down upon. Kudos, CCS!

Shruti Rajagopalan
LSS Delhi 2003, Intern 2003
Law student, Delhi University

My journey of liberalism in life started more by default than by design with what seemed like a harmless internship at the Centre for Civil Society. It then blossomed into what I call an all consuming 'way of thinking' spilling over to every aspect of life and behaviour. Like any book, life has its chapters, and I write my story as a *trilogy in four parts*¹. A trilogy because it seems to be doing rather well as a mode of story-telling of late and I can think of three distinct academic phases in the last few years; the fourth part because the journey is ongoing and it is too soon to conclude it.

Part I- Being Rescued

When I applied to CCS for the public policy summer internship, it was to explore the area of policy formulation in the realm of economics, in which I had no previous experience. However, as I came for the first day of orientation in May 2003, I had very strong views which were full of clichés. I believed the law was perfect and its implementation lacked rigour, the system was corrupt because of a few rich businessmen, profit was a bad word and all we needed in India was a better and stricter set of penalties to implement existing laws to wish our problems away. This was one of the reasons I wanted to be a lawyer as these issues could be resolved by the judiciary.

My journey began with being rescued from my preconditioned ideas, which were probably not even my own. I learnt to take nothing for granted and question everything presented before me. I was given the task of evaluating a government department and an economic legislation. The government department was the Directorate of Prohibition which seems like one of the better welfare schemes of the government to be applauded by common people, because aren't policies against alcohol consumption leading to a better society? Within just a few days of my work I realised the two faced-ness of the government, as on one hand it had a keen interest to increase liquor sales because it imposed excise on alcohol and on the other hand it pretended to reduce alcohol consumption with a large department which was paid to do its job badly. Similarly analysing the financial legislation called the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Bill proved difficult as it took us weeks to even get a copy of the bill! I learnt to distinguish between laws on paper which are bound to never be followed and those which are just badly drafted. Though the projects in the internship were limited and specific, the tools learnt in the process are invaluable even today. As I read books and cases as a law student, I use the same methodology I used then. The pillars I lean on are Rule of Law², individual liberty and what I believe is the limited role of

¹ It's the same way, one of my favourite authors, Douglas Adams has described The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy.

² Rule of law today has a perverted meaning donned under the cover of welfare states. A party to this perversion has been the United Nations which believes in welfare legislations and abridging individual fundamental rights for 'greater common good', whatever that may mean. The Rule of Law I am referring to is Dicey's version which was simply three things:

1. Separation of Powers and the absence of arbitrary power of the government
2. Generality of laws of equality of all before the law

government in society. In this context it is important to clarify that I completely endorse Hayek's view that social welfare states are a negation of Rule of Law because it confers large arbitrary powers on the state.

The internship changed my life in many ways. First, I began to think and question for myself and didn't take any authors or experts (including liberals) for granted. It also made me begin to read books that changed my life. The first author I began to read was Ayn Rand whose theories on individualism and objectivism struck home. Outside of course work, I began to read Adam Smith, whose book I feel has answers to most problems we face even today, if we look carefully.

The rescue operation was complete with Liberty and Society Seminar in August 2003. The great thing about LSS is that it provides a battle field for ideas (and our group was truly at war) and it also provides the weapons to fight our own intellectual and ideological battles. The series of lectures such as *Why is India Poor* and the lecture on Population left a lasting impact. Another aspect was the John Stossel videos on *Greed* and *Sex Drugs and Consenting Adults* which so accurately portrayed all sides of the story leading to the obvious rational and liberal conclusion.

Part II- Liberal Warfare

Liberal warfare or the war of liberal ideas with those of welfare ideas perhaps has an even more lasting impact on the world than nuclear or bio-warfare. Armed with my weapons after LSS even I went on a self proclaimed war. I used every forum I could find to think, express and evolve. One of the vents for this newly acquired energy was debating at the University level. My debating partner (Ruchika Khattar, also an LSS graduate) and I shared similar views and aired them strongly and cogently, making us a formidable pair winning many prizes. Of these I would like to mention two; one on the Pitfalls of globalisation and liberalisation in India, which I strongly opposed and the second on privatisation of primary education where I argued that privatisation in education and creation of private as opposed to government monopolies is hardly an answer and we need to create competition through choice by changing to a voucher system. Incidentally I won both. Another area where my liberal ideas struck home was a paper presentation on the *Dabbawallahs of Mumbai - A Micro Market Study*. In this presentation I broke the illusion that the *dabbawallahs* are efficient because they are handpicked by God to be good without greed, and pointed out that though they were the only Tiffin association in Mumbai seemingly making them a monopoly, they faced competition right from the hawker selling *vadapau's* to Mc Donald's Happy Price menu. They were efficient because they would otherwise be substituted with outside food and they were cheap because the cost of making the food at home and sending the *dabba* over must be cheaper than eating out. I was thrilled when this article was published and the presentation received the first prize in a premier university competition. Another exciting contribution to policy formulation was when my research was used in the first Delhi Handbook which I also helped in editing.

3. Most importantly, Constitution as a consequence of individual rights and not individual rights deriving recognition from the constitution.

Academically, LSS and the tools I learnt there changed my life. To begin with, due to my internship and LSS and all that followed, I got accepted at Oxford University for a BA in Law; one I couldn't accept due to financial reasons. My third year Economics Honours curriculum had interesting papers such as Economic Systems (where the various systems such as capitalism, socialism and feudalism are compared and debated upon) and Development Problems and Policy (where there was great room for debating various interventionist and non interventionist government policies for problems such as poverty, unemployment and marginalisation). Armed with the ten commandments of liberalism I critically examined each author and topped my final year in College. I also began to read voraciously and tried to apply liberal values to every possible real and hypothetical situation. It was during this period that I decided to pursue Law at University of Delhi to analyse where our policies are going wrong at the legislation stage and also to what extent the judiciary must intervene in these situations.

Part III- A Giant Leap

After completing Economics Honours and joining a Graduate School, one feels one knows a fair amount about the world and now the magic is in applying it. This attitude received two blows in my first and second year. First; when I was introduced to a field called Law and Economics and second; when I attended the Austrian Economics Seminar in August 2005. It is through these experiences that I took a giant leap academically and settled on my career plans.

Law and economics was introduced to me by Parth in one of our many informal discussions as he asked me if I considered doing an economic analysis of laws. This intrigued me and I read more on the subject and decided to attend lectures of the only person teaching it in Delhi, Prof TCA Anant. I have in the past year read volumes on the subject of the economic efficiency of labour laws, criminal litigation, tort law and how the correct imposition of liability will determine whether the markets remain free or get distorted. Though I am far from an expert on the subject, the discoveries I made using the same tools; rule of law, individual liberty, free markets and trade were fascinating. In one of the ten libertarian commandments we learn the road to hell is paved with good intentions; and while analysing laws I realised the system is failing because most of the times the laws hurt the ones they hope to protect. B.R Shenoy once said, "The task before the policy reformer is indeed overwhelming. The situation provokes the prayer; 'Good Lord, protect me from my friends; against mine enemies, I can defend myself.'" And this is exactly what I inferred as I analysed Labour Laws (Industrial Disputes Act, 1947) three decades later.

In the last two decades the policy formulation has taken a dangerous road, one where the Judiciary and not the Legislature is the front runner. The consequence is that there is no analysis done regarding the economic effect of any law; how it may distort choices and try to curtail a free market. We have seen a clear example of this in the *Delhi Vehicular Pollution Case* where the Supreme Court imposed its orders for a blanket conversion to CNG by a coercive command and control mechanism as opposed to using market mechanisms like lead and sulphur vouchers which have worked successfully abroad. It is indeed important that such an economic analysis must precede the laws and not be in hindsight. This becomes impossible in cases where the courts formulate the law, and there is no review of

the Supreme Court Judgements. My career goal is to pursue my Masters in Law and Economics and help in policy formulation in India by preceding legislation with economic analysis and reviewing Supreme Court judgements.

The leap was completed with the Austrian Economics Seminar this August. When I went for the seminar, I was familiar with the brief history and ideology of the school and its key members, and did not have a clear idea of what I was about to learn. But now I can confidently say that introduction to the Austrian School of Economics has changed my life. All the ideas I had followed instinctively so far, now had academic backing. What I found fascinating about the school was that its authors in their various prophecies had followed the singular road of individual liberty and arrived at fascinating conclusions. The predictions about socialism, especially those of von Mises and Hayek, which we appreciate more today, were singularly based on the foundations of upholding individual dignity and turned out to be the greatest philosophies propounded in the Twentieth Century. These principles helped me form my own ideology regarding various issues affecting individual rights. I submitted an essay on Euthanasia, Theology and Suicide for the *Manupatra* Essay Competition titled *Full Circle* and took the view that every individual has the right to live and live with dignity, and therefore attempted suicide must not be a criminal offence simply because there may be a religious sanction against this victimless crime. In the same essay I also advocated legalising passive euthanasia in India. I share a similar view on other victimless crimes such as homosexuality and adult prostitution where I follow the 'harm principle' propounded by John Stuart Mill and advocated by Prof Hart. In another essay on Judicial Intervention I endorsed Hayek's view of Rule of Law and limited government, by extending it to limiting the role of the judiciary in India. In a paper for the Jharkhand Handbook I advocated principles of limited government as there is no reason for the government to enter the market of building houses. Even more recently I wrote an article called the Economics of Colour and used the *pareto* optimality approach to determine how to formulate policies in situations where the initial endowment of individuals is wiped out due to natural calamities. However the greatest gift I received from the Austrian Economics Seminar was introduction to www.mises.org. I immediately bought a copy of the Road to Serfdom which I believe is one of the most influential books of the last century. Closer home the prophetic BR Shenoy and his writings are still relevant many decades later and provide me with answers to many policy questions even today. I also became a member of Spontaneous Order where I enjoy participating frequently in heated debates with other LSS and AES graduates.

Part IV- Creative Destruction

Like Prof Schumpeter I believe that existing ideas must give way to better ideas. On the basic foundation based on individual freedom, the process of creative destruction must take its own course for the evolution of human society. My journey is in a similar phase where I am exploring various areas of public policy and trying to evolve new ideas to improve on existing approaches. One such area has been the Access to Information laws in India on which I worked for a substantial part of last year. I was an integral part of the legislative process as PILSARC (Public Interest Legal Support and Research Centre) made parliamentary submissions based on my research. I have written two Working Papers for PILSARC on *Development of Freedom of Information Laws in India* and *Sunlight is the Best*

Disinfectant- Right to Information Act 2005. This has been my first major contribution towards policy formulation and my analysis suggested that *suo moto* publishing of information must be wider and access must also include private players in public utilities.

The current turn this journey has taken, is teaching economic systems to students of third year economics in Delhi University. Parth once told me the best way to learn a subject is to teach it; and in the process of teaching students basics of various systems, I have learnt much more as I read various schools especially the von Mises institute's teachings on every area of economics I teach. In fact the heated debates that take place during my lectures on teachings of Marx or on Schumpeter's Creative Destruction are so inspiring and many times go way beyond the prescribed curriculum, making it more a discussion amongst peers.

I have tried to sum up the past few years of life in which I have imbibed and applied libertarian principles in my work and my life and will continue to tread new uncharted paths. The only parallel I can find to the way my journey has unfolded is one of Alice tumbling down the rabbit hole in Alice in Wonderland.

Anindita Ghose
LACS Mumbai 2005
Masters Student, Mumbai University

I need no warrant for being, and no word of sanction upon my being. I am the warrant and the sanction. Ayn Rand, Anthem, 1946.

Ever since I first read Rand, way back when I was in school, there was something in what she said that was terribly attractive to me. I didn't know what it was exactly. It seemed to be everything but then again, it seemed that there was some core idea that I especially liked.

The Fountainhead was a cult hit in my peer groups. We were all Roarks. Or at least we all wanted to be on the edge of that cliff. But gradually, my friends started *outgrowing* her ideas. We started reasoning out Objectivism: juvenile, impractical, idealistic? I can say that I'm not affected by opinions around me, but I would be lying. I was confused. I definitely didn't want to be too 'idealistic': those ones seemed to end up in asylums or in underpaid voluntary jobs.

Then, around that same time, a graphologist told me that I write my 'I's very strong, too much of individualism. She said it was unhealthy. I pondered on it, wondered if I was selfish or unsocial. Decided I was neither.

I do truly believe that the purpose of our lives is just that, our life. To live it the way we want, with dignity and freedom. I'm willing to help people who are ready to help themselves; I'm willing to work towards providing equal opportunities for people. But I'm definitely not okay with charity. It's a concept I don't understand at all.

I had all these scattered thoughts, and then there was LACS, which I attended in Mumbai in November 2005. It helped me orient my thoughts into one consolidated body. A four day seminar cannot purge out everything that is in you and fill you up with completely new ideas...no, that would be a very superficial change but what it can do is help you string your already existing strands of ideology, belief systems and bring it together.

I have a tendency to be dramatic in my declarations (possible influences of years with a theatre group) but I feel liberated after LACS. There has been a change in the way I react to the world around me, and more than that it has instilled in me the conviction that I can be make those changes I want to see being made.

This ideological ferment has spilled onto everything; whether it's incorporating economics books and periodicals in my daily library reading routine to understand classic liberalism to a greater depth, wearing the oversized *Fund students, not schools* CCS t-shirt for my evening jog or finding it totally hilarious that newspapers in Bombay carried lead stories about the Right to information Bill and about cable operators being banned from screening U/A and A movies; side by side as completely paradoxical instances of liberty, a week ago.

I can't boast about completed projects, it's been only a month. After a few debates with the Head of my Department, I changed my M.A final year term paper

topic to 'Liberalism and Language'. That was a tad unexpected, though I wouldn't say hasty. But I'd been reading up post LACS and I simply had to reflect upon all of that. As a student of Linguistics I could comment on Hayek's example of language as a complex human institution that has come about by human action.

My professor, on hearing my topic change, had a socialist axe to grind. He opined that liberalism was about fence sitting. About a redemption of institutions and beliefs and plunging into no man's land. That ticked me for a while but I made peace with it; people who call themselves "liberal" today are perhaps by-and-large fence-sitters on individual issues but that doesn't mean that liberalism is a philosophy that encourages fence-sitting. That is probably why according to Michael Moore "liberal" today is a dirty word in America.

I also discussed with Dr. Padma Prakash, the editor of the online social science journal *esocialsciences* about writing a detailed article about certain specific issues discussed at LACS.

The student's council of the University of Mumbai has already agreed to screen *Jeevika* documentaries. I'm waiting for the next FoF meeting to work out the logistics.

I believe in magic. Not the sort that brings rabbits out of hats but the sort that strings together events in one's life and makes one believe that every little thing one does fits into the larger jigsaw puzzle. LACS and all the ideas that it bought about did.

Just a week before LACS, my department at the University hosted a national seminar. It was purely academic and dealt with the notion of Text and Context in Literature, History and so on. I met one of the leading linguists in the country, Probal Dasgupta; an out and out leftist who also happens to be a leading figure in the worldwide Esperanto movement. Esperanto was not discussed in the seminar at all (it isn't generally discussed in seminars, a fact that embitters the proponents furthermore); this was informally during the tea break.

He explained that talking in Esperanto -an artificially constructed language invented by the Polish philologist L. L. Zamenhof 1887- is the only way to be 'free' because you aren't taking part in any domination of sorts. Language domination is this case. At face value, this seemed to be very libertarian. He also said that it isn't Anglo domination that he is particularly against but language domination of any kind because by say 2050, Spanish will be the most powerful language simply because the Spanish speaking Roman Catholics are multiplying at a very fast rate as a direct result of the Vatican's ban on birth control.

I had heard about councils, which govern the usage of Esperanto worldwide to ensure that no dialectification takes place, that every speaker uses the standard variety. Now this appeared to be very restricting. The English have been wise; it is only by the given freedom of its usage that their language is top of the charts today.

I could not fathom how a new, artificial construct could be thrust upon people.

It gives no scope at all to spontaneous human action to add/improvise/modify any aspect of it. Even to get the world saying 'hello' in Esperanto would be a massive task. That energy could be used for far more pressing issues like fighting AIDS. Esperanto hasn't really been a successful movement. After 100 years there are still no more than 2 million speakers. In some sense the artefacts of its design have held it back. It will have loosen control of its syntax and allow for more exceptions if it is to be accepted all over the world.

What was this about equating Esperanto and freedom then?

During LACS, specifically during a random conversation with Parth and Gautam it occurred to me that Hayek's instance of language as a result of human action, of spontaneously emerging relationships, is a total antithesis to whatever Esperanto stands for. Or atleast what Dasgupta as a Marxist believes that Esperanto stands for. And his opinion, given his stature as a linguist is of immense significance (to a student of linguistics atleast).

So I got down to reading up on this. Apart from compilations of Hayek's essays, I also found Public policy pamphlets published by University of Chicago in the late 1930's on freedom and the economic system. These quaint old publications were interesting.

Hayek used the notion the slogan (= result of human action and not human design=) encapsulates as a principal tool of analysis of economic and social institution. And in *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, he denies that the systematic character of law comes about because people designed the legal system.

What is of greatest significance to economists, of course, is that he uses the notion of unplanned order to explain the market economy. In contrast with centrally directed socialism, the market permits people to share information. If no one planned the rise of market capitalism. Conversely, is it possible to design language use? Since Hayek uses the example of language to base his theory, this invitation to investigate the validity of this very claim of his that language comes about spontaneously, is very interesting.

Right after LACS, I went to Goa to attend the International Film Festival. Ordinarily I might not have picked up on this since this was a holiday. The news media in Goa is embroiled in a massive linguistic controversy. Konkani written in the Roman script has been denied Government support (since 1987, and the Official Language Act). There has been a lot of discussion/controversy over the script used for Konkani. The reason for this is the use of various different scripts for the language - based on the regions where its spoken. Its written in Roman and Nagari scripts in Goa, Kannada script in Karnataka, Malayalam script in Kerala. As of now the Government wants to promote the Devnagri script at the cost of the Konkani written in the Roman script, to the extent that it dies out completely.

The validity of the Devnagari lobby's claim that Konkani cannot be sufficiently expressed in the Roman script is another matter altogether. But 'denying Government support' amounts to an attempt to murder a language variety and this is pretty much an issue of Freedom of expression. Restricting the use of a language

is not just what it appears to be, it is about killing a medium, which would lead to the slow demise of an entire way of thinking. Banning a medium amounts to banning the expression itself.

Besides, if Language is a spontaneous order and no single individual or group thought it up how does it make sense to make such impositions? Language has its own rules of grammar, and it continues to evolve as mankind advances.

The fundamental obstacle that confronts any theory of the invention of language is a paradox succinctly stated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau: "Words seem to have been necessary in order to establish the use of words." To invent a new word is an easy task, once people already speak a language; but how can an entire language be invented? Invention implies conscious thought, but how can one construct a language when thinking presupposes the use of words?

Bringing things to perspective, a Marxist campaigning for Esperanto is not just about fighting Anglo-dominance, and it isn't about 'being free'. Marxists, Conservatives and others who harbour a Planning mentality about society at large see a lot of structure in the way society functions cannot fathom that free individual human action can create and sustain institutions. To them everything must be designed, even Language.

So LACS has given me direction even in my academic endeavors apart from solidifying a general libertarian outlook in life. It has straightened out my views on language domination; just like things exist in the market because of consumer demand, languages thrive or die because of usage. One cannot try to introduce an artificial order, it won't work. Individuals and their choices need to be respected, their personal variations of language need to be celebrated.

Because all of us are so many different I's after all. I don't mean to say that I believe in a self centered, selfish society. But I do feel like Roark again, standing at the edge of the cliff, the master of all I survey. And what's more is that, I have absolutely no problem with everyone having their own master-of-all-I-survey cliffs.

Sneha Jha
LSS Hyderabad 2005
Law Student, NALSAR Hyderabad

Who decides?

Every morning I wake up and skim through the daily newspaper, and the same feelings run through me, disillusioned, dismayed and helpless. Where is my country heading no one knows. I wish the soaring the Sensex was an indicator, but the sudden boom seems to extend to the FMCG sector, the new economy stocks and not to the nation as a whole. I wonder have I done my bit, I know the answer is no. This particular write up for me was just a way to air my views and do my bit for once. I am writing this with the belief that anyone who goes through this will ponder for a minute, and that is when my bit would be done. And then I would be proud to be a CCS graduate in the true sense.

The memories of the first day at Liberty and Society Seminar (LSS), Hyderabad, August 2005 is still afresh because for once someone was talking about different perspectives. For me it was the first Seminar I had been invited for and yes, like everyone else I was on cloud number nine when I got the official invitation. After I had read Atlas Shrugged by Ayn Rand my entire philosophy of life had gone a sea change. Capitalism was the 'in thing'. But it was hard for me to convince people that all your life you run after things only for selfish gains and after all there is nothing wrong in being selfish. And here I was at LSS where people actually believed that money is the biggest motivation and running after profits is running your life well. I was so kicked after watching 'Greed'. I felt at home. The best thing was frankly I had never been an Economics person I used to dread anything related to business. I grew up with a kind of Economic Times phobia. Till I attended LSS and realized every sphere of my life had so much of economics involved and it was not all that bad after all. It all seemed so much enjoyable. And now, it is as if I can read economics into the most mundane affairs.

Recently I had to present a paper on Euthanasia, at a Bioethics Conference organized by Indian Journal of Medical Ethics (IJME) in Mumbai from 24th to 25th November, 2006. This paper was co-authored by a friend. I came up with a solution to how expensive health care facilities should be brought within the purview of every individual so that denial of health care does not amount to asking for euthanasia; give people in low economic group, loans with prime lending rate being bearable for them. This may not be the most unique thing but I was proud of myself now that I could finally utilize what LSS had taught me.

Now I shall travel back in time and come back to LSS, Hyderabad. What I am going to narrate now is something that inspired me and I carried it back home. Our seminar which had commenced on 4th August, 2005 had been going on for a while and soon it was drawing to an end, this was the third day, 6th of August, 2005 and we had a debate. The topic for our group was Censorship and our group was to contend in favor of it. I was visibly delighted. Our debate went on and our group's strongest contention was that it should be we as individuals who should be given the choice to decide what we wish to view and hence the contents should be a matter of sole discretion. After all the entire censorship board cannot decide for

crores of people. As for children no one can judge better than their parents, moreover curbing would lead to heightened curiosity and children would definitely find other means to view. Our judge so to say was Mr. Mohit, a part of the CCS and he made point in the end he said, "I have an eight year old son and no one would know better than me what he should watch. No one can think better than the parents themselves what the child should watch and at what age. And moreover the Censor board cannot be allowed to govern what I should watch." This one remark left an indelible mark in my mind. After that a day later the seminar came to an end and we all packed our bags went back and I carried this with me.

That observation with passage of time got buried in my intellect until recently when one of India's oldest High Courts, the Bombay High Court decreed that cable operators cannot air movies with Adult certification that I recalled those words. It was the first thing that came to my head instantaneously. This judgment compelled me to write something about an issue I have fervently been against. The ratio decidendi of the Court being that since these movies are not subject to any scrutiny hence the Judiciary had to take the onus upon itself to act as a pre-censor board. I was flabbergasted. After all as John Locke had said, "The end of the law is, not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom." And here the law was ending freedom of choice rather than making attempts to safeguard it. I guess the Courts do not recognize the ideals of liberty and freedom.

Which century were we living in and who decides what I want to watch after all? I can ensure everyone with my miniscule knowledge of history, people thousands of years ago where more open. Are we curbing ideas, freedom of expression? In 2005 a highly acclaimed movie hit the theatres; **Black** it had been certified by our noteworthy Censor Board as Adult grade, how many of you reading this ever felt that there was any such need? Questions and question, it has been pouring like cats and dogs in my head and I wish someone could clarify. Ok, let us take up issues one by one. To begin with who are cable operators, broadcaster or mere distributors? It is a matter of common sense which as Voltaire put it aptly is not so common, that cable operators are mere distributors-they are just a channel. How can they stop what is being aired on more than two hundred channels 24x7? And why should they? Did the Court try and look into their economics? Hypothetically speaking say five lakh viewers in Mumbai watch English movie channels habitually. They all threaten do withdraw connection because of this legal tangle or even better, they ask for reduction in cable connection prices because their favourite channels are being shown in parts, what happens then? After all basic principle of economics tells you that price is governed by demand. Slump in demand would bring down the prices, and thus reduce the profit earned by Cable operators. So who bears the brunt? Poor cable operators. Moving on to the major issue here, why should somebody else decide what I view? Just because a particular Professor of St. Xavier's College, Mumbai files a Public Interest Litigation seeking a restraint on what is aired by Cable operators should entire Mumbai be devoid of preferences? There is no point of raising issues like public morality in such issues. No two humans are born alike. What may be immoral to you might be of no consequence to my conscience. This same Mumbai remains unperturbed and has no sense of public morality when a girl is raped in a local train how can they raise a hue and cry over such issues? What I or you wish to watch within our private domains should not be a cause of concern for anyone. Personal choices should be left to individuals

and the judiciary should for once stop acting as the moral guardian. Thinking and reasoning are activities best performed by individuals. By limiting the mental faculty and letting others decide what is right and wrong for you is like giving up your biggest freedom. I watch what I pay for and not for things that forced upon me.

If only our countrymen and women grew wiser. If only we could inch towards Monopolistic Competition in every sphere. This is what I propose, let there be vast array of goods and let people be allowed to pick and choose, select and reject. After all few years ago the entire issue of Conditional Access System (CAS) and Set-top boxes created a furore in the Metropolitan cities, were it was to be implemented in the first phase. The plans got shelved. Had it been implemented it would have done more good than harm. Having a package of free channels and paying for the rest would ensure personal choice and opinion. I would decide if I wanted the entire Star channels package or not. It might have pinched the purses but then you would pay according to you choice. It would have been a win-win situation for both the cable operators and the consumers. The amount of governmental interference in India is not funny. For once let the market forces determine, let the Even now it is not too late if individuals decide to take a step in this direction. The rider being that we take up more serious issues rather than frivolous ones. It would be possible if only we decide to chose and use our intellect and not blindly follow the path set out by others.

I wish my country someday awakes into that haven of freedom where the reasoning is held high and where the mind is led forward into ever-widening thought and action.

Amen.

Rishi Kochhar
LSS Delhi 2002, ALSS 2003, AES 2005
Field researcher, CAPART

This year again, I participated in Austrian Economics Seminar (AES 2005) after a long gap of two years since last time I attended ALSS in 2003. This was again to interact with liberal thinkers from all over the India and share their views and prospects on some commonly faced problems and issues. Austrian Economics as we got an idea after reading in the pre seminar reader there were lots and lots of questions coming in the mind about what actually it all was going to be? But Parth and other resource persons tried to answer many of the questions.

2005 also ended with most of my desires came true. Especially what I mentioned in last time in Liberalism in Life competition; namely:

To organize Parth's Guest Lecture in my University for which I was trying from last 2 years; and this time we got successful. After LSS Chandigarh Parth, Manali Shah and Christopher came to Amritsar and interacted with Students and Teachers of Punjab School of Economics (G.N.D.U.) and of D.A.V. College, Amritsar. After the lecture few of my teachers who teach International Economics argued with me over the Parth's lecture. One of my teacher said, "These CCS people speak World Bank Language". I argued how? They again tried to mention some points like they don't care for poorest of the poor; they are more favorable to developed nations. But when I raised some points on the basis of my knowledge gained through CCS seminars I was successful in overcoming the arguments. But as they are my teachers so they have some seniority in their nature and they don't want to accept those truthful facts.

This year also fulfilled my desire to start Friends of Freedom Group in Amritsar. And we are organizing documentary screenings, discussions and talks on various topics in various colleges in Amritsar.

With the help of Friends of Freedom Group we are going to organize "Freedom Fest" in February 2006. We are very hopeful to generate awareness and interest about Liberal ideas among college graduates. This will also help us in strengthening our group itself.

I got a chance through CCS to attend Workshop on "Understanding and Spreading the Ideas of Liberalism" in Kathmandu (Nepal) in Oct 2005. I was accompanied by Mr. Dhanuraj from Cochin FOF. We both represented CCS and FOF at South Asian Level and there I really got realized that how wonderful the working of CCS is! CCS was the most renowned and formal body amongst other present there.

Spreading liberalism Workshop really helped me in improving my presentation and facilitation skills. I learnt many new techniques there which include simulation, energizers and various games also. I think the workshop has put a lot of courage and confidence in me and that will surely help me in near future.

Spreading liberalism will only work when we can show them actually the liberal ideas and principles working in real terms. I usually carry copy of "State of Governance Citizen Handbook" with me when I visit Principal/ Head of some institution/college etc. to show actually the working of RTI and its various aspects thereon. Then they ask numerous questions on its actually working. Sometimes I really got astonished when even the head of the organization even doesn't know about Right to Information Act.

I have also made a painting in Warli (Tribal Painting Art) showing the happiness and celebrations of FREEDOM! All are dancing and singing on the "Songs of Freedom". (Attached file)

I have written to editor of "Business and Economy" Magazine in response to article published on "Dark Zone" (attached file) tittle is "Free Power is a Curse".

I think there is required a change at grassroots' level and that can only be achieved when we try to reach really the last possible in the chain.

I am very hopeful that we will be able to generate awareness about CCS, FOF in general among students, youth and about liberal ideas in particular.

<p>Kaushik Das LSS Kolkata, 2000 Economist (SBI Capital Markets Ltd.) & Research Fellow at CCS, Delhi</p>
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In 1998, I took up economics in St. Xavier's College, Calcutta as my main course in graduation because I firmly believed at that time, that I would be able to use the knowledge of 'development economics' to help improve the conditions of millions of my underprivileged brothers and sisters, living in abject poverty and inexorable misery in India. I was convinced that 'welfare economics', *if* applied honestly by the government, is the panacea to India's poverty. But this conviction received a severe jolt in the winter of 2000 when I attended a residential seminar conducted by Centre for Civil Society - a libertarian think tank based in Delhi.

The seminar helped raise thousands of questions in my mind - which till then I had held as a universal truth. Do the government really work for the benefits of the citizenry? Are the interests of the public in tandem with the interests of the government? Why is India actually poor - is it because of its large population or due to lack of economic freedom? What is the true role of the government?

I went back home in a confused state of mind but promised myself to keep on seeking the answers to these contentious issues till I was mentally satiated. This search led me to an intellectual roller coaster ride where I became acquainted with the writings of free-market stalwarts like Adam Smith, Frederic Bastiat, Carl Menger, Ludwig Von Mises, Freidrich Hayek, Murray Rothbard, Henry Hazzlit, Lord Peter Bauer, Milton Friedman to name a few.

It opened up a new world in front of me - the world of free market economics where each acting, 'near rational' individual agent is responsible for creating wealth for himself in a free society supported by the four pillars of free trade, property rights, sound money and rule of law, rather than state sponsored massive welfare programmes which has the adverse effect of misallocating and redistributing wealth rather than creating genuine wealth.

Once I realized that the prosperity of any economy is dependent on the degree of its openness to market oriented policies, I decided to do a MBA programme (after successfully completing my graduation in economics) and work in the financial markets for a couple of years to gain a first hand experience on how markets actually work. In these three and a half years of my corporate experience, (first as a Treasury Manager and then as an Economist), I gained tremendous insight into how markets behave in real life which convinced me even more about the veracity of the Austrian theory of business cycles (propounded by Carl Menger and later refined by Bohm Bawerk, Mises & Hayek) - that business cycles are not caused due to lack of government intervention but on the contrary are the result of the Central Bank's misguided attempt to micromanage interest rates and exchange rate policies.

In India, with the exception of a few handful of economists, most are not well versed with the Austrian school of economic thought and still continue to follow economic theories, which favour active government intervention in the markets.

Therefore, apart from my professional responsibility as an economist, I voluntarily took up the additional responsibility of writing regularly for all the leading financial dailies of India (Business Standard, Financial Express, Indian Express etc.) - championing the cause of classical liberal economy and particularly Austrian capital based macroeconomics.

Dr. Parth J. Shah and Mr. Sauvik Chakraverti of the Centre for Civil Society have been a constant source of inspiration and more than a friend, philosopher, guide in my humble endeavor to be a small catalyst in expediting the intellectual revolution of establishing classical liberalism in India through the medium of free press. CCS made me a Research Fellow in 2004, which gave me additional authority and confidence to carry on with my mission to free India from the clutch of the socialist predatory state with even more vigour.

In the coming days, I intend to devote my energy heart and soul to the field of economic research and use my knowledge to popularize capital based macroeconomics among both the economists as well as corporates who are still used to the traditional macroeconomic analysis in the Keynesian tradition.

I also intend to continue writing for the newspapers on a regular basis so that I can explain the ideas of classical liberal economy in a lucid way to the layman. This is extremely important, as I firmly believe that as long as the people on the streets are not convinced, there is very little hope to usher in full-fledged capitalism in India.

I am confident that given my passion and dedication towards the field of economics, I would be able to establish myself as a reputed economist in five years' time and earn the respect of the fellow economists in India. Once I gain the attention of the other economists through my professional achievements, my next job would be to convince them as well as laymen (including young students who are generally the agents of change) about the efficacy of free market economics through writing research papers, books, articles in newspapers and engaging in public debate.

I am sure that in a decade from now, not only would I be able to carve a niche for myself in the intellectual sphere, but I would be also able to bring about a considerable change in the mindset of the Indian people and they would be able to see through the hollowness of socialist policies as clearly as ever and would themselves demand for change.

And probably after twenty years I would be able to satiate my dream, a dream which I had dreamt as a young economics graduate of seeing my country become one of the most prosperous countries in the world with every individual having the freedom to enjoy his life, liberty and property at his own will.

Last but not the least, I would like to present CCS with a song I had written almost two years back. It's called THE FREEDOM SONG.

THE FREEDOM SONG

I sing, sing the song of freedom

*All day and all night long
And when you sing, sing the song of freedom
They cannot keep you down for long
Everybody can sing the song of freedom
The rich, the poor, the old and the young
As free men in this world we are born
So you see, we have every reason
To sing, sing the song of freedom
Until our last breath, we got to push on
And you don't need any education
To sing, sing the song of freedom
All you need is a little bit of passion
To sing, sing the song of freedom
And every time they teach you something wrong,
You got to sing, sing the song of freedom
And at times when you are feeling really down
You got to sing, sing the song of freedom
And if you join me in my song of freedom
Together we can start a revolution
So wouldn't you join me in my song of freedom?
Drop by drop we will build an ocean
And you and me together will rock the nation
And I'm asking each one of you to sing along
The father, the mother, the daughter and the son
Let's all unite to sing the song of freedom
Together we can start a revolution
Drop by drop we will build an ocean
And you and me together will rock the nation...*