



CMF Chairperson Dhruba Hari Adhikary interacting with media students of Kathmandu University on April 24, 2015

The orientation programme was successful in informing university level students about security of journalists and about what constitutes violation of press freedom. It also managed to provide them advanced knowledge about principles of media independence and current practice in the country. The students said that their knowledge about the issues of media dependency, gender equality and media safety in digital age was markedly enhanced by the interaction.

c) Training for Journalists on Self-regulation

CMF in coordination with Federation of Nepalese Journalists, district branches, and with support from the Direct Aid Program of the Australian Embassy in Nepal organised eight training programmes entitled "Training for Journalists on Self-regulation" in eight mid-hill districts from December 18, 2015 to January 2, 2016: Baglung, Myagdi, Parbat, Kaski, Tanahun, Lamjung, Makwanpur and Dhading.

In these two-day programmes CMF Chairperson and trainer Dhruba Hari Adhikary, Media Expert and trainer Tara Nath Dahal, and CMF General Secretary and trainer Bimal Gautam shared their professional journalistic experiences that proved beneficial to local journalists as their journalistic skills in regard to self-regulation were increased. CMF had taken special care in maintaining inclusivity of participants along gender and ethnic lines which allowed people from marginalised groups to participate in the programme.



Participants during and after the completion of training in Makwanpur district

The participants' positive reaction to the training provides evidence of the success of the programme. Most of them said that they had never taken part in training with such an extensive subject and committed to implement the learning in their professional life.

Partners

CMF works in partnership with several national and international organisations for media development, governance and democracy.

Some of the organisations it has collaborated with are Development Communication Society Nepal (SODEC-Nepal), Nepal Centre for Contemporary Research (NCCR), Organisation Development Centre (ODC), UNESCO, Australian Embassy, Governance Facility (GF)—Embassy of Denmark, Embassy of Switzerland and DFID.

Ongoing and Future Projects

CMF is implementing a project on "Strengthening Citizen Engagement in Anti-Corruption Efforts (STREAC)". Another project on the cards is 'Capacity Building of Journalists on Disaster/Humanitarian Reporting' in earthquake affected districts. Both projects will be operated in collaboration with various partner agencies.

Message from the Chairperson

Centre for Media Freedom (CMF) is an organisation fully devoted for uplift of media sector in Nepal. Its aim is to extend media outreach from grassroots to the policymaking level. Freedom of expression, the cornerstone of democracy, can foster only when the media--



Dhruba Hari Adhikary

through different outlets--is allowed to professionally unleash its vast potentials without any let or hindrance.

Founded in 2015 by a group of media personalities, CMF intends to inspire the work-force in this sector so that it identifies innovative ways to fulfil its own responsibilities. It desires to help stakeholders to first enhance cooperation among themselves. Through constant and consistent lobbying and advocacy, CMF also plans to pave a way to make technologically advanced media services easily accessible to a wider segment of the population. Side by side, our modest endeavour is expected to offer a leadership role in the field: through media-related events as well as forward-looking research reports.

Guided by its mission and vision, CMF has already been carrying out various activities at regional and national level and will continue its efforts to work with stakeholders for freedom of media, smooth governance, accountability of the public sector, inclusive democracy and human rights. The organisation commits to offer its expertise and engage its efforts and resources to translate its vision into reality with collaboration of various national and international governmental and non-governmental organisations. We are open, flexible and ready to join hands with our partners and funding agencies for achieving our vision and mission.



Centre for Media Freedom

Defending Media, Strengthening Democracy



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Introduction

Centre for Media Freedom (CMF) is a non-governmental and non-partisan organisation registered at the District Administration Office, Lalitpur and is registered with Social Welfare Council. The organisation's goal is to take necessary actions needed to be taken at local, regional and national levels to foster the objective of creating a national media which is free, independent, pluralistic, and fearless. Only independent and ethical media can work as a watchdog of the society, assisting the government in good governance and anti-corruption measures. Democracy can thrive on conditions of good governance.

To achieve this goal, CMF collaborates and closely works with constitutional bodies as well as national and international media advocacy groups. It aims to provide a voice for the voiceless and facilitate their access to service delivery system by improving governance and accountability mechanism through media outlets, promoting linkages among state agencies, civil society organisations and media, as well as strengthening media capacity through skill development, debates and dialogues.

The professional team at CMF, with inclusiveness along gender and ethnic lines maintained, constitute experts in diverse issues concerning media mobilisation, governance, decentralisation, policy issues, right to information and freedom of expression.

Vision

Free and ethical media, accountable/transparent government and institutionalised democracy.

Mission

Consistent advocacy, research, capacity building, policy intervention, public discourse and debates for strong media, good governance and inclusive/vibrant democracy.

CMF Focus Areas

This initiative aims to protect media pluralism and media freedom in Nepal, and to establish what actions need to be taken to achieve this purpose at the national and regional levels. The organisation believes that free media helps boost good governance which ultimately creates foundation for strengthened democracy. CMF focus areas are as follows:

a.) Free and Ethical Media: Dedicated to the mission of media development and freedom, CMF endeavours to take steps on ensuring journalists' safety, upholding professional rights of journalists, code of conduct and self-regulation. To be worthy of the title of a watchdog, media should abide by professional codes and ethics and CMF's activities will be geared towards increasing journalists' capacity to do ethical journalism. As part of its efforts to build environment for journalists to work professionally, the organisation will facilitate different trainings both in Nepal and in foreign countries. Those activities are structured through conferences, workshops, trainings and seminars, fellowships, international exposure to journalists, study tours, investigative reporting targeted to improve the capacity of journalists and media professionals to report accurately, independently and fairly so that they can help in good governance and build public trust among citizens.

b.) Governance and Inclusive Democracy: CMF believes that independent and ethical media is able to promote the values of good

governance, social justice and freedom of expression. Transparency and accountability are challenging issues in public sector to promote good governance. A joint effort of the media and the public sector through professional collaboration can make a difference in promoting good governance and CMF's efforts will be focused on this collaboration. The organisation devises different strategies including orientations, public consultations, interactions, exposure visits, use of IEC materials and mass media tools for public awareness on anti-corruption and governance issues. Once the public is aware, it can raise voices to create pressure on policymakers to abide by the norms of accountability and transparency. An accountable and transparent state can foster inclusive and participatory democracy thereby creating foundation for institutionalised democracy.

c.) Public Discourse and Debates: CMF carries out structured debates at policy and grassroots level on media and governance issues. The organisation will make full use of available media outlets including print, broadcast and online portals as well as produce face-to-face interactions, street dramas, TV Serials, documentaries, PSAs, jingles, books, journals, and publications as part of public discourse and debates.

d.) GESI and Advocacy: CMF is aware of the historical marginalisation of women, dalits and ethnic groups in Nepali society and the need of proportionate inclusion of excluded social groups and women in the social mainstream. CMF's organisational structure as well as its activities ensures Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and it engages its full efforts in implementation of social inclusion, gender equality and good governance policies. The organisation plays a major role in soliciting national and international voices to respond to the issues of media freedom, GESI, social justice and good governance. Research works carried out by CMF will be used strategically for advocacy, lobby and campaigns for the aforesaid issues at national and international level. The organisation will work in close coordination with various stakeholders to carry out tasks related to advocacy and lobbying.

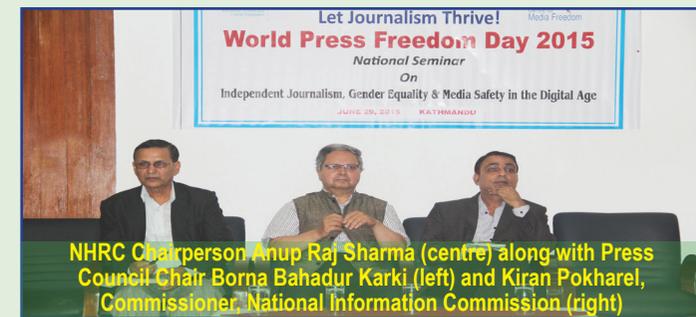
e.) Research and Policy Intervention: CMF conducts researches on media freedom, governance system, democracy, social justice, accountability and inclusivity issues to assist policymakers in identifying policy needs and implementing them. It will actively work to reform, amend and improve upon these issues and to achieve that purpose, it will hold frequent meetings with policymakers, members of the legislation and relevant government authorities. The organisation also aims to produce investigative research reports and print and audio/video materials relating to crosscutting issues of media, governance and democracy.

Activities

CMF has so far carried out three different activities in 2015 that have made significant impacts on the media sector.

a) National Seminar

CMF bagged the award from the UNESCO to organise a national seminar to coincide with World Press Freedom Day-2015. CMF and UNESCO Kathmandu Office jointly organised the seminar in Kathmandu entitled "Let Journalism Thrive, Towards Better Reporting, Gender Equality, & Media Safety in the Digital Age".



To mark the occasion, eminent personalities highlighted the significant role of media in upholding press freedom. Altogether three seminar papers were presented. Media expert Prof Rama Krishna Regmee presented a paper on "Media Safety in Digital Age", Manju Thapa, Executive Director of the Asmita Women's Publishing House, presented a paper on "Gender Equality and Safety of Women Journalists", and Suresh Acharya, Former Chairperson of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) presented a paper titled "Independent Journalism and Corporate Influence".



All these papers generated lively debate among the participants that included a healthy number of female and ethnic participants. The programme was thus able to urge stakeholders to develop initiatives in favour of a free press. It managed to prompt similar discussions among media persons, academicians and policymakers about independence of media in Nepal.

b) Orientation to students on themes of World Press Freedom Day-2015

CMF organised orientation sessions on the themes of World Press Freedom Day-2015 at five selected colleges from Kathmandu University, Tribhuvan University and Pokhara University that impart journalism education. The programme was organised to inform students of journalism and mass communication about the three themes, namely "Media Safety in Digital Age", "Gender Equality and Safety of Women Journalists", and "Independent Journalism and Corporate Influence". More than 200 media students participated in the orientation. Media experts Dhruba Hari Adhikary, Rama Krishna Regmee, Bimal Gautam, Manju Thapa and Narayan Wagle conducted extensive interactions with students on the above-mentioned themes.