

Strategic Plan - 2020/2025
The Law and Society Trust

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACMC – All Ceylon Makkal Congress

CEDAW - The Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women

CEPA - Centre for Poverty Analysis

CSO - Civil Society Organisation

CF – Community Forums

CBO – Community Based Organisation

FR – Fundamental Rights

GSP+ - Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus

HR – Human Rights

HRD – Human Rights Defenders

ICCPR - International Convention on Civil and Political Rights

ICES – International Centre for Ethnic Studies

ICESCR - Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

IDEA - Increased Demand and Engagement for Accountability

INGO - International Non-Governmental Organisation

IWP – Individual Work Plans

JVP - Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna

LA – Local Authorities

LGA – Local Government Authorities

LGI – Local Government Initiative

LGBTQI - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual

LLRC - Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission

LST – Law and Society Trust

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

OM - Outcome Mapping

PA – Performance Appraisal

PARL – People’s Alliance for Right to Land

PIL –Public Interest Litigation

PTA – Prevention of Terrorism Act

SDG - Sustainable Development Goals

SLFP - Sri Lanka Freedom Party

SLDC – Sri Lanka Consortium for Development Facilitation

SLMC - Sri Lanka Muslim Congress

SLPP - Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna

SMEs – Small and Medium Enterprises

TNA - Tamil National Alliance

TU – Trade Union

UDHR - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council

UNP - United National Party

LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

EU – European Union

Executive Summary

The Law & Society Trust (LST) is a not-for-profit organization engaged in legal research and human rights advocacy in Sri Lanka since 1982. Over the years the Trust has contributed to upholding principles of human rights, rule of law and democracy, by engaging in research, documentation and advocacy.

During the last decade, Sri Lanka has seen rapid changes to the political, cultural and socio-economic landscape most notably due to the end of the war in 2009, the Presidential Election and General Elections of 2015, and the Presidential Election of 2019 held against a backdrop of a terrorist attack that claimed many lives. As Sri Lanka prepares for General Elections in 2020 under a newly elected President, it confronts a global pandemic that will equally impact the economy, public health and security of the country and the fundamental rights of individuals to privacy and freedom of movement, among others, the Trust looks to evaluate its historical work and purpose to better align its strengths, opportunities and focus to effectively address evolving challenges to human rights, democratic values and the rule of law.

The Trust's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan aims to promote inclusive and equitable national level policies and legislative reform while influencing perceptions, attitudes and traditions that have a bearing on the realization of rights for the most marginalized and vulnerable. The Trust is mindful of the reality that it is working in a context where civic spaces are shrinking globally and in the aftermath of the COVID- 19 pandemic, economies will shrink further, causing unimaginable socio-economic and political disruptions. The Trust will continue to be a space maker committed to promoting human rights discourses in this era of disruption through its research, documentation and advocacy work. At all times, the Trust will empower and build the capacity of rights holders, calling for greater accountability through good governance, transparency, equality and social justice.

The Trust will carry out its programmatic work under three main programme areas namely, Law and Economy; Law and Society and Law and Governance. The Trust is committed to achieving gender equality and justice for all women and girls and will therefore identify and promote key gender priorities across all programme areas and ways of working.

The new Strategic Plan envisages a hybrid organizational structure that creates a unified team of individuals coming together for a common goal. The work plan was developed using an outcome mapping process that will enable the Trust to effectively monitor and evaluate progress over the next five years. This Strategic Plan specifies steps that will be taken to ensure that LST staff are equipped to deliver the proposed plan of action, which includes 1) organizational development processes, that will promote effective and efficient financial management and administration, and human resource management and 2) programme management processes, that will strengthen the overall effectiveness of its programme strategy.

1. Introduction

The Law & Society Trust (LST) is a not-for-profit organization engaged in legal research and human rights advocacy in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The late Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam, President's Counsel, founded the Trust in 1982. First registered under the Trust Ordinance, the Trust was later incorporated as an association in 1990 under the Companies Act No. 17 of 1982 under Registration No. N(A) 211, and subsequently re-registered under the new Companies Act No. 07 of 2007.

Over the last thirty-eight years the Trust has strived to be a voice for the voiceless through critical engagement with the law. The Trust has actively defended and furthered human rights, democracy and the rule of law through rights based approaches to research, documentation and advocacy. With a rich history of engaging law makers, academics, think tanks, both national and international, as well as local civil society organisations and community based organisations, LST has been able to effectively influence and partner with multiple stakeholders in their journey to ensuring dignity and justice for all.

In 2020, at the beginning of a new decade, the Trust seeks to re-formulate its strategy for the next five years, taking into consideration the current and emerging socio-political and economic contexts, its past achievements and lessons learned. Through this strategic document for 2020-2025, the Trust envisions a dynamic, proactive role in re-defining certain areas of work while continuing to build on the foundation of key achievements in the past. This Strategic Plan lays down conceptual approaches and its key programmatic thrust for the future.

2. The Strategic Planning Process

A comprehensive Strategy Development process serves multiple functions for the organisation, of which four main functions are highlighted below:

- defines the purpose for its existence
- establishes objectives in alignment with its mission
- formulates realistic goals that are achievable within a defined time frame based on the organisation's strengths and capacities
- articulates the future strategies, resource allocations, and actions in order to achieve its objectives and goals.

This exercise focused on establishing strategic directions for LST for a five-year planning cycle covering the period of 2021-2025. Highlighted below is a summary of the major stages of the Strategic Planning process:

- Commenced shortly after the 2019 Sri Lanka Presidential Elections, with an initial meeting on the 21st of November with Harini Amarasuriya (board member) to review the context, with an emphasis on the changes in the political and legal environment, post-elections.
- Follow-up discussions by the internal team, facilitated by the Executive Director, to flesh out the key considerations of the context to LST's programme.
- One-day workshop on the 9th of January 2020, with the participation of an external resource person, to review past events and present context; evaluate interventional strategies; identify gaps, opportunities and constraints and to identify possible relevant strategies for the next period (2020-2025)
- Internal meeting at LST on the 20th of January to conduct a stakeholder mapping and a Strengths and Weaknesses analysis in order to improve institutional capacities
- A second internal meeting was conducted at ICES on the 3rd of February, to decide on institutional-level outcome measures and an operationalized Annual Plan to help realize the steps agreed as per the Strategy
- A workshop was conducted on the 24th of February with the entire staff, to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation plan based on an Outcome Mapping methodology

3. Connecting the Past

LST was established in 1982 to initiate studies and activities on law and social change. It was intended that the Trust would fill a vacuum in the study of law, legal processes and institutions that were often excessively legalistic and lacked focus on the broader contribution of legal processes to national development. At the heart of LST was the desire to ensure that the law played a more meaningful role in the lives of the poor and disadvantaged. In that regard, LST from its inception was focused on minority and disadvantaged groups whether it be in the constitution, the economy or family.

Even as far back as 1991, the Trust was concerned with the articulation of diverse view points on questions of constitutional reform and the need for greater social engagement. Over the years, LST has continued to play a pivotal role in shaping debates surrounding the human rights commission law (1991-1996), fundamental rights, devolution of power, election law reform, land reform, the formulation (in the early 1990s) and later the implementation of the 17th Amendment, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, emergency regulations, religious freedom, women and the law, disability rights, socio-economic rights and child rights. The LST Review for example was distributed to 40 countries, among 150 human rights organizations, and the State of Human Rights, the flagship publication has provided a unique critical legal analysis of the state of human rights for over 25 years.

Dr. Tiruchelvam, a legal luminary and parliamentarian, was deeply concerned with the enrichment of the legal community. To this end, the Trust employed publications, workshops, seminars, symposia, and the establishment of a well-resourced documentation center or library to advance socio-legal studies and research. He also sought to promote the Trust as a regional and international resource point. It maintained this status, not only during his tenure, but also thereafter. LST was invited to provide technical expertise in the Bangladesh Project in collaboration with ODHIKAR (1996) and the Uganda Institutional Capacity Building Project of World Bank (1996), and the Maldivian legal system (2006). The Trust was instrumental in building and strengthening regional networks, and through various interventions LST contributed to the development of a global intellectual policy agenda centered on human rights, democracy, development and minority protections.

A brief timeline of LST's work from 1982 to date is annexed.

4. Looking to the Future: 2020- 2025

Vision

A society free from violent conflict, discrimination and social injustice and based upon human dignity for all

Mission

To advance human rights using research, documentation and advocacy, and to promote the full realization of the rule of law, justiciability of rights and public accountability that fosters an inclusive and pluralistic democracy.

Goals

To be a leader in national level policy and legislative changes (inclusive and equitable policies)

1. To be a change maker – changing perceptions, attitudes, traditions and policies that affect rights (majoritarianism, patriarchy, militarized development etc.)
2. To be a space maker – expanding the civic space to engage in discourses, advocacy and actions to advance democracy and human rights
3. To advocate for effective accountability ensuring good governance, transparency, equality and social justice in an era of disruption
4. To empower and build the capacity of rights holders

The Law and Society Trust is committed to specifically support seven thematic areas that are encompassed within the Sustainable Development Goals in the context of its mandate and its human and financial resources.

LST is committed to support:

- Democratic Governance and the Rule of Law, Constitution and public law that falls within SDG 16 supporting Peace and Justice and Strong Institutions,
- Gender Equality falls within SDG 5 supporting gender equality and Peace and Justice and Strong Institutions - SDG 6
- Environment, Food Security and Food Safety - SDGs 2,6,12,13,14 and15
- Poverty and Social Injustice - SDG 1,3,4, and 16
- Reduced Inequality - SDG 10

- Decent Work and Economic Growth - SDG 8
- Sustainable Cities and Communities - SDG 11

5. Context

Post-war Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic, plural society and has a long and well-established history as a vibrant, multi-party democracy. Sri Lankans are committed to rights and duties of democratic citizenship. However, in the seventy-two years of its independence, Sri Lanka has experienced many conflicts due to the adoption of a politics of exclusion.

The war and grandiose economic projects left the country in debt with limited resources to improve the lives of the population with the required investments in health and education. Corruption and waste of public resources also left the people disillusioned and embittered. The post-war government's poor human rights record left it marginalised in international arenas and the much-needed GSP+ concession was withdrawn by the European Union, causing additional hardships for Sri Lanka's export-driven economy. The introduction of partisan constitutional reforms to permit the president to run for unlimited terms of office created additional fears towards autocracy.

The communities affected by the war still continue to be displaced from their lands, with no means of establishing sustainable livelihoods. They still lack answers regarding their loved ones who disappeared in the aftermath of the war. Recent years have also seen a rise in anti-Muslim violence, for example the Aluthgama riots in 2014 and Digana in 2018. In the aftermath of the Easter Sunday bombings on 21st April 2019, the antipathy towards Muslims further increased. Political leaders continued to opt for national visions and political models that were ethno-nationalist, exclusive, and exclusionary.

Sri Lanka is a signatory to a range of international treaties, including human rights conventions and to the Sustainable Development Goals and these bind successive governments - whatever their specific ideological orientation. The challenge for human rights activists and civil society organisations is to hold fast to the reality-check that "peace and reconciliation are a prerequisite for nation-building in Sri Lanka."

Presidential Election – January 2015

The Presidential Elections in January 2015 created a political space and an opportunity but also a challenge for the people of Sri Lanka to renew their commitment to building a peaceful democratic society based on human rights; one that prioritises social justice and human security for all. The decision of the major political parties to support a common candidate was very significant and demonstrated a degree of political maturity and bi-partisanship. Civil society groups' engagement in this process was also significant. Groups that did not ordinarily work together came together to support the resuscitation of democracy. The defeated government accepted the result and the transfer of power was peaceful.

The newly elected government made significant advances during the first six months of its tenure. For instance: the 19th Amendment to the constitution was passed; significant legislation such as The Right to Information Act and legislation on reparations was passed; the Office of Missing Persons was established and the Constitutional Council was re-established ensuring checks on the powers of the Executive Presidency in relation to appointments. Key independent commissions (Public Service Commission, National Police Commission, Human Rights Commission) were established and strengthened. A commitment was made to operationalize the tri-lingual language policy as a way to ensure both inclusion and the progressive advancement of youth and other citizens by improving their skills in English – the link language. By co-sponsoring the United Nations Human Rights Council resolution 30/1 on “Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka”, the country signaled it was ready to re-engage with the international community and to reconcile with its constituent communities. These measures benefited Sri Lanka diplomatically, leading to the restoration of the GSP+ concession. They also generated some trust among the political leadership of the various minority parties, creating the opportunity for dialogue, consensus building and reconciliation.

Regrettably, the coalition government unraveled very quickly and for a variety of reasons. Some of the fault lines should have been anticipated and measures taken to address the early warning signs of fragmentation. The supporters of Sri Lanka's transition (both domestic and external well-wishers) did not / could not support the failing coalition when it was in crisis by establishing mechanisms for political dialogue and accountability.

Corruption scandals, especially the bond scam, undermined the government in the early days and the ideological fissures relating to constitutional reform, devolution, the treatment of war crimes and transitional justice soon undermined the *raison d'être* for the coalition.

The Coup – October 2018

The rupture culminated in the constitutional coup spearheaded by President Sirisena when he sacked Prime Minister Wickremesinghe and installed Mahinda Rajapakasa as the Prime Minister. Parliament was brought into disrepute with recordings of bribes being offered to Members of Parliament to crossover to the new government and it culminated with scenes of violence in the chamber of Parliament, including physical attacks on the Speaker. No action was ever taken against those who used violence in Parliament and were known to have offered or received bribes to cross over. The trust and respect for Parliament and the elected representatives in Parliament were greatly undermined.

The Supreme Court decision to suspend the President's actions to dismiss the government gave time to petitioners to file cases that the President had violated the constitution by seeking to dissolve Parliament before the expiry of its prescribed term, and the Court's subsequent ruling that the President's decision was unconstitutional and illegal was important victories for judicial independence. However, while the Prime Minister Wickremesinghe and the government was restored, the political relationship was beyond repair and little could be achieved in the months pending the elections, as the President and Prime Minister found no common ground for cooperation.

Creating a Safe Space for Civil Society Engagement – 2015-2019

Despite the many weaknesses and failures of the "Yahapalana government" of President Sirisena and Prime Minister Wickremesinghe, civil society groups were able to establish their voice on a variety of matters of public policy. During this period there was an open civic space in which the public could engage with the government on a variety of issues.

LST was able to engage with the government on matters relating to constitutional reforms – specifically on devolution, protection of fundamental rights including socio-economic rights. LST also engaged on the right to information, the right to demand a corruption – free government, the right to gather and to protest on a range of issues from the absence of state action regarding the

disappeared, to the takeover of lands of war affected communities, the over-use of the concept of eminent domain, living wages for plantation workers, and the evils of unregulated micro-credit. LST with other civil society groups pressed for the need to hear the people on matters relating to constitutional reforms, and specifically the need to accommodate religious and ethnic minorities. Parliamentarians and cabinet ministers were available to hear civil society views on the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Counter Terrorism Bill and why they should both be dispensed with in the cause of human rights protection. Many of these recommendations were accepted in principle, although the details and mechanisms were not agreed.

Civil society was also empowered to challenge the government actions and inactions. For instance, civil society was able to challenge the slow return of lands to the war-affected communities, the choice of inappropriate housing for war affected communities in the north, the lack of regulation of micro finance, and the low wages of plantation workers and even gain some victories by way of changes to policies and implementation.

If democracy is to thrive, there should be no walls of fear dividing the polity from the government. In the early days of the democratic euphoria, such walls were initially dismantled but they soon re-emerged with the arrests of workers and students and the suppression of minorities through insidious legislation such as the ICCPR Act.

A Crumbling Political Infrastructure

Unmet expectations between policy, pronouncements and performance corroded the credibility of the government. The corruption scandals relating to the Central Bank seriously undermined confidence in the government. The Easter Sunday bombings of churches and hotels by Muslim extremists in April 2019 laid bare the cost of the dysfunctional relationship between the President and the Prime Minister. Their personal antipathies and institutional based rivalries between the Executive President and the Prime Minister created obstacles to the sharing of security related information and coherent decision-making by the Executive and Parliament. The tourist industry and the small and medium enterprises were severely affected in the aftermath of the bombings. A new / old fear – for national security and personal security – emerged and this too became a deciding factor in the Presidential Election of 2019 and the current direction of Sri Lanka's politics.

The Easter bombings widened the divisions between the Sinhala and Muslim communities, who had been subjected to harassment and intimidation and bouts of communal violence in the last two

years. The anti-Muslim violence reinforced a three-way communal divide in the country between the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities. It also framed the political narrative of the Presidential Elections of 2019 - national security over all else.

The political parties in Sri Lanka advocated for democratic government, representing the voice of the people, yet the parties themselves lacked internal democracy and cohesion. This was most marked in the older and more established political parties, i.e. the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and their inability to devise transparent and credible mechanisms to elect leaders and ensure succession, was laid bare.

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) – the political alliance in Sri Lanka that represents the country's Sri Lankan Tamil minority is in an equally parlous state. There is no succession plan for its elderly leader Mr. Sampanthan and there is disunity in its ranks. Its patient and uncritical support for the governing coalition led by Mr. Wickremesinghe with few gains to show have left the leadership marginalised from its constituency.

Despite their alliances with the major mainstream political parties, the parties representing the Muslim community have come under siege from their own communities for failing to protect them during the various anti-Muslim riots that occurred from 2014 – 2018, and also during the backlash against the broader community in the aftermath of the Easter bombings.

Presidential Election – 19th November 2019

The SLPP, a front for the Joint Opposition, re-launched itself as recently as 2016. Largely driven by the charismatic former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, SLPP emerged strongly at the Local Government elections held on 10 February 2018. Like the UNP and SLFP, SLPP reinforces the familial foundations of the major political parties in Sri Lanka.

In November 2019, Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa contested an elected office for the first time under the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) and became the 7th Executive President of Sri Lanka winning 52.25% of the vote, predominantly among the Southern, Sinhala majority electorate.

The National Democratic Front led by Sajit Premadasa polled 41.99% of the votes and despite a spirited campaign launched by Mr. Anura Kumara Disanayake, focusing on national issues and the general malaise affecting Sri Lanka's politics, the National Movement for People's Power, secured only 3.6% of the vote and the other 35 candidates contesting did not even receive 1% of the votes.

These figures were surprisingly low in the context of the widely expressed public disenchantment for the established, major parties.

Role of Media in Elections

The Presidential Election of 2019 was fought aggressively on television and in the press, and the campaign heightened the role of the media in Sri Lanka's democracy. The state media as well as several private media channels demonstrated clear political biases. The support given at elections translates to business advantages, at later stages.

In the aftermath of the Easter bombings, the press ran very negative campaigns against Muslim communities and these messages were also reflected in social media and in street actions, leading to violence against Muslim communities, and especially against Muslim women, targeting them for their attire.

Role of Social Media in Sri Lanka

Social media plays a dominant role in Sri Lankan politics, particularly in spreading ethno-nationalism and hate-speech. This was most evident during the anti-Muslim riots in 2017 and 2018. In comparison to the debates around the constitutional crisis of October 2018, which were more fact-based, the Presidential Election campaign of November 2019 significantly drew on hate speech.

The combination of misleading information and hate speech within ethno-nationalist pages and their wide sharing on Facebook deepens social divisions along political, ethnic and religious fault lines and continues to endanger social cohesion in Sri Lanka.

Disciplined Leadership or Transformational Leadership

The early signals of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's strategic directions are gleaned from his actions and words during his inauguration, his policy statement to Parliament, his address to the nation during the 72nd Independence celebration on 4th February 2020, and the national framework: Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour, presented by him. The strategic directions will continue to be elaborated in the run up to the General Elections scheduled for April 2020.

The President observed the priority for the whole country is development, including the war-affected areas, and it transcends the need for devolution and accountability. The President has variously expressed frustration with the 19th Amendment to the constitution that has limited the

powers of the Executive Presidency. He sees as the need of the day - a strong executive and strong legislature. While endorsing the proportionate representation system, he alluded to the possible adjustments to the threshold of votes required by political parties to gain Parliamentary seats. This will impact the smaller parties representing ethnic and religious minorities. The President has also expressed frustration with the judiciary, and various investigatory branches of the police. Noting that “unnecessary judicial interventions” are harmful to democracy, he established a Presidential Commission of Inquiry to look into allegations of political victimization as well as interference and undue influence on the judiciary and police during the past regime in the wake of the flood of revelations of interference in police and legal matters and other abuses of power during the previous government.

The President has been vocal that a 2/3 Parliamentary majority will free him from constraints and will enable him to foster rapid economic development. He, like his predecessors, is committed to heavy infrastructure development and promoting several megapolis projects. He is also committed to salvaging the rural economy. While details of the plans are yet to emerge, it could be anticipated that such transformations will lead to the relocation of people and impact on their livelihoods.

Despite the President withdrawing from UN Resolution, A/HRC/RES/30/1 in February 2020, many of the principles remain embedded in the public domain and in public discourse and they should continue to be fostered through dialogue and research. The Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation 2011 (LLRC) was a national initiative to chart pathways towards reconciliation. There may be an opportunity to re-visit the recommendations of this report as it will be difficult for the government to walk away from a report initiated by the former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, albeit nine years ago.

The strong nationalist sentiments that were appeased through the withdrawal from the UN resolution may nevertheless impact Sri Lanka’s standing as a credible partner in the international community, and may leave the country isolated and vulnerable to attacks in the diplomatic arena – the costs of which are high.

In March 2020 the GoSL finds itself battling the global pandemic of COVID 19. The Election Commissioner responded to the growing public demands for postponement of the General Elections scheduled for 25th April 2020. It is expected that this public health crisis will significantly affect tourism, small businesses and public life, and serve as a litmus test of the President’s ability to

govern the country in times of public crisis, especially as Parliament stands dissolved. The legal and political vacuum created through the postponement of parliamentary elections and the dissolution of Parliament is also a matter of some concern.

Role of Civil Society in the Context of Shrinking Spaces

The space is shrinking but it has not disappeared altogether. It will be LST's challenge, as well as the challenge for other civil society activists and for human rights defenders in Sri Lanka, in the region and globally, to ensure in the coming years, that through their unrelenting endeavours, the glass that is seen to be half empty, will be regarded as half full in its support for democracy and for human rights. This challenge can only be met by asking some uncomfortable questions of ourselves, reviewing our past practices and orthodoxies and seeking the common ground that unites communities and working collectively to address the common challenges that threaten citizens collectively.

Civil society organisations must challenge themselves to do more than simply "be present at the table" and to be able to "speak out." While it is gratifying to be recognized, it is more compelling to be an influencer and civil society must ensure that its advocacy and engagement influences government policy for the benefit of the broader community. This could be by influencing policy makers directly or the constituencies that they depend on or heed. Civil society must be proactive in finding those spaces and opportunities and must expand its networks to engage with an array of broader boundary partners. This requires networking outside ones comfort zone.

Civil society must also recognize that the growing public disenchantment with politics and the support for militarized and technocratic rule has emerged from disenchantment with parliaments – especially with parliamentarians, who are regarded as myopic, ineffective and self-seeking. The appeal of the strongman who comes from outside the political system builds on this disenchantment. The strongman is impatient of red tape (laws, systems and processes), is action oriented and decisive, and does not weigh the pros and the cons as he sees only the pros. Restoring faith in parliamentary democracy, rule of law and human rights protections as the foundation for the most equitable and sustainable form of government remains the long term challenge.

Responding to the disruption caused by the COVID 19 pandemic – Never let a serious crisis go to waste

The speed at which the Coronavirus spread highlights our interconnectedness, as well as our vulnerabilities. All aspects of our lives – public health, trade, production, supply chains, labour, and travel are impacted. Sri Lanka's economy depends on tourism and remittances and the export of garments all of which will be affected. The manner in which this crisis is handled – globally, regionally and nationally is critical. This is the time for civil society to push for adaptive leadership and strong engagement with community networks drawn from all sections of society, to review our developmental paradigms, our expectations and our strategies and policies and strive for a just and inclusive social order. The New Deal and the Marshall Plan were emblematic of visions to rise out of disasters and while they are contested in some quarters, they are representative of bold and expansive visioning and action plans that are required today.

This is an age of disruption and we cannot face it with old prescriptions and formulas. We recognize that the intersections and interdependencies between law and society, law and the economy and law and governance are evermore intertwined and are bounded by the fundamental principles of securing human rights protection and human security. Even in this age of disruption, challenges may be endured and society's cooperation is more likely to be secured if the principles of transparency, accountability, public participation, equality and equity and human rights for all form the bedrock of government policies and actions.

6. LST Programme

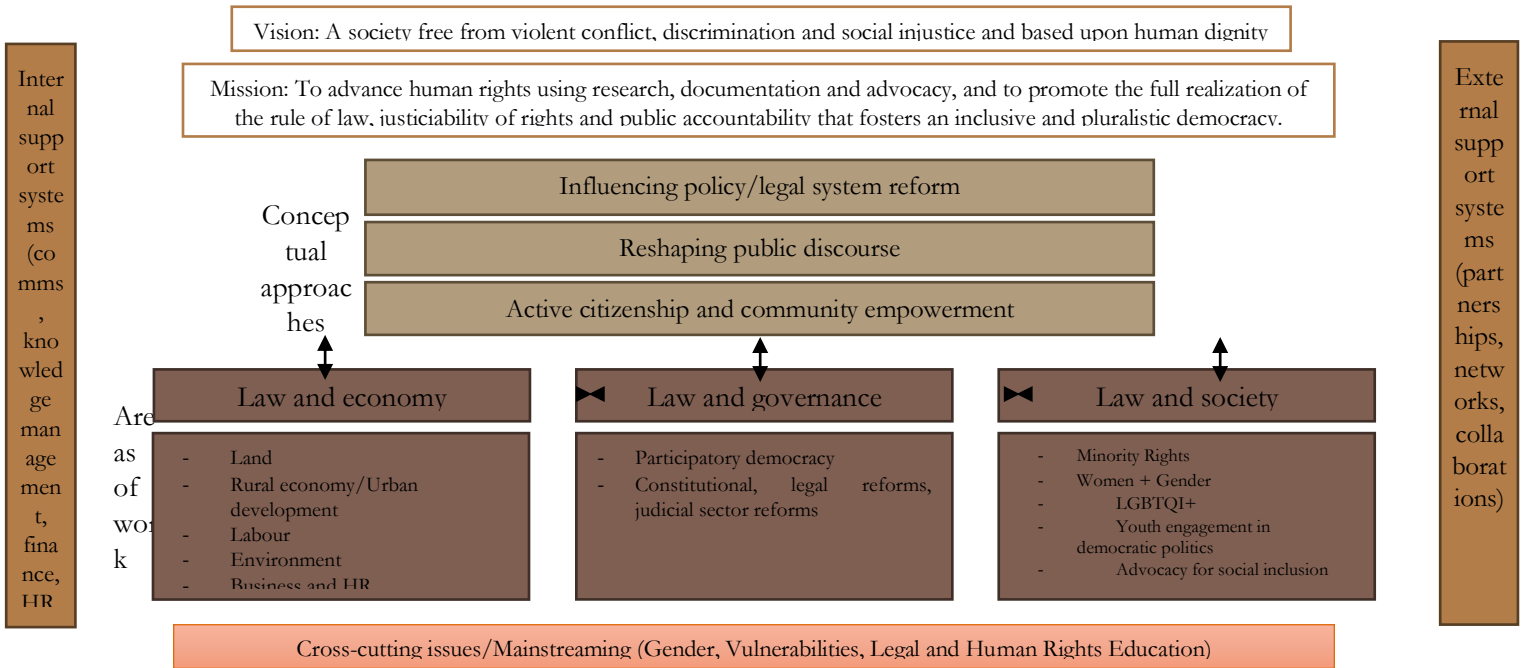


Fig 01: LST Strategic Framework

6.1. Conceptual Approaches

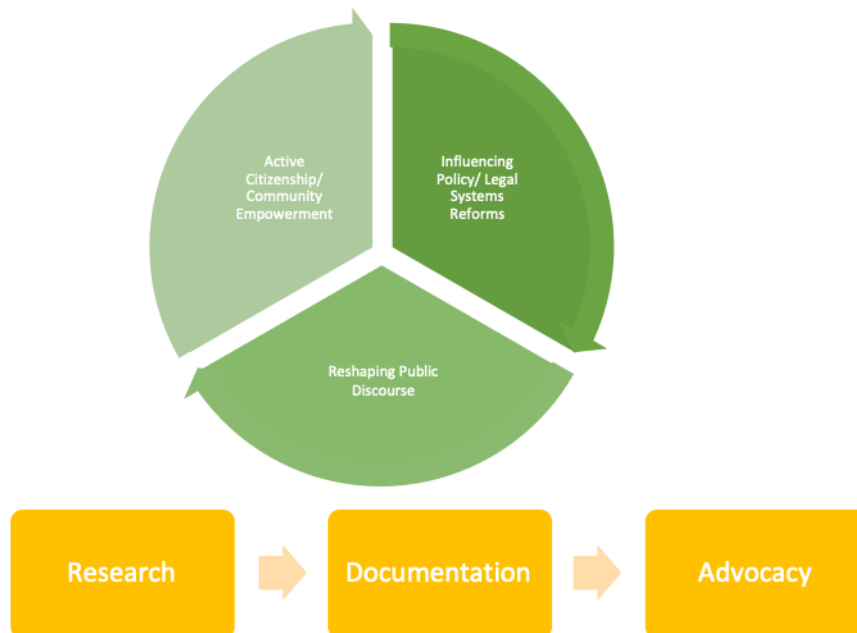


Fig 02: Conceptual Approaches

The Trust will adopt the above conceptual approaches in achieving its mission and vision. These approaches are interconnected, complement each other, and form an integral part of how LST works with a wide spectrum of stakeholders to bring about social change.

6.1.1. Influence Policy, Systems and Legal Reform

The Trust believes that change must come from all quarters for it to be sustainable and meaningful. To that end, LST remains committed to working with policy makers, state ministries and departments, and most importantly administrative officials who encounter the public in day-to-day matters, in an effort to deepen their understanding and commitment to the realization of human rights and democracy. The Trust is also committed to working with Parliamentarians to support legal and policy reforms that foster inclusion and improve the status of minorities.

This approach is operationalized through learning and sharing evidential knowledge among regional legal and human rights networks such as FORUM-Asia and the South Asia Collective with a view to exploring collective priorities, and new forms of human rights activism to contend with international and national challenges to democracy and human rights.

The Trust continues to be committed to its foundational principle of evidence-based advocacy, aiming to influence policy, systems and legal reform through research and documentation. In the more recent past, this has meant drawing from community experiences, and generating material in Sinhala and Tamil, in addition to ensuring translation of publications in all three languages. This also includes using this research to report on or feed into international mechanisms concerning state obligations. Examples of this would be submissions to UN Treaty Bodies on Migrant Worker Rights (2012/2013), submissions to the UN Expert on Foreign Debt and Human Rights (2018), and facilitating meetings with civil society and the Chairperson of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2018).

Looking to the future, the Trust is committed to link community networks working on labour, land and women's issues with policy makers and government officials to facilitate a dialogue of cooperation for social change. LST also endeavors to strengthen its focus on minority rights in governance.

6.1.2. Reshaping Public Discourse

The Trust will build on past lessons to focus on influencing public opinion and shaping public discourse, particularly on issues pertaining to constitutional reform, transitional justice and

reconciliation, economic social and cultural rights, gender and sexuality, and the environment. LST will actively invest in deepening public awareness and understanding on these key issues through simple local-language literature and new media. The Trust believes such awareness and understanding is crucial to enable the public as well as the Trust respond to crisis situations in a timely manner. For example, LST's publication *"Islamic Extremism: Clash of Civilizations or Clash within Civilization?"* responding to the April 2019 Easter attacks in Sri Lanka was a timely and well-received publication.

LST has identified a need to effectively counter development driven economic policies that are not based on human rights, gender equality or ecologically sustainable frameworks. LST seeks to confront patriarchal power hierarchies that continue to disadvantage the poorest and most marginalized sections of society. Through its programming, the Trust envisions opportunities to mobilize community groups on common issues, adopting an approach that will analyze the gender, ethnicity, language and geographical intersections and the broader impact of these intersections.

6.1.3. Building Active Citizenship

Building on yet another foundational approach, the Trust as a catalyst is committed to equipping grassroots communities for active citizenship. In this regard the Trust will support knowledge and skills development in human rights of, and establish human rights mechanisms for, local community groups, trade unions, women's groups and networks. Communities will be made aware of human rights treaties, constitutional provisions and other legal frameworks and supported to use the rights-based language that promotes equality, inclusion and non-discrimination. LST envisions strong and active women, men and youth aware of their rights and committed to democratic values, demanding due process in all aspects of governance. This approach includes, for example, establishing and supporting citizen's forums and women's economic forums, the development of land law handbooks for civil society leaders, and tools to improve human rights education.

Moreover, the Trust supports local communities to be effective advocates at the local level and will therefore invest and train local communities to conduct action research, that will in turn be used to lobby and advocate for policy, system and law reforms. In addition, citizen's forums will be trained in using participatory accountability tools to promote accountability and transparency in local government.

Learning from past lessons, the Trust will actively aim to work more with youth, especially in building networks and partnerships with youth groups, and organizations working with youth in the South and in the North.

6.1.4. Research, Documentation and Advocacy

LST's strategic programme is achieved through research, documentation and advocacy. The Trust engages in many forms of research that include but are not limited to literature surveys, perception surveys, and research on laws, practices, and action research on matters relating to human rights.

The Trust documents human rights violations and issues relating to rule of law to create baseline studies and databases that enable monitoring of trends and supporting human rights advocacy based on facts and validated information.

The research and documentation support, encourage and stimulate dialogues and advocacy at community, national and international levels. LST aims to create safe spaces for discourses –at the community level, among civic leaders and among academics, to engage in dialogue and brings these conversations to the attention of policy makers.

6.2. Stakeholder Environment

Nationally, the Trust will invest in building long-term linkages with key government Ministries, Departments, Independent Commissions and District authorities particularly in terms of advocacy on land, judicial reform, labour rights, and urban development. LST will continue to strengthen the capacity of grassroots activists and networks to lobby respective Ministries and state bodies.

Locally, citizen's forums and women's economic forums will continue to receive support to ensure that citizens are able to effectively advocate for their rights. The Trust will promote greater participation and inclusion of grassroots women in research and advocacy, while ensuring that LST publications are relatable and accessible to communities. The Trust looks forward to expanding networks on the ground by engaging in long term work with community-based organisations to achieve this. Special effort will be made to reach and work with youth in the south. The Trust believes this will contribute to reshaping public discourse and understanding on principles of democracy, participation and human rights.

Partnerships

LST is a member of several national, regional and international networks supporting human rights research and advocacy. LST continues to maintain and develop institutional links to work in partnerships with organisations at the international, regional and national level. These partnerships include:

International partnerships: UN Treaty Bodies

UN Special Rapporteurs

International Centre for Transitional Justice

Frontline Defenders

Amnesty International

University of Edinburgh

Dignity – Danish Institute against Torture

Minority Rights Group

ESCR-Net - International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Westminster Foundation

Regional Partnerships: FORUM-ASIA

South Asians for Human Rights

South Asian Collective

National Chrysalis

National Fisheries Solidarity Movement

Suriya – Women’s Development Centre

Centre for Society and Religion

Uva Community Development Centre

Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA)

Active Citizenship Development Network

International Centre for Ethnic Studies

People's Alliance for Right to Land (PARL)

SLCDF

Vilithu

Centre for the Study of Human Rights, Faculty of Law

Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust

Women & Media Collective

7. Programme Areas

The Trust has three areas of work that are interconnected, interdependent and mutually reinforcing. The Trust is committed to achieving gender equality and gender justice for all by addressing equally the gender issues facing women and girls, and sexual minorities. The Trust will identify and promote key gender priorities of equality, equity and inclusion across all programme areas and ways of working.

The Trust will employ the conceptual approaches and methods of working (described in the previous section) to bring about desired changes in these programme areas.

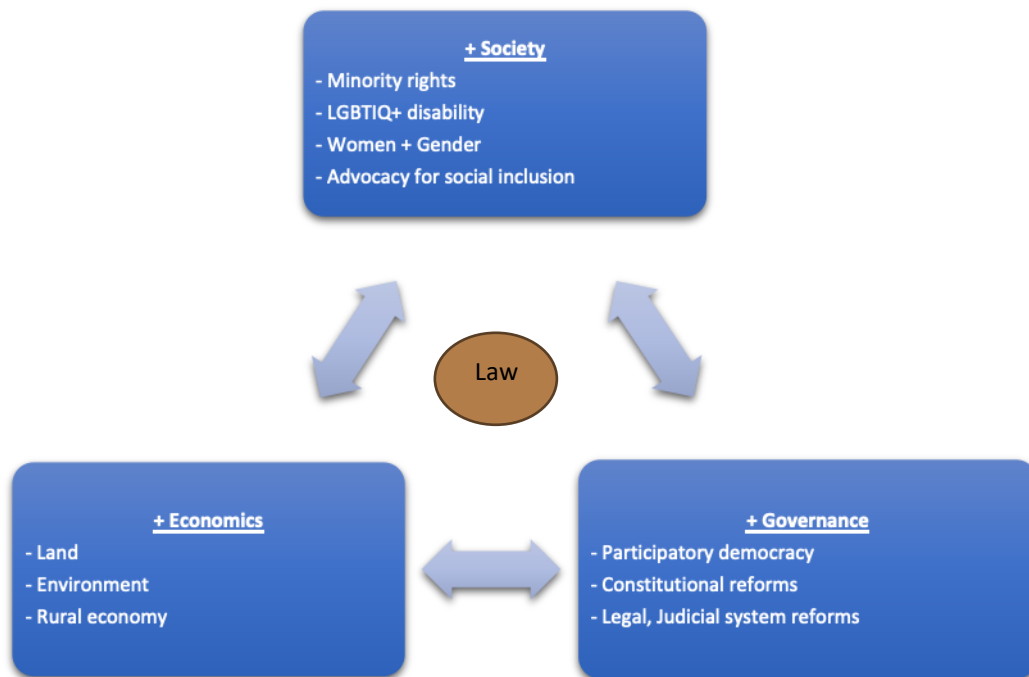


Fig 03: Programme Areas

7.1. Law and Society

At the heart of LST is its focus on law and society. This programme area focuses mainly on access to justice and includes issues relating to women, children, persons living with disabilities, religious

minorities, persons identifying as LGBTQI, and persons encountering the criminal justice system as victims, witnesses and suspects.

Historically, LST has been committed to ensuring an impartial and equitable justice system that prioritizes human rights, and therefore has been lobbying for legal aid for criminal matters. The Trust aims to ensure that through this programme, hitherto discriminated and marginalized groups will be better equipped to articulate their own concerns and needs. To achieve this, the Trust will work to promote rights-based approaches such as non-discrimination and inclusion with a view to changing attitudes, laws, policies and practices.

LST seeks to strengthen further partnerships in strategic litigation in areas of criminal justice, environment, land, disappearances and arbitrary arrest and detention. LST will also work on issues relating to online/technology related rights, the clergy and their role in democracy, educational curriculum reform and its role in advancing gender equality and promoting ethnic and religious harmony. LST will also expand its programming on the environment, climate change, and its correlation to economic, social and cultural rights. LST will build on existing work with youth as change makers.

7.2. Law and Governance

The Law and Governance programme area focuses on constitutional reform, strengthening the rule of law and participatory democracy. The Trust is committed to citizen's engagement and participation in constitutional reform and transitional justice processes. Central to these reforms is the recognition of the importance of economic, social and cultural rights, traditionally not prioritized in constitutional reform initiatives. Therefore, LST will continue to engage in research and critical analysis of bills and policies from the perspective of human rights and constitutionalism. LST will also document and analyze the State's accountability and commitment to human rights issues through its responses to the judiciary, other state institutions and to issues relating to impunity.

Through this program the Trust aims to facilitate meaningful dialogue and cooperation between citizens and the State, and where necessary, support communities to hold the State accountable to deliver on national and international commitments. This is primarily achieved through community governance platforms and building relationships with provincial councils and local government authorities in promoting participatory governance.

In recognition of the historical work on devolution and minority rights, the Trust is committed to deepening public understanding and awareness of devolution debates, and minority rights. In addition, the Trust will continue to support legal practitioners and academics in upholding and defending well-established principles of human rights, equality and dignity. This includes engaging with legal education, strategic interest litigation and regular discussions within the legal professions on promoting and defending human rights principles in practice and law.

The Trust will also engage in issues of cyber security and data protection and learn from international best practices in developing protection mechanisms relating to privacy and digital security.

7.3. Law and Economy

LST's Law and Economy programme draws from the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Directive Principles of State Policy in Sri Lanka's 1978 Constitution and United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Historically, LST has had a long interest in law and the economy having organized the national law and economy conference, consecutively for many years throughout the 1990s. Over time, LST has come to articulate a distinct critique of the neo-liberal economic model, and has focused its attention on vulnerabilities and marginalization, especially within the rural economy. The programme's recent work has focused on indebtedness and micro-finance, changing labour relations and land rights.

The Trust is committed to strengthening local communities in their struggle for land rights and social justice. Through this programme, LST aims to highlight the centrality of land in the lives of individuals and communities in Sri Lanka. LST will conduct research and analysis of government policies on land, ownership, land usage and development, and work closely with government officials and communities in developing an equitable land use policy. LST will also seek to ensure that urban development is community and environmentally friendly and will support the communities to know their rights, to articulate their needs in these relocation processes, and to ensure that they are supported through out a relocation process.

LST aims to establish itself as a repository of labour policy research while further sharpening its unique contribution to the understanding of the impact of different economic models and approaches on labour. In the future, LST hopes to better understand and capture the impact of militarization of the labour force, and continue its long-term research into women's livelihood.

The Trust will strategically support Trade Unions while continuing to lobby businesses to engage with Unions on human rights issues. In a changing world of work, the Trust will facilitate learning from other countries in introducing alternative forms of mobilization and protection networks for privatized and informal sector workers.

Indebtedness has emerged as a defining characteristic of the rural economy, with many families unwittingly turning to microfinance credit on easy terms of access that are also linked to high interest rates. LST will continue to work with the government to establish a regulatory framework and mechanisms for the oversight of microfinance institutions and to support financial literacy programmes for the affected communities.

LST will work with the business community to create understanding of the connection between business and human rights and to recognise the ways in which businesses can incorporate human rights principles in the design and management of their operations to ensure a harmonious and productive relationship with their workers, while gaining the respect and trust of customers. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis, this is particularly important. LST will develop strategies of engagement between the business owners and workers and share lessons learned of successful initiatives of human rights-oriented collaboration between the business owners, workers, CSOs and the State.

8. Institutional Development

The key to successful implementation of the strategies formulated by LST, will be the efficient management of its operations and overall strengthening of the organization. The staff as implementers of the strategy will require sound systems and structures to support them to achieve the goals and objectives set out. In the discussions that took place during the strategy development phase, it was identified that there is potential for strengthening and enhancing the support function especially in the areas of human resources, finance and administration.

In the recent past, LST developed a new salary structure and a performance appraisal scheme to help address concerns raised by staff in this area. In order to ensure that an effective Performance Appraisal (PA) Scheme is in place, LST will work on using this Strategic Plan to develop Individual Work Plans (IWPs) for all staff that will then be linked to the PA Scheme. In the coming three years, LST will also look to enhance their human resource policies in areas such as recruitment, staff capacity development, staff motivation and to update their human resource policy manual. During

the review process, staff also identified that there was a lack of communication between the different units and the projects within LST. This issue will be addressed within the organization structure by creating a programme management team, which would improve communication between units, creating synergies between the different projects and programmes.

Given that LST is a knowledge based organization, enhancing research skills and writing skills of the staff was identified as a key task. In light of this, LST also hopes to draw on the research skills possessed by board members, who would provide oversight to staff in this area. LST will also look to further enhance the involvement of the board of directors in the area of fundraising for the organization.

LST having used the outcome mapping process in developing their new Strategic Plan has understood the need to closely monitor and evaluate all initiatives and activities undertaken and track the progress markers developed. The need for a dedicated person to carry out this task was identified and LST will look to employ a suitable staff member to manage the task of monitoring and evaluation and quality assurance.

8.1. Organizational Management

Hybrid Organization Structure

In August of 2019, LST reviewed its organization structure and after much deliberation and discussion, with the help of the Strategic Inspirations team, developed the hybrid organizational structure below. This hybrid structure creates the concept of a shared mission and allows for **both LST's Core Staff and Programmatic Experts** (*with different experience and specialized levels of expertise*) to work together on various projects and in diverse programmes.

This structure creates a unified team of individuals (*notwithstanding the employment arrangement*) with a common goal.

Each Consultant/Programme Expert is able to work in the areas he/she is best suited to and can also provide specific expertise for diverse projects within LST's portfolio, moving from project to project and reporting to different LST staff as and when necessary.

The structure fits in well with the Strategic Plan developed by LST, and is intended to facilitate the delivery of LST's planned programme of work over the next three years. (See Organisational Structure -Appendices 10.2)

8.2. Finance and Resource Mobilization

LST has a well-staffed finance department that is responsible for managing funds accountably and providing information for decision-making purposes. Currently, detailed financial information and reports are presented to the board of directors on a quarterly basis. These reports consist of quarterly income and expense statements, balance sheets and variance analysis and information pertaining to the investment portfolios and finance pipelines. In order to further strengthen its financial health, LST will enhance and regularize the role of the finance committee who will be centrally responsible for reporting to the board of directors.

While detailed financial management information is provided to the board of directors, the lack of financial information provided for internal purposes and decision-making was identified as an area for improvement. LST will put in place systems and processes to enhance the finance information shared internally which in turn will help a better decision-making process among the staff of LST. As with the plan to update the human resources procedure manual, LST will also look to update the current finance and administration manual and to enhance it to include areas such as capital asset management policy, and budgeting policy.

With a view to deliver on its programme of work, as formulated above, LST will look to mobilize its board of directors in the task of expanding and diversifying its current funding portfolio. Presently LST has some long-term donor support in place and will actively look to strengthen its funding portfolio with a healthy mixture of project funding, core funding and local funding. LST will also look to raise funds jointly with other partners that would also extend the outreach of their programme.

8.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Trust will employ a monitoring and evaluation technique called Outcome Mapping (OM) to streamline their monitoring priorities and evaluation plan at the institutional level. OM suggests a participatory approach to developing outcome challenges and thus promotes consensus building and empowerment of project staff.

OM focuses on one specific type of result: outcomes as behavioral change. Outcomes are defined as changes in the behavior, relationships, activities, or actions of the people, groups, and organizations with whom a programme works directly. These outcomes can be logically linked to a programme's activities, although the activities do not necessarily directly cause them. An important element of

OM is Boundary Partners: individuals, groups, and organizations with whom the programme interacts directly and with whom the programme anticipates opportunities for influence. Most activities will involve multiple outcomes because they have multiple boundary partners.

Under the various subthemes of the three main programme areas of LST, the following boundary partners were prioritized for LST's institutional-level OM:

- Lawyers and legal educators
- Human Rights activists
- Religious leaders
- Parliamentarians and political party leaders
- Various Government officers (e.g. Officials of Land Ministry, Divisional Secretariats)
- Civil Society Organizations
- Trade Unions
- Business Leaders
- Citizens' Forums

For a comprehensive work plan with further details, such as progress markers, time-lines and persons responsible, refer the Annexes (10.3).

9. Risks and Assumptions

This Strategic Plan is premised on the assumption that donors will continue to support work related to human rights and democracy in Sri Lanka, as well as support grassroots activism and capacity building that require long-term investment. The Trust also assumes donor interest in supporting timely documentation and research work that support local, national and international advocacy on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The Trust recognizes that any shrinking of human rights space in Sri Lanka would negatively impact on its ability to freely work with communities across ethnic, religious and geographic lines, as well as affect the advocacy campaigns. The precarious positioning of non-governmental organisations working on human rights and democracy in a context favouring technocracy and militarization as the basis of 'good' governance could also act as a deterrence.

The COVID 19 pandemic is an unexpected challenge during this strategic planning process. In addition to the limitations on mobility and community work, nationally it is expected that the public health crisis will have a significant impact on the economy. It is anticipated that it would be difficult to negotiate alternate development paradigms based on human rights even as the Government is

likely to prioritize traditional economic and development models. However, this is an opportunity to re-think development paradigms and indicators and to forge new partnerships with government entities and other stakeholders. The pandemic attacks individuals and communities across ethnic and religious boundaries and creates the opportunity to face these challenges collectively and to adopt rational and fact-based approaches to shape national priorities and to ensure that social justice and human security is realized by all.

10. Appendices

10.1 Timeline

The Law & Society Trust was established in 1982 to initiate studies and activities on law and social change. At the time of its establishment, legal research in Sri Lanka and the region focused on textual developments and case law evolution and not on the politics underlying legal development, and the nature of the legal process and the possible contribution of law to national development.

The Trust focused on activities and programmes, including studies and publications that brought the law to the forefront, to play a more meaningful role in the lives of the poor and the disadvantaged. The Trust continued its activities throughout periods of political and economic crisis and the institutional challenges it faced with the assassination of its founder.

LST’s Programmatic Interventions	Significant Developments In Sri Lanka’s Socio-Political, And Economic Landscape
1982	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Law & Society Trust is established • Introduced the concept of community legal education and awareness of the legal needs of poor 	<p>Government led by the UNP holds a national referendum to extend the life of parliament by 6 years</p>
1983	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged the legal community on socio-economic and development issues. • Established a Documentation Centre • Established an Internship Programme 	<p>Black July riots targeting Tamil minority community - Approximately 150,000 people left homeless and many businesses burnt</p>

1987	
	The Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord signed in Colombo
1988	
	December – Ranasinghe Premadasa (UNP) elected as president
1989	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturday morning TV shows on legal literacy • Development of <i>Chithra Katha</i> booklets on rights • Video documentary on legal education • Casebook on Fundamental Rights – first casebook published in the country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14th Amendment - increased number of Members of Parliament up to 225 • 15th Amendment - number of members that each electoral district is entitled to return • 16th Amendment - Members of Provincial Councils empowered to use either of the National Languages to discharge their duties • The Second JVP Insurrection • 9th Parliamentary Elections with UNP led by Ranasinghe Premadasa winning with a total of 125 seats (This was the first parliamentary elections since 1977 and under the 1978 Constitution)
1990	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Asia Task Force on the Judiciary – addressing effectiveness, accountability and independence • Regional meeting of human rights and donor communities of the region to explore new forms of activism • Law & Economy Core Group established – develop the capacity of the Sri Lanka’s legal professionals to assist in restructuring of the economy and development process • Discussions on a Legal Aid Coalition to pursue developmental legal aid and support paralegals • Discussions on Alternate Dispute Resolution • Discussions to establish a Non-Governmental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Party Conference on Constitutional Reform • Draft 17th Amendment to the constitution developed

Commission on Legal Education

- *Kantba Melas* or Festivals of Justice
- Project on CEDAW's local implementation
- 1st August 1990 - LST Fortnightly Review published
- Documentaries on Mental Health and Child Abuse

1991

- Acquisition of Sam Kadirgamar, Q.C. Collection & Canada Collection
- Paralegal Training Programme, March 1991 – workshops conducted as several NGOs requested more trainings
- The Trust plays a catalytic role between human rights groups and developmental organisations
- Refugee /displacement studies
- Symposium of the 17th Amendment to the constitution
- Discussions on the impeachment motion and related constitutional issues – LST serves as a critical and independent forum for articulation of diverse viewpoints on constitutional change and the need for social engagement
- Symposium on the Bill of Rights from experiences of Sri Lanka, India, Canada and United States of America
- Supporting comparative legal studies focused on constitutional public law and promoting a South Asian Case Book on Fundamental Rights
- LST Review distributed among 150 human rights organisations in 40 countries
- Motion of impeachment against President Premadasa
- Commission of Inquiry into activities of NGOs
- Parliamentary Select Committee appointed to look into proposals for a political resolution.
- Number of internally displaced people exceeds one million
- Revised draft of 17th Amendment, a product of the All Party Conference - the new amendment sought to rewrite Sri Lanka's Fundamental Rights Chapter

- ‘Legal Personalities’ lecture series, exploring the lives and times of eminent lawyers of 19th and 20th century Sri Lanka
- Assisted in the preparation of the draft Human Rights Commission Law

1992

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Working Group on democratic governance and human rights protection for the SAARC region • Supporting the development of a global intellectual and policy agenda on human rights, democracy and minority protection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sri Lankan security forces launch Operation Chaturanga, reflecting government's resolve to pursue a military solution to the conflict • At the government's invitation, Amnesty International representatives visit Sri Lanka to evaluate implementation of Amnesty's 1991 recommendations for human rights safeguards concerning arrest and detention procedures and protection against disappearance or torture |
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1993

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to continuous legal education and strengthening of professional skills • Identifies need for specialized legal skills within the context of economic restructuring, privatization of state enterprises and the liberalization of the economy • National Conference on Law & the Economy • Formulated project on the State of Human Rights in Sri Lanka | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assassination of Lalith Athulathmudali • Assassination of President Premadasa • D. B Wijetunge (UNP) appointed President. • Emergency regulation on sedition and incitement re-enacted • Opposition led by Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga gained control in Western, Southern and North Western Province in Provincial Council Elections • Battles of Kilali and Pooneryn • Supreme Court issues fresh interpretation of the mandate of the Human Rights Task Force – HRTF began investigating the legality of detentions and advised on releases • SC delivered several judgments upholding allegations of torture by the Police |
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- SC decision invalidating appointments of Chief Ministers from the UNP
- NGO Commission Report – under Emergency Laws NGOs required to register with Director Social Services
- Resettlement of displaced communities
- Repatriation of 7000 Sri Lankan refugees from India to Sri Lanka
- Ministry of Constitutional Reform established

1994

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intention to contribute to the development of a new constitution • State of Human Rights in Sri Lanka Report published 1993 • Continued work on Constitutional Reform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August – Parliamentary Elections: Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, leads the PA to win a slim victory in the parliamentary election, winning 105 of 225 seats • Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam appointed a national list MP from the TULF • October – Assassination of Gamini Dissanayake • November – Chandrika Kumaratunge elected as President • Expectation of a political, negotiated settlement to the conflict • Greater levels of tolerance to criticism and dissent • Promise of a new constitution by 1995 • Sri Lanka ratifies Convention against Torture • Limited Torture Act passed • Commissions of Inquiry regarding disappearances after 1988 (includes power to order compensation) • Discovery of mass graves at Suriyakande (suspected victims of 1988-89) |
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1995

- Focus on incorporating perspectives of developing nations into international rights/policy agenda
- Engaging international scholars on issues of human rights, democracy and development
- Strengthening Regional Human Rights Organisations
- Promoting the Protection of Human Rights

Penal Code Amendments e.g. relating to the age of marriage, sexual harassment

1996

- Health and Human Rights Desk
- Annual Law and Economy Conference
- Sharing of technical expertise with the region.
- Collaboration with ODHIKAR (Bangladesh) – to develop seminars on law and development and law and economy, and to conduct training programs in Dhaka on international and regional instruments on individual and group rights.
- Uganda Institutional Capacity Building Project (World Bank) to reform commercial laws of Uganda
- Citizens Participation in Democracy Project
- Input into formulation of the National Human Rights Commission Bill, Rehabilitation of Public Enterprises Bill and Goods and Services Tax Bill
- Novib Evaluation commends the Trust for crucial role in the region despite being small, dynamic flexibility of the Trust's work, comments on the need for LST to broaden grassroots network

- Armed conflict intensifies
- Devolution proposals

1997	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal Opportunity Project and Landmark litigation initiative • Towards greater freedom of association, assembly and expression in Asia • Comparative Constitutionalism in South Asia • Study group on media • Consultations on the Draft Constitution of Sri Lanka – Invite international jurists, legal draftsman, multi-stakeholder consultations 	<p>May: the Sri Lankan Army unleashed Operation Jayasikurui, marking the beginning of a long military campaign that would last for another 2 more years</p>
1999	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assassination of Founder and Executive Director • Ms. Damaris Wickremesekera appointed as Executive Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 1999 - a suicide bomber assassinates Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam, a national list MP • Presidential Election, President Kumaratunga wins a 2nd Term
2000	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia-Pacific Advisory Forum on Judicial Education and Equality Issues –to sensitize the judiciary on gender issues. • Appellate Law Recorder published 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Constitution by President Kumaratunga • Eppawala (mining of phosphate) Case: SC (FR) 884/1999 – landmark environmental judgment
2001	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliamentary Election – UNP secure Parliamentary majority
2002	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norwegian-mediated ceasefire agreement under UNP (2002) commences
2004	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights and Duties of Grama Niladari • Farmer's Right to Livelihood (FRL) • Trade, Development and Poverty Project with CUTS (Consumer Unity and Trust Society) • Shadow Report on CAT and ICCPR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliamentary Election • Tsunami

2005

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submissions to Parliament on Reforms to Election Laws & a Draft Contempt of Court Act • Submission on importance of implementation of 17th Amendment • Published Aspects of 50 Years of Law, Justice and Governance in Sri Lanka | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presidential Election – Mahinda Rajapaksa elected as President • Post-Tsunami response and reconstruction |
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2006

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Justice Initiative with Public Interest Law Foundation (PILF) • Advocating for constitutional right to health with PMRP • Citizens' Commission on the Expulsion of Muslims from the North in 1990 • Supporting objective and rigorous scrutiny of the Maldivian legal system on invitation of Native Operators on Rights (NOOR) | |
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2008

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language Rights stakeholder consultation and publication • Public consultations on status, mandate and performance of National Police Commission and National Human Rights Commission • A Reference Guide: Presidential Commissions of Inquiry, Sri Lanka • Human Rights Education workshops for local community activists • Continued advocacy on the implementation of the National Medicinal Drug Policy & Input towards a Charter of Patients' Rights and Duties | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalist J.S Tissanaiyagam arrested under PTA • War intensifies • Eviction of urban and/or underserved settlements commences |
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2009

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued research, documentation, advocacy and some protection to victims and families • Promoted dialogue with state and civil society | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assassination of journalist Lasantha Wickrematunge • May 2009 - End of the War |
|---|---|

- Raised understanding of human rights
- Strengthened civil society actors/networks
- Study on Land and Property Rights of Women in Sri Lanka – Highlighted discriminatory Laws, regulations and administrative practices
- Fact-based documentation and analysis of human rights violations, arrests, detention and disappearances
- Analysis of Writ Remedy of Habeas Corpus and Fundamental Rights Remedy against Arbitrary Arrest

- Large numbers of displaced detained in camps

2010

- August: Appointment of new Executive Director -Ms. Mala Liyanage

- Presidential Election – President Rajapaksa elected for 2nd term, defeating Former Army Commander, Sarath Fonseka
- Abduction and disappearance of journalist Prageeth Ekneligoda
- 18th Amendment to the Constitution- removing limitation to Presidential Term
- Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) appointed

2012-2013

- Not this Good Earth – report on the implementation of land policies, and analysis of lesser-known regulations, circulars issued by the Ministry of Lands
- PARL, Future In Our Hands and United Worker’s Congress Networks share information on their campaigns on land rights
- Production of video: ‘Mega Development Projects of Hambantota: in Whose Interest?’
- Submissions to UN Treaty Bodies on Migrant Worker Rights

LLRC holds hearings and records submissions

- Publication of The Judicial Mind in Sri Lanka: Responding to the Protection of Minority Rights
- Legal empowerment programmes in Mannar and Jaffna, on human rights violations
- Human Rights Training for Activists
- ANNI Report on the Human Rights Commission

2014

- Anti-Muslim riots in Aluthgama
- Maithripala Sirisena nominated as UNF Presidential Candidate in November 2014

2015

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June: Appointment of new Executive Director – Ms. Dinushika Dissanayaka • Land law handbooks developed and training for government officials and CSO leaders • National Workshop on South Asian Human Rights Mechanisms (Sri Lanka and Maldives) • Advocacy with BOI on right-based development • Documentary on tourism in Kalpitiya- ‘Theppam’ • Proposing alternate drafts to gender discriminatory provisions in law relating to land • Building fact-based evidence on human rights issues including violations • Supporting interaction and dialogue between state, civil society and community on development and land related issues • Enhanced digital presence • Advocacy to shape the 19th Amendment and the Right to Information Bill • Training of Journalists on reporting on human rights violations, linking lawyers and journalists • Report on Aluthgama Riots • Discussions on Transitional Justice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 2015 Maithripala Sirisena elected as President • Co-Sponsorship of UN Resolution, A/HRC/RES/30/1 • Bond Scam • 19th Amendment • August 2015 - Parliamentary Election – UNF secured a majority – emphasis on good governance and accountability |
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2016

- Three Thematic priorities outlined:
 - Law and Society
 - Law and Economy
 - Law and Governance
- National Consultation on Labour and Informal Work
- Training for community leaders and local government officers on land rights
- Lived Experiences of War-affected Women with Disabilities
- State of Minority Rights Report published
- Advocacy for recognizing ESCR in transitional justice
- Research on the criminal justice system
- South Asia Judicial Barometer
- Project on Anti-Corruption
- Convened 'Action for People's Constitution' to advocate for the inclusion of ESCR in the new constitution
- Right to Information Act
- Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Public Representations on Constitutional Reforms
- Consultative Task Force on Reconciliation Mechanisms
- Draft Counter Terrorism Law
- Draft Amendment to the Criminal Procedure Code
- November 2016 Formation of Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP)

2017

- Research and national symposium on informal labor
- Research on Women's perspective of Samurdhi and social security
- Launching of the study of War-affected Women with Disabilities in Sri Lanka
- Publication on Land Development Ordinance: Key Concerns and Ideas for Reform
- Community awareness, civil society mobilizing and advocacy on constitutional reforms
- Submission of shadow reports for International
- The EU reinstates GSP+ facility to Sri Lanka
- April 2017 – Collapse of Meetotumulla garbage dump

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and Universal Periodic Report (UPR). Facilitate CSO advocacy with UN

- Land rights advocacy, legal trainings, convene People's Alliance for Right to Land (PARL)

2018

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August: appointment of new Executive Director – Sakuntala Kadirgamar • Facilitated visit of Chairperson of the Committee on ESCR and meetings with the Government, CSOs and Constitutional Assembly • Citizen's Forums • Community Governance Platform • Submission to the UN Expert on Foreign Debt and Human Rights • Commenced Five Year Research project on women's livelihoods, rural indebtedness and microcredit in four districts • People's Commission on Land Rights • Database on Land Issues – PARL • Study on Court of Appeal Judgments on sexual violence published • Regional Judicial Colloquium on Women's Rights to Justice and Equality in the Family • Workshop with PILPG on strategic litigation • Civil society fact Finding Mission to Digana on anti-Muslim violence • Documentary on Muslim Marriages and Divorce Act (MMDA) • Youth For Inclusive Development in South Asia (YIELD) - action research project on the challenges faced by youth and sexual minorities in India and Bangladesh | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government Elections – SLPP winning with a majority in February • March 2018 Anti- Muslim violence in Digana • Disintegration of the Unity government • October - Constitutional coup <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removal of PM Wickremesinghe and appointment of Mahinda Rajapaksa - Supreme Court temporarily stays President's proclamation dissolving Parliament. - Parliament passes motion suspending the Government from spending state money - Court of Appeal issues interim order preventing Mahinda Rajapaksa from functioning as Prime Minister and all other cabinet ministers in their portfolios - Supreme Court finds President's act of dissolving of Parliament to be unconstitutional and illegal; President's order was overturned - Supreme Court confirms Court of Appeal interim order restricting the functions of the Prime Minister's office - Mahinda Rajapaksa backs down from claiming Prime Ministership - Ranil Wickremesinghe is reinstated as Prime Minister |
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- Analysis of High Court Judgments on Torture
- Study on social aspect of protection and torture
- Social impact stories of PTA arrest/ arbitrary arrests – difficult to collect but in progress
- Legal support to appeal death penalty
- Legal support to victims of arbitrary arrest under Emergency regulations
- Human rights education with the University of Colombo
- Studies on Informal Labour
- Research, national symposium, publications and advocacy on micro-finance
- In-depth Studies on the working of the Rural Economy in selected areas
- Grassroots capacity building programmes for activists.
- Publication on Islamic Extremism: Clash of Civilizations or Clash within Civilizations
- Research on LGBT Rights, Disability rights
- Engagement with the government structures, Land Commissioner, giving legitimacy
- Legal advocacy support to affected communities to engage with Provincial and National land authorities to solve land rights issues
- LST Review on constitutional crisis published in 3 languages
- State of Human Rights Report published
- National symposium ‘Ten Years of People’s Land Struggles: Reflections and Way Forward’ in collaboration with People’s Alliance for Right to Land (PARL)
- April: Easter Bombings and national security crisis, arrests under ER and PTA
- September: Aruwakkalu struggles and lack of satisfactory alternatives to waste crisis
- November - Presidential Election, Gotabaya Rajapaksa elected as president

2020

- Minority Rights in South Asia – Report launched in Colombo in partnership with LST
 - Development of Strategic Plan 2020-2025
 - People’s Land Commission report launched
- President has expressed a wish to repeal 19th Amendment
 - Bills to repeal the MMDA and Kandyan Marriage and Divorce Act discussed
 - President’s vision to create a government run by technocrats and meritocrats: retired Armed Force personnel appointed to key public postings
 - Political demands of minority communities and their concerns sidelined – ‘development, not devolution’
 - 2 March: President dissolves Parliament
 - 3 March – first Sri Lankan with COVID-19 detected
 - 12 March – nominations for parliamentary elections
 - COVID- 19 declared a pandemic
 - Curfew March through April 2020
 - Elections postponed

10.2 Organizational Structure

