

# CONTRIBUTION AND CHALLENGES FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS WORKING WITH TRIBALS

A PRIMER OF THE STUDY REPORT



VOICE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR  
VANI



Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)

**Contribution and Challenges of Voluntary Organisations working with Tribals: A Primer of the Study Report**

*Author:* Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)

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Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)  
BB-5, 1st Floor, Greater Kailash Enclave-II,  
New Delhi 110 048  
Phone: 011-29228127, 29226632  
Telefax: 011-41435535  
E-mail: [info@vaniindia.org](mailto:info@vaniindia.org)  
Website: [www.vaniindia.org](http://www.vaniindia.org)

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Telefax: 011-41435535

Email: [info@vaniindia.org](mailto:info@vaniindia.org)

Website: [www.vaniindia.org](http://www.vaniindia.org)

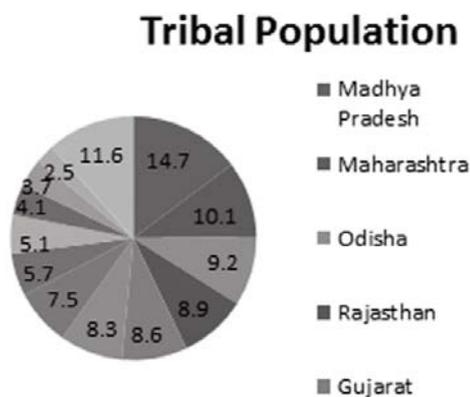
**Context:**

The scheduled tribes who predominate certain areas of the country like the North-Eastern region, large parts of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, and certain parts of Gujarat and the hilly regions of most states are those sections of the Indian population who still live in their tribal ways and observe their own peculiar customs and cultural norms.

In the post-independence India, welfare and development of the tribal communities has been a constitutional obligation and special responsibility of the centre and the various state governments. Therefore, the government took initiatives for the upliftment of the tribals in collaboration with the other stakeholders and the general populace of the country. The government had instituted numerous commissions and committees from time to time to assess the tribal situation in the country. However, it is unfortunate that in spite of the efforts and initiatives, the government could not bring any radical change in the socio-economic development of these marginalized sections and subsequently they were pushed to the periphery. It was soon realized that all the activities and programmes relating to the development of scheduled tribes cannot be done single-handedly by the government. The failure of the government gave a fertile

ground to the VOs to work upon and extend a helping hand to their tribal brethren.<sup>1</sup>

The role of VOs, with their local roots, has become increasingly important as they are enjoying the confidence of the tribal population by providing much-needed services close to their homes. They supplement the efforts of the state in ensuring that the benefits reach to a large number of population irrespective of the geographical barriers.



Source: <http://www.ifad.org/operations/projects/design/106/india.pdf>

In certain cases, it is observed that the VOs are in a better position to implement the schemes of the government for the tribals. This is primarily attributable to the highly dedicated and committed human resources available to VOs.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.radianceweekly.com/106/2019/civil-society-the-new-superpower/2008-05-06/cover-story/story-detail/ngos-and-tribal-development-in-india-issues-and-concerns.html>

### **Contribution of VOs working towards issues of tribals**

VOs are playing a vital role in the advancement of the society especially through their catalytic role in promoting socio-economic development of the socially disadvantaged groups like that of the tribals. The direct involvement of VOs at the grassroots level ensures effective community participation and triggers attitudinal changes amongst the tribal people who otherwise remained for too long outside the mainstream society deprived of the development taking place around them. Thus, there is an immense need to recognize the credible contribution of the VOs in uplifting the weaker sections.

In connection with this, many of the development actors have tried and made efforts to do something substantially for the tribal development in their own way. Due to this, some progress has been made but still a lot needs to be done. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can play an important role in ensuring Sustainable Tribal Development.<sup>2</sup>

The study focuses on issues and problems pertaining to the role of VOs in tribes across the country in a three-pronged strategy, namely.

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2. <http://www.nomadit.co.uk/uaes/uaes2013/panels.php5?PanelID=1605>

1. Research and advocacy
2. Capacity-building and
3. Rights-based approach

### **Research and Advocacy**

VOs undertake research, review, assessment, and development of social structure in various tribal regions of the country. They also

undertake research and development activities of rural technology in rural area for increasing agricultural production, creating employment, eradicating poverty, and bringing overall improvement in tribal areas.

VOs are actively engaged in advocating the cause of the adivasis especially with regard to migration, displacement, land alienation, trafficking, tribal rights violation, etc. Further, VOs help in creating a joint platform to facilitate a constructive conversation among the marginalized group, civil society organizations, and government and private bodies including media. All key stakeholders are involved in a series of extensive discussions and consultations to formulate a strategy that will give the right focus to the programs to maximize the impact.



Source - <http://revolutionaryfrontlines.wordpress.com/category/south-asia/india/jharkhand/>

Developmental role of NGOs is preparing the people for a change which is basically an advocacy role, viz. development of education, incorporating self-sustainable development philosophy, and form public opinion about government policies or social issues, consciences for environmental problem, literacy, health, use of appropriate technology for family planning and empower the poor to overcome psychological inhibitions and opposition of appraisers.

### **Service Delivery**

- **Capacity building:** VOs build capacity of the group and facilitate relationship and capabilities to boost voice and opportunities of people and bridge the social gap.
- **Self-reliant:** VOs play a greater role in the lives and livelihoods of the tribal and backward communities of India today. They make an honest endeavour to empower the marginalized people by providing information and also support the community to become self-reliant.
- **Awareness generation:** VOs make the tribal communities aware about various government welfares schemes, land, PESA act, education, health etc.
- **Livelihood support:** Enhancement of livelihood opportunities by monitoring the better implementation of government

schemes in PTG areas.

- Organize campaigns and exposure visits and provide awareness to community members on horticulture and agriculture activities in PTG areas.



Source - Members of the Daraghuyan tribal community work closely with the Kitanglad Integrated NGOs

- **Community empowerment:** To improve the living conditions of tribal people in general and PTGs in particular VOs organize and enable communities to adopt sustainable and productive natural resource management regimes, adopt market-oriented production systems and learn the skills and gain the experience of planning and implementing development plans relevant to their villages.
- Towards upholding the democratic spirit in planning and implementing various welfare and development programmes, VOs are involved to ensure active, effective, and purposeful participation of the tribal people.

### **Rights-based entitlement**

VOs are working towards protecting and promoting tribal culture, ethos, ecological practices, and tribal rights. These institutions are

acting as a proactive agent by seeing that the tribal rights are safeguarded and energies for socio-economic development of tribes are directed to bring fruitful channels of development. The contributions of VOs in ensuring the rights of tribals are discussed below.

Below are some of the various issues on which VOs are focusing:-

**Right to forest** : The identity of tribals is in grave danger, since the forest cover in the country has drastically been reduced causing unnatural damage to the environment and forests they were living in. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest

“VOs believe that working with the marginalized group is more crucial while working for them.”

Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 is a result of the protracted struggle by the VOs and the marginal and tribal communities of our country to assert their rights over the forestland over which they were traditionally dependent. The notification of rules for the implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006 on 1 January 2008, has finally paved the way to undo the 'historic injustice' done to the tribals and other forest dwellers. The traditional forest rights of the tribals are now well-recognized.

***Right to land and resources:*** Many indigenous and tribal people live in areas rich in living and non-living resources, including forests that contain abundant biodiversity, water, and minerals. Historically, the desire of non-indigenous society for such resources has resulted in the removal, decimation or extermination of many indigenous communities. Many VOs are championing the cause of tribal people around the world and are helping them to protect their lives, their lands, and determine their own futures. VOs are actively involved with government ministries and lobbying with the government on their land rights. They are also focusing on protecting their constitutional and traditional rights over their natural resources and traditional livelihoods

***Right to health and hygiene:*** Sudden change in the ecosystems of tribal settlements and migration of non-tribal population into tribal areas, led to the spread of diseases with which they were not familiar in the past. Moreover, medical facilities in the tribal areas are utterly inadequate and they continue to depend on their traditional magico-religious and ethno medical systems. Many VOs are covering the remote tribal villages in the localities where either no governmental health care facilities exist or the same is not sufficient for the population.

**Right to education:** Education is considered indispensable for helping tribal people cope with national integration. Education will also determine their prosperity, success, and security in life. The tribes which remain either deprived of or negligent toward education will suffer the consequence. VOs recognize that non-formal education system is the ideal solution to deal with the illiteracy issue in tribal areas. It is working towards raising awareness and contributing to better attendance in schools.

<b>Drop Out Rates(Boys)</b>		
	<b>ST</b>	<b>All Categories</b>
Classes I - V	37.2	28.7
Classes I - VIII	54.7	40.3
Classes I - X	70.6	50.4

*Source: Statistics of School Education 2010-2011*

### **Protection and promotion of tribal culture**

VOs are working for the moral as well as social development of

<b>Drop Out Rates(Girls)</b>		
	<b>ST</b>	<b>All Categories</b>
Classes I - V	33.9	25.1
Classes I - VIII	55.4	41.0
Classes I - X	71.3	47.9

*Source: Statistics of School Education 2010-2011*

the indigenous people (tribals), backward minorities including women, youth, and children by improving the cultural resources through social coordination. They also protect and expand the traditional art, literature, and culture of the indigenous people and provide legal support to the migrated women and build social equality for a healthy atmosphere. VOs are working to revive the cultural degradation by promoting the traditional art and culture, ensuring the identity of the tribals, and making the community aware of their fundamental rights.

## Recommendations

- Community participation should be fundamental to empower the tribal community. VOs can play an effective role not only in the implementation of state-sponsored development initiatives but also in articulating the alternatives for development of the marginalized.
- Create sense of ownership among tribal population. The development paradigm should centrally focus the tribal philosophy/vision/ideology in its approach and the Tribal Advisory Council needs to be structured and should be accountable to the people of scheduled area.
- Social watch on various interventions of the state should be conducted and the society should understand and come forward to restore its rights and other existing opportunities.
- VOs should make efforts to dialogue with the various violent groups and also enhance coordination between state and naxalite groups.
- Ignorance and illiteracy of tribals are the basic problems to any development. Government should also take it up as a thrust activity to bring literacy and education to the tribals.

**A national plan of action for comprehensive development which would serve as a road map for the welfare of the tribals should be prepared and implemented.**

## LIST OF VANI PUBLICATIONS

### **Economic Policy**

1. GATT, WTO and the Developing Countries (Hindi & English)
2. Proposals for National Union Budget for 1993-94: An alternative to the Fund Bank dictated Union Budget (English)

### **Panchayati Raj**

1. Local Self-Governance: The Role of Voluntary Organisations (English & Hindi)
2. Nagarpalika (74th Amendment) Act, 1992: The Role of Voluntary Organisations (English and Hindi).
3. State Panchayat Acts: A Critical Review (Hindi and English)

### **Social Development**

1. Summary of Declaration and Programme of Action of UN World Summit for Social Development (Hindi & English)
2. State Reports on Social Development: Assam; Bihar; Gujarat; Haryana; Karnataka; Kerala; Maharashtra; Madhya Pradesh; Orissa; Tamil Nadu; Uttar Pradesh; West Bengal.
3. Community Based Disaster Management: an information Guide (Hindi & English)

### **Law and Rules**

1. Report of the Task Forces: To review and simplify Acts, Rules, Procedures affecting Voluntary Organisations (Hindi & English)
2. Laws, Rules and Regulations for the Voluntary Sector-Report of the South Asian Conference (English)
3. Action Plan to bring about a collaborative relationship between Voluntary Organisations and Government (Hindi & English)
4. FCR Bill 2006 (Marathi).

### **Promoting Voluntarism**

1. Youth & Voluntarism (Hindi & English)
2. Into the Media World: An Introduction to Media Relation for Voluntary Activists.
3. Voluntary Development Organisations: The Guiding Principles (English & Hindi)
4. Non-Governmental Organizations: Guidelines for Good Policy and Practice (Hindi and English)
5. Voluntary Organisations Responsible Partners in Nation Building (English)
6. Voluntarism & Politics (English & Hindi)

### **General/Issues Concerning the Voluntary Sector**

1. India's Living Legends Savants of Voluntary Action (English)
2. Voluntary Organisations Responsible Partners in National Building (English)
3. The Election Process –Voters Know-How (English & Hindi)
4. Voluntarism & Govt: Policy, Programme & Assistance
5. Visioning Voluntary Sector in Emerging India: A Report on National Convention 2006
6. Status of NREGA in Chattisgarh: Key Issues and Hard Options, A Report on State Tribunal 2006 (English & Hindi)
7. Civil Society Security and Aid in India : A report on Roundtable December 2006 (E&H)
8. National Policy on the VS & Eleventh Five year Plan 2007
9. Civil Society Accountability Principles and Practice (India Toolkit) (English)
10. Enabling environment for Voluntary Organisations A Global Campaign (Book)
11. Model Policies for International Good Governance in Voluntary Organizations
12. The Hand Book in Good Governance for the Voluntary Sector
13. Status of the Voluntary Sector in India A Report
14. Status of the Voluntary Sector in India (Primer) English & Hindi))
15. Civil Society Engagement in Aid Effectiveness Discourse
16. Changing Dynamics Between VOs and Private Sector
17. Involving Voluntary Organizations in Governments Plans and Projects
18. India's Global Footprints



### **About Christian Aid**

Christian Aid is a Christian organisation that insist that world can and must be swiftly changed to one where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty. They provide urgent, practical and effective assistance where need is great, tackling the effects of poverty as well as its root causes. They are an agency of their churches in Britain and Ireland and are mandated to work on relief, development and advocacy for poverty eradication. Christian Aid's work was founded on Christian faith, inspired by hope and acts to change an unjust world through charity – a practical love and care for neighbours.

They work globally for profound change that eradicates the causes of poverty, striving to achieve equality, dignity and freedom for all, regardless of faith or nationality. They are part of a wider movement for social justice.

They provide urgent, practical and effective assistance where need is great, tackling the effects of poverty as well as its root causes.

From April 2012, Christian aid's work has been focused around the goals and objectives identified in their corporate strategy, 'Partnership for change – the power to end poverty' .

### **About VANI**

Voluntary Action Network India (VANI) is an apex body of the Voluntary Organisations.

- Founded in 1988 to act as a promoter/Protector and collective voice of the voluntary sector.
- Base of 8000 non-governmental organisations spread in 25 states of India.
- Resource Centre for publications, research work, articles, important documents and information about and related to the voluntary sector.

#### **Objectives:**

- As a platform, to promote voluntarism and create space for voluntary action.
- As a network, attempt to bring about a convergence of common sectoral issues and concerns for building a truly national agenda of voluntary action in India. In addition, facilitate linkages of various efforts and initiatives of the Indian voluntary sector, which succeed in strengthening a united and sustainable movement of change.
- An an association, work towards fostering value based voluntary action and long term sustainability especially amongst our members.

#### **Areas of work**

- Promoting practices of good governance in the voluntary sector.
- Strengthening networks
- Articulating independent voices of the sector.
- Research and advo cacy of policies and law effecting the voluntary sector.



**Christian Aid**  
House No. D25/D,  
SJ House,  
South Extension Part-II,  
New Delhi 110 049

**Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)**  
BB-5, 1st Floor, Greater Kailash Enclave-II,  
New Delhi 110 048  
Phone: 011-29228127, 29226632  
Email: [info@vaniindia.org](mailto:info@vaniindia.org) Website: [www.vaniindia.org](http://www.vaniindia.org)