

CONTRIBUTION AND CHALLENGES OF VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS WORKING ON RELIGIOUS MINORITY

A PRIMER OF THE STUDY REPORT



VOICE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR
VANI



Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)

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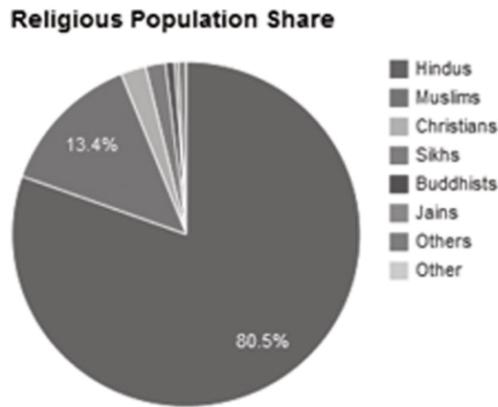
Context

The poorest communities in any society tend to be the minority that have witnessed discrimination since ages and have been suffering from injustice, violence, and exclusion. The minority or socially excluded groups are ignored and denied basic rights of the society. This can be seen both in the developed countries and also in least developed countries. Discrimination and inequality have very much become a part of their existence. The rights of the minorities are somewhere diluted. Their representation is minimum in various socio-economic and political structures. They have little or no say in decision making. They are vulnerable to discrimination by the powerful.

To address their issues there is a need to have a sustained approach that recognizes their rights as individuals and distinct minority communities. Thus, keeping in mind the discrimination that these

socially excluded groups face and continue to face, both the Constitution of India and VOs have various provisions and schemes to address their developmental needs. There have been several loopholes in the government schemes which have not completely changed the situation of the minority groups. VOs

independently and along with the government are working towards emancipation of these groups. It is high time that the development of



Source - <http://www.quora.com/What-are-your-views-on-caste-based-reservation-system-in-India>

every sector of the society benefits all and promotes social security and dignity.

Contribution of VOs towards strengthening religious minority

The VOs have made immense efforts towards improving the lives of religious minority. They are working with the minority with lot of sensitivity and ensuring that they are main-streamed in the society. It can be observed that not many VOs working on religious minority have put their work on public domain. Lot of VOs at the grassroots level is working tremendously for their emancipation. They are mostly involved in rights-based and service delivery. Not many organizations are involved in research and advocacy.

The VOs are working towards eradicating inequality and injustice faced by these minorities where the distribution of human resources is based on the principle of equitable and sustainable approaches and nationally across borders on the principle of

humanity where every minority gains equal human rights and lives with dignity.

The three category on which VO's are working are as follows.

1. Research and advocacy
2. Service delivery
3. Rights and entitlement

Research and advocacy

The VO's are developing relations with a number of stakeholders. They are building close relations with the nearby district and communities.

Without active cooperation and collaboration of the district administration,



Source- <http://www.thecuttingedgenews.com/index.php?article=1&M=March&Y=2013&PS=9>

the VOs would not be able to work with the various minority groups. They are developing linkages with other VOs, networks, officials, political leadership, etc. All these linkages facilitate the work of the organizations.

Workshops

VOs are conducting various workshops to create awareness amongst the minorities about the many schemes launched by the government for the welfare of the minority communities and imparting training on how to make best use of the Right to Information Act to monitor the implementation of these schemes.

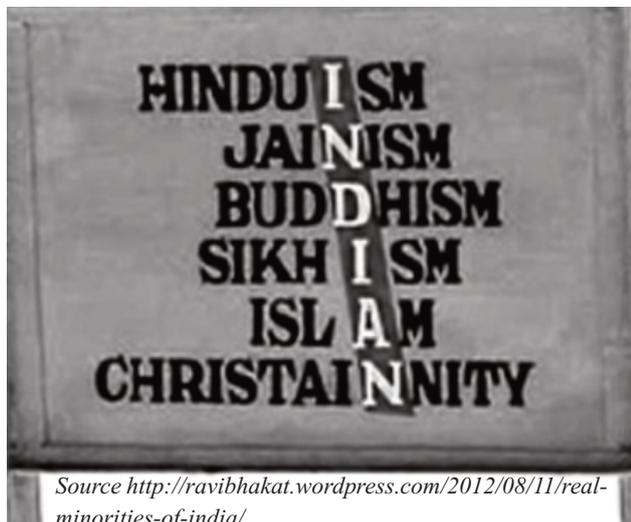
VOs are involved in various consultations organized concerning discussions on equal opportunities commission and communal violence which are also priority areas. Various discussions are ongoing on having an agency which acts like a watch dog and monitoring hate speeches.

Service delivery

Community-based rehabilitation of the minorities

There are various networks of VOs and individuals working for the relief and community-based rehabilitation after the devastating calamities. During the various interventions on rehabilitation, some of the core issues which came into light were discrimination and denial of the rights of the poor and minority section. The focus thus shifted towards eradicating the discrimination of the marginalized minorities

and empowering these communities to campaign for their rights.



Source <http://ravibhakat.wordpress.com/2012/08/11/real-minorities-of-india/>

Minority scholarship fund

VOs are working towards minority scholarship fund. Such programmes have started to give opportunities for those minorities who want to pursue their studies further and do not have the



means or ends to fulfill their dreams of completing their higher education.

Various fundraising activities are

performed to solicit funds for this purpose.

Rights-based entitlement

The VOs are implementing various projects related to rights of the minorities. Women and child development is the priority area of the VOs. They are also focusing on human resource development,

protection of cultural heritage, sustainable agriculture, legal aid, etc. They are constantly making efforts towards national integration and co-existence of national peace creating development agenda.

VOs are focussing on the overall development of minorities in rural and urban areas. There are various campaigns like those for social justice to include rest of the minorities in Article 341 of the Constitution of India like national integration, peace, and co-existence. The VOs are empowering minority youth,

women to demand their rights for their development.

The government acts like a push factor for



development of the minorities, whereas the VOs are ensuring that various schemes are reaching out to the minorities. Several schemes are proposed to enhance the long-term outreach for the minorities.

Some of the key issues are:

Education

It can be found that lack of education is a major problem faced by religious minorities in India. VOs in this regard are assisting the state to complement the public education system and improve its outreach to the most marginalized and minority population. The effectiveness of VOs is felt in the effectiveness of the schooling of the minority children and communities.

Right to Protection from Abuse and Exploitation

It can be seen that right to protection is every person's right but discrimination can be seen

belonging from minority community. It is imperative to ensure that the minorities are protected.

Some of the activities in relation to their protection are:

- Reduce emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and neglect

- Prevent minorities from exploitation through child labour and trafficking

- Ensure that they are paid fairly.

Recommendations

- There are various VOs and groups working with minorities at the grassroots level and they can learn a lot from each other's work. There can be a platform where there is sharing and exchange between these organizations.
- There are organizations who are only confined to their specific religious organizations and have very less or no contact with the other communities. There is a need to be more receptive and adopt new approach and outlook towards the various minority issues.
- VOs should be able to go beyond simply identifying related or narrow defined religious demand that benefit only a small section or a small class and also include the overall development and empowerment of the minorities.

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
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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.



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