



VOICE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR
VANI

Voluntary Action Network India

an apex body of voluntary organisations

celebrating 25 years...

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Editorial

Collectivisation of Voluntary Sector...

Dear Members and Associates,

Greetings from VANI!

On behalf of Working Committee of VANI, it is my pleasure to invite you to the 25th Annual General Body Meeting of VANI and VOICE 2013. This year the focus of VOICE is "Collectivisation of Voluntary Sector". As we all know that organisations which are remotely located and are active on most contested issue of realising rights to the marginalised are at the forefront to face the problems.



This year the focus of VOICE is to address the diversity of the sector and need for collectivisation. The second part of the day will be the AGM with statutory agenda. This year we would like to dedicate the lecture in the memory of Late Pratap Bhai Gandhian by principles, his attention was drawn towards hunger, poverty, drought and malnutrition amongst primitive tribes of Sarguja district where he established Sarguja Gramin Vikas Sansthan (SGVS) at a tribal village Rajkheta of Wadrafnagar block in 1991. His memorial lecture will be delivered by Dr. Jayant Kumar, Chairperson VANI and head of programs, CASA.

VOICE 2013

Voluntary sector of India has been known in the world as most vibrant and innovative. It has produced numerous outstanding innovative models which has been successfully scaled up and applied not only in India but in many parts of the world. It has also been the breeding ground of many development models, theories and practices which has shown path to people who are struggling to come out of poverty cycle. Our sector has also produced many thinkers, practitioners and leaders in the field of development. Interestingly, now our sector is on the cross roads. The government estimates say that we are around 1.5 million. Blame it to the century old laws of registration or important contribution made by the sector, now the sector has become one of the major players in the development of our nation. No debate on the growth of this country can conclude without the recognition of voluntary sector. However, there is negative side enclosed to it. Today, almost all types of entities can be registered under the term of "NGO". Although the term NGO is not acknowledged by the sector but it is now widely used and misused.

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On one hand, there are entities who claim that they are also like us, but we don't accept them. They are sports clubs like football federations, cricket bodies, or even recreation clubs which are registered under same law. Further, there are many institutions which are created and managed by government but are called society and stand with us in counting. In addition, almost all ministries have their own formations of NGOs. Many entities are created by people with vested interest we may call them 'fly-by-night' NGOs which are created many times to enjoy financial loopholes in the system. Thus, we see that today all good, bad; ugly are registered as NGOs by using the same registration laws. In past few years, it has been observed that media is also keeping a track on the NGOs and there is a negative publicity of the sector when black lists are made by the government or donors. Community also talks about drawing room NGOs floated by celebrities which generally exist on the page 3 of daily newspapers. On the other hand, we also have people in our sector who have spent almost all of their lives in struggle fighting for the cause of marginalised, but they are dismayed when they see the state of the sector. There are numerous voluntary organisations, commonly referred as NGOs, but are products of social movements and are active on the most contested issues in god forbidden locations. They are not formally registered but are on the same path of socio-economic change. They are like us but gradually a wide gap has been created between the identities due to incorporation which is making them isolated. Hence, the serious question before us is how to differentiate between the two in the mind of each and every person active in voluntary sector. On the basis of above discussion, the objective of VOICE 2013 is to collectivise the genuine voluntary sector, which is active as change maker and a facilitator in the journey from darkness to light for marginalised.

One of the major goals of VOICE this year is to fill this gap and work towards brining everyone in the fraternity of voluntary sector and volunteerism together. The time has come for the voluntary sector to redefine and re-look at its relationships with external stakeholders, because the external world has now started redefining us. The external world defines us from their vantage point, but many times due to their limited understanding we become categorised with category which is not acceptable. Majority of times the legal definitions and categorisations are linked with our incorporations. The century old law to register voluntary organizations becomes the primary parameter for defining our identity. Many such laws exist, like society registration act or trust act and recently discovered companies act with its attractive proposition under section 25 is an addition to it. We end up calling ourselves as trust or societies but feel defence less when we see cricket clubs, commercial bodies, family trust in the same category. Eventually, we find ourselves with people who are not like us, but just because they are registered under same act we are forced to joint same club. On the other hand, there is the group who are like us but refuse to join legal bondage. They could be people's movement, informal community groups, who are more like us but are not with us as they have different legal status, rather no legal status. Our operating realities have given us various bonding chains like FCRA, income tax, or registration laws in spite of having vision and dream of greater socio-economic change. The time has come to relook these relationships and identify our allies and rewrite the real world. We need to recount ourselves and collectivise to develop our identity beyond legal structures. In coming days, we might see corporates entering into same legal definitions, but the larger question is to move beyond incorporation and develop our own definitions.

For 2013 VOICE and AGM, we selected Raipur, Chhattisgarh as the venue for the VOICE 2013, because of its history and leadership in social movement in the country. The state is well identified as the sacrifice of tribal to ascertain their rights of livelihood, forest products, and statehood. The state has also given many tribal leaders to the country and been the torch bearer for rights of indigenous people in country.

This year VANI would like to give a call to the voluntary groups irrespective of their legal status to come and join the struggle for "right to association" which is much beyond legal definitions and incorporations.

Harsh Jaitli
CEO VANI



The changing role of the voluntary development sector in India

— By **Harsh Jaitli, CEO VANI**

2012 was a year full of challenges and also new opportunities for the voluntary sector in India. A country that has a very long tradition of volunteerism faced numerous domestic challenges, which demanded that Indian voluntary organisations adjust. The year saw its share of mass movements when thousands of people gathered in the political capital to demand a corruption free system. A Gandhian leader, P V Rajgopal, mobilised thousands of tribal peoples and forest dwellers to claim their land and forest rights, while the end of the year saw a very effective spontaneous movement against sexual harassment and for the dignity of women. There were also manifestations by a strong anti-nuclear movement in the Southern state of Tamil Nadu.

The Indian government responded by not only promising to change policies and the ways the system works, but also by increasing controls and threats on voluntary organisations. Numerous public debates took place on the harassment of the voluntary sector during this year. In addition, the voluntary sector looked within itself to implement internal reforms. In 2012, the voluntary sector also experienced new challenges due to the changing nature of the financial and partnership opportunities available. On the one hand, India has emerged as strong global player in global fora on economic policies and development, but on the other, domestic challenges of widespread poverty and deprivation have become more obvious.

A long and deep history of volunteerism

It is our belief that the existence of the voluntary sector in India is as old as the history of humanity in any civilisation. In the recorded history of India, the responsibility to provide for a decent human life with dignity had been always shared between the state and informal groupings of people. Religious institutions played an important role through their charities to provide education, health and other basic services alongside the state, the primary role of which was to provide security.

More structured voluntary organisations came into existence with the creation of the Societies Registration

Act of 1860, but the contribution of voluntary sector has gone much beyond those formally registered organisations. After the independence of India, the father of nation, Mahatma Gandhi, became the inspiration for many grass roots organisations, popularly known as 'Gandhian organisations'. After independence, Gandhi reminded people that India had only achieved political freedom, and freedom from hunger, disease, deprivation and marginalisation was still to be achieved. He advised many freedom fighters to join the electoral and political process to achieve these social goals or alternatively to join the voluntary social service sector. In the years following independence, India faced the herculean task of providing basic services to the remotest corners of the country, while at the same time trying to recover from a devastating drought and the pains of partition between India and Pakistan. These challenges were further complicated by the lack of financial and human resources within the state.

Recent trends and measures affecting the voluntary sector

As advisors and advocates for the cause of the marginalized

There are some voluntary organisations that play an active role as advocacy groups. They conduct research on the key issues affecting the country and engage with the government in policy dialogues. Often they also conduct reviews and consultations on the efficacy of developmental projects carried out by the state and national government. These reviews help influence mid-course corrections and sometimes redefine the targets of such projects. In this work the government reaps the benefit from voluntary organisations' capacities for outreach combined with their technical expertise. Beyond projects, voluntary organisations are also engaged in the political process for the formulation of five-year plans by the Planning Commission. A review of the 11th five-year plan in 2012 was conducted by a consortium of voluntary organisations after a series of consultations at state and thematic levels. Various sub-groups were then created by the Planning Commission to help craft the next five-year plan. The voluntary sector



and even the Indian government consider this role as important for enriching policy formation. In the last three years selected voluntary organisations have also been invited by the Finance Ministry for a pre-budget annual consultation, while many consultative committees have been formed by various ministries to seek structured input from the voluntary sector.

The voluntary sector provides critical input for policy-makers within government through regular status reports on topics such as climate change, agriculture, industry and fiscal reforms, which are submitted to the government. These reports gather important information and perspectives for members of parliament and state legislatures. However, since these reports are not requested by the government, they are often not accepted. In such cases, organisations run advocacy campaigns through the media and popular publications to generate awareness and solicit public support.

Promoting rights versus service delivery

Today India is progressing very fast along the path towards self-reliance. A stable democracy and continuous economic growth have contributed much to this goal. Unfortunately, the fruits of economic growth have not properly reached the majority of the population, many of whom still suffer from the conditions of poverty. Those living in poverty include the urban and rural poor, and many tribal people, dalits, children and women. For the benefit of these sections of society, the Indian government has established various flagship schemes.

Many of the government's schemes are based on innovations carried out by voluntary organisations, such as the National Rural Health Mission or the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. A number of voluntary organisations in India are engaged in implementing these schemes. Since many voluntary organisations have the capacity for outreach to the remotest locations, and most can count on acceptance by the community, they can be very effective partners of government at national, state and district levels. This role is primarily known as facilitating service delivery.

Voluntary organisations are not only delivering services but also empowering people regarding their entitlements under these schemes. Many such schemes are created in national or state capitals in very complicated language. The true spirit and ultimate results can only be achieved when people know about a programme's potential benefits and demand these from officials and from the voluntary organisations administering the programme. These roles, of

service delivery and empowerment, have to go hand in hand if freedom from hunger and disease is to become a reality, but also if a programme is to achieve its full value for public money.

Addressing the changing nature of financial resources

Financial resources are very critical to the survival of the voluntary sector, because the users of services provided by voluntary organisations are generally not in a position to pay. For example, for any voluntary organisation that is providing sanitation facilities to economically poor and socially marginalised groups, the full expenditure on these activities has to be supported by a third party. This funder could be government, the private sector or an international funding agency. We believe in the last few years overall international funding for development has been declining for India. This is partly due to stable and consistent economic growth and partly due to policies of the Indian government to refuse some offers of bilateral aid. The focus has now shifted towards technical aid, and away from socio-economic development aid, for many international aid agencies engaged in India. Most bilateral and multilateral agencies also prefer to directly support the Indian government. This has restricted funding available for innovations or projects designed according to localised requirements.

Unfortunately, in the current scenario for India, the biggest losers in funding are those promoting innovations, freedom of opinion, advocacy and work on peoples' entitlements. The voluntary sector of India is losing its edge in these important areas and roles, for which it has been known worldwide.

The voluntary sector – An easy target

The voluntary sector has always been the target of the ruling elite whenever any social movement for change takes place in India. The first occasion was the independence struggle in 1857, resulting in the formulation of the Societies Registration Act of 1860, which is still operational today in its timeworn form. Since then various attempts had been made to curtail the role of the voluntary sector to mobilise or participate in any social movement and to reduce the sector to one of only a deliverer of services. In the late 1970s, India witnessed a widespread movement against corruption and an internal emergency. This movement, popularly known as the Jay Prakash Movement, based on the name of its leader, led to the fall of the government. As a consequence of this movement, the government enacted the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA). While a new FCRA was enacted in 2010, the



current version continues the provision debarring voluntary organisations from taking part in any political activity. This law does not define political activity, in effect giving a free hand to an investigating official to define any social mobilisation as political activity.

Section 2(15) of the Indian Income Tax Act defines the categories of charitable organisations that can receive tax exemption, and this measure is also heavily tilted towards service delivery. Under this section of the Act, there are six categories: the first five focus on the delivery of health and education services, along with taking care of monuments and the environment. Organisations that fall into these categories are not only exempt from taxation, but are also allowed to raise resources from selling their services and creating consultancies. Organisations covered by the last category in the Act, which is “any other purpose”, are not allowed to raise resources, even if the activity is in line with their main mission. Here again the focus of the law is to promote the running of schools or hospitals or the distribution of emergency relief at the time of disaster. But any organisation working for educational reform, for example, or advocating for reform of health service delivery or prevention of disaster, can be taxed.

VANI, as the umbrella body of the Indian voluntary sector, has been demanding reform of the registration law, and for it to be applied with uniformity, which was also one of the recommendations in the 2007 National Policy. In 2012 the Ministry of Corporate Affairs issued a draft bill, the ‘Multi-State Societies Registration Bill’, but while this bill is a welcome gesture, it still keeps numerous local organisations outside its purview.

Unfortunately, the voluntary sector does not have an exclusive ministry or anchor department that can coordinate and promote it. In the absence of such a nodal ministry, every department of government tries to regulate voluntary organisations with self-defined systems. A voluntary organisation in India has to report according to the systems of each department to which it may relate. Advocacy to demand a nodal ministry for the voluntary sector continues.

Positive developments

A number of positive developments reported. The government launched its Development Partnership Administration (DPA) which brings together India’s international assistance programmes. This administration has long been sought by voluntary organisations so that the logic and objectives of Indian development assistance abroad can be better understood. The DPA has opened up

an opportunity to have dialogues and potentially partner with an otherwise very secluded ministry. The government also made announcements that it might create an exclusive ministry for the voluntary sector, and if so, this measure would be a huge step towards strengthening the sector.

The future

2012 saw a renewed spirit among voluntary organisations to reinforce and reclaim their space in the system. In the first instance, the focus was to ‘clean up house’. Intensive efforts, for example, were initiated by VANI to disseminate the provisions of the contested laws, such as the Income Tax Act and the FCRA, outlined above. The objective was to reduce the possibility of harassment from the state by voluntary organisations taking their own steps to increase transparency and accountability. This year’s annual report of FCRA clearly indicates that reporting by voluntary organisations has improved. More and more organisations have now understood the law, but also have worked to improve the quality of their reports.

The same is the case with the Income Tax Act. Although numerous ‘show-cause notices’ were served by the Taxation Department, organisations for the most part came out clean. One estimate from the Central Statistical Organisation indicated that there are more than 3.3 million not-for-profit organisations in India. As mentioned above, this is due to out-dated application of laws, which results in a very broad definition of not-for-profits to be registered, and misuse of the space of charity. But internally, voluntary organisations have invested time and meagre resources to improve their management systems. VANI produced a document on draft internal policies that was well received by the voluntary sector, and a feeling of greater togetherness could be seen in the sector. Organisations are coming together to face the challenges and redefining their relationships with government, private sector and other stakeholders.

Although times are challenging for voluntary development organisations, the spirit of volunteerism will never die. Not only in India, but globally, the voluntary sector has always emerged more effective after crises. New strategies for engaging with the government and the private sector now have to be explored. The voluntary sector needs to invest in the capacity of organisations to utilise any new opportunities and space offered by the system. There is need for renewed relationships and comradeship between organisations irrespective of their strategies, location, themes and sizes.

— *(It is the abstract from “state of civil society 2013” report of CIVICUS)*



Expectations vs. Reality

A critical review of National Policy on the Voluntary Sector

— *By Pavneet Kaur Manchanda, Programme Officer VANI*

In an ideal policy cycle, policies are first formulated, then implemented and ultimately put into practice. After a policy instrument has been implemented it should be monitored and evaluated, which measure the degree to which a program has achieved its desired outcomes and identify if any changes are required in the policy. Public policy evaluation is one of the most significant and eye-opening ways to examine the impacts of government policy. It is done to estimate the impact of the policy and to consider whether the policy has achieved its objectives and has effectively met the needs of the third sector.

The Year 2007 was very special for the voluntary sector in India; the Union Cabinet formally approved the long-awaited National Policy on the Voluntary Sector on May 17, 2007 and the year marked the beginning of the 11th Five Year Plan (2007-2012), which promised to encourage partnership between Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and government. The National Policy aims to make the voluntary sector a partner in development. Till 2007, the collaboration with the State was in the nature of project funding and project partnership. The major change, the National Policy suggested was a strategic collaboration of the government with the voluntary sector not merely to execute state programs but in a much more substantial way, from the very conceptual stage itself. The National Policy was, therefore, the beginning of a process to evolve a new working relationship between the Government and the Voluntary Sector, without affecting the autonomy and integrity of voluntary organizations.

It is recommended that all the policies should be evaluated after every 5 years. Given that 5 years have passed since its introduction, an evaluation of the policy is necessary to gauge its effectiveness and impact. So a critical analysis was done of the policy. The document has two main objectives. Firstly, to critically present current picture of the policy and secondly to highlight whether there are any significant lessons that are to be

learnt from past experience to make future operations better.

It is considered that evaluation helps in improving the design of the policy and also increases the **accountability and transparency** towards the society. Over the years, Government has been raising the question on the accountability and credibility of the sector but this time sector wants to put forth the question regarding the policy formulated by the government for the sector.

Planning Commission did evaluation of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan on June 2010 but voluntary sector is waiting for the evaluation of their one and only good policy framed by government.

Facing the Reality:

- The preamble of the policy clearly stated that the **“Policy is a commitment to encourage, enable and empower an independent, creative and effective voluntary sector, with diversity in form and function, so that it can contribute to the social, cultural and economic advancement of the people of India.”** Over the five years, it has been observed that instead of creating an enabling environment for the voluntary sector government has imposed strict regulations which hinder the overall growth and sustainability of the sector. The FCRA 2010 passed by the government is controlling in its approach and goes against the spirit of the voluntary sector policy that supports the creation of an enabling environment for voluntary organizations. On the one hand, the provision of deemed approval is being taken back while on the other hand there is no answerability by Ministry in case of a delay or arbitrary rejection. Presently, the VOs are not supposed to mobilize people for their democratic rights unless approved by the ministry.



The Planning Commission has set up a Task Force to examine the issues related to the evolution of an independent, national level, self-regulatory agency for the voluntary sector and to develop accreditation methodologies for voluntary organizations on 13th May, 2009 (vide Notification No. P-11011/1(2)/2007-VAC. The Task Force held its first meeting on 2nd July, 2009; second meeting on 23rd September, 2009 and third meeting on 7th May 2010. The task force was set up to look more deeply into the issue of accreditation. However, the report submitted by the NAC has been rejected and nothing has been done after that.

- The second objective of the policy is ***“to enable VOs to legitimately mobilize necessary financial resources from India and abroad.”*** With harsh clauses in FCRA 2010 the foreign funding has gone down which has adversely affected the voluntary sector.
- The third objective of the policy is ***“to identify systems by which the Government may work together with VOs, on the basis of the principles of mutual trust and respect, and with shared responsibility.”*** But, a single statement made by the Hon’ble Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh to an American Journal that a few Indian NGOs in the state of Tamil Nadu are being funded by the American and Scandinavian NGOs for the anti-nuclear protest at Koodankulam had done a serious damage to the

entire voluntary sector in India. The above stated statement clearly indicates what kind of mutual trust and respect government holds for the voluntary sector.

- On the basis of the fourth objective of the policy i.e. ***“to encourage VOs to adopt transparent and accountable systems of governance and management”***. The Planning Commission has set up a Task Force to examine the issues related to the evolution of an independent, national level, self-regulatory agency for the voluntary sector and to develop accreditation methodologies for voluntary organizations on 13th May, 2009 (vide Notification No. P-11011/1(2)/2007-VAC. The Task Force held its first meeting on 2nd July, 2009; second meeting on 23rd September, 2009 and third meeting on 7th May 2010. The task force was set up to look more deeply into the issue of accreditation. However, the report submitted by the NAC has been rejected and nothing has been done after that.
- One of the recommendations (4.3) of the policy called for the government ***to examine the feasibility of enacting a central law to register VOs.*** As a follow-up to this, the Planning Commission set up an Expert Group. The Expert Group in its meeting on October 3, 2008, under the chairpersonship of Dr. (Mrs.) Syeda Hameed, Member, Planning Commission set up a task force to examine the matter and submitted a report to the Chairperson of the Expert Group. The draft report submitted is not as per the need of the voluntary sector.

Because of the outdated and confusing registration laws, there is a need to develop a national law for the registration of voluntary organizations.

- ***Formulation of State policies:*** As the policy was developed in consultation with the state governments; the chief ministers of all the states were requested to prepare similar policies or develop mechanisms consonant with the policy at the national level. VANI in collaboration with its member organizations organized 22 state level consultations on National Policy on the Voluntary Sector in various

1. <http://capart.nic.in/misc/task.htm> accessed on July 9, 2011.



states of India (for list of meetings refer Annexure-1). The purpose of these consultations was to build an understanding on the policy in states, to understand the viewpoints of voluntary organizations on the national policy for the states and to create a platform for advocacy with state governments for the adoption of the policy in the states. So far only five states i.e. Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Rajasthan have formulated their state level policy on voluntary sector.

The government of Andhra Pradesh, adopting an innovative approach, has formed a state level coordination committee of government officials and NGOs headed by the chief minister for promoting the coordination between the government and the NGOs. On the same lines district level coordination cells have been formed headed by the district-in-



There is lack of awareness among the voluntary organizations regarding the National Policy on the Voluntary Sector. Further, while the policy is directly related to NGOs, most of the NGOs that are field based are not involved in policy related interventions.

charge ministers with collectors, officials and NGOs as members.

Though four policies have passed since the approval of this policy by the Union Cabinet, consultation by ***VANI reveal that most of the NGOs do not seem to be known about the policy and its relevance to them. Thus, there is lack of awareness among the voluntary organizations regarding the National Policy on the Voluntary Sector.*** Further, while the policy is directly related to NGOs, most of the NGOs that are field based are not involved in policy related interventions.

- Section 4.6 of the policy states that ***“the Government will consider suitable tax rebates and will also simplify and streamline the system for granting income tax exemption status to charitable projects under the Income Tax Act.”***

But, presently many organizations in the voluntary sector are facing difficulties owing to a sudden situation where a large number of Notices have been issued to the Voluntary Sector organizations by the Income Tax Department. The notices range from not only demanding taxes but also challenging the very basis of their non-profit character (i.e. registration under Section 12A). This sudden change in Income Tax practices is impacting the sustenance of several organizations, putting several of these non-profit organizations in state of uncertainty and ambiguity.

However, it is suggested that there is a need for authorization of the policy by the Parliament in the form of legislation. There is a need to check harassment of NGOs when they approach the Government for funds or for recommendations. Sensitization workshops with elected representatives and other senior Government officials and consultations at the district level must be held. All ministries and departments need to be sensitized to the GO-VO partnership in development. It is essential to establish a forum for grievance handling and conflict resolution for the NGO sector.



Can the G20 Summit 2013 Deliver?

— *By Mr. Mazher Hussain*

The core objectives of the G20 Summit, scheduled for September 2013, are stated to be sustainable inclusive and balanced growth and job creation around the world. There is a need for G20 Countries to first evolve and adopt a composite tool – Growth, Equity, Conflict and Sustainability (GECS) Audit – that could enable an integrated measurement of growth, equality, sustainability and potentiality for conflict generation of growth initiatives. Radical reform of international financial architecture would also be required to make available credit to promote small and micro-enterprises. Finally, global tax reforms must be debated to dismantle tax havens and prevent tax avoidance.

The G20 Summits, which comprise the largest economies of the world, traditionally focus on addressing major challenges to the global economy. The Russian Presidency's objectives for the G20 Summit 2013 to be held in Saint Petersburg in September 2013 aim to develop a "set of measures aimed at boosting sustainable, inclusive and balanced growth and jobs creation around the world".

The eight key areas on which deliberations at the summit will focus are: **Framework for strong, sustainable and balanced growth; Jobs and employment; Energy sustainability; Development for all; International financial architecture reform; Enhancing multilateral trade; strengthening financial regulation and fighting corruption.**

It is important to note that the G20 Summit is being held at a time when economic disparities all over the world are on the increase – rising unemployment, unsustainable development, displacement and deprivation induced by development, large-scale tax evasion and unfair trade practices. The world never had neither so much wealth nor so many deprived or disgruntled people as we have today.

The four key factors responsible for this growing inequality and unsustainable development in the world seems to be a growth pattern that is paradoxically leading to greater inequality; a mindset that is increasingly treating nature as a personal asset and not as a common resource; the inability of the poor to access capital and finally the emergence of a world order mired in corruption and tax frauds.

Growth-Inequality Paradox

Economists and governments are privileging growth over equality. The general presumption seems to be that growth would automatically lead to equality as greater generation of wealth would give everyone a bigger share. But records show that higher growth need not necessarily lead to greater equality. India provides a classic example of this paradox. During 2007 to 2012 when India had an average GDP growth of 7.9% – the best growth rate in the world next only to China – India's ranking on the Human Development Index (HDI) slid from 127 in 2005 to 134 in 2009, even as growth rates were high, touching 9%. During the same time, for the first time in history, four Indians joined the list of ten richest persons in the world, but in the same year, three out of every ten poorest persons in the world were also Indians. This seems to happen because the governments are focused only on estimation of GDP and do not factor in issues of equality and human development while assessing growth – despite the availability of measures like the Gini Coefficient, HDI, etc. As a result, no concurrent correctives can be formulated or operationalized when there is an increase in inequality or deterioration in the services available to people.

Unsustainable, Exclusivist Development

Natural resources are being exploited in an unprecedented, unsustainable manner due to the overarching craving for rapid economic growth. Planet earth is being treated as an exclusive asset of the present



generation and not as a trust that has to be protected and replenished with cautious use. Despite the great progress made by man, it is unbelievable and unfortunate that no serious efforts are being made to develop appropriate tools to assess and regulate the exploitation of natural resources.

Finally, while economic growth is enriching some sections of society, a vast majority of people are not only getting excluded from the benefits of this growth, but are actually facing displacement, deprivations and increasing destitution as a result of the pattern of growth that is being pursued leading to ever increasing social conflicts that are degenerating into armed violence.

As conflicts due to displacement or exclusion from benefits of development initiatives arise and manifest when the projects are completed or even in advanced stages of implementation, it is difficult to make the required modifications and the conflicts become intractable, leaving little scope for redressal. Hence what is urgently required is the development of a Conflict Assessment Audit of all development initiatives and projects before their implementation. This will enable the determination of any debilitating displacements or exclusions that projects might generate, allowing the incorporation of appropriate corrective mechanisms and features in the design of development projects to ensure minimum adverse impact on stakeholders as well as provision of an appropriate share in the benefits to all concerned.

Growth, Equity, Conflict and Sustainability (GECS) Audit

If we want a growth that contributes to equality, that is sustainable and does not result in conflicts, then it will be inappropriate to consider GDP as a sufficient measure for development (as is the current practice), but it will be necessary to simultaneously employ tools like or similar to the Gini Coefficient and HDI that enable measurement of inequality and indicate the level and quality of services available to all. Further, it will also be imperative to evolve parameters for the development of a Matrix for Conflicts and Sustainability Assessment that can be utilised to ascertain if the trajectory of growth being

pursued is sustainable and can mitigate existing conflicts rather than contribute to their proliferation.

But all these five aspects seem to be intricately interlinked to each other: growth, sustainability, equality in incomes, access to basic services and conflict. As all these five are interlinked, disparate tools for their measurement will not be able to provide a correct picture of their trajectories nor provide an understanding of their collective dynamic to enable appropriate regulation for desired results. It seems like the space-time continuum of Einstein. You can measure both space and time separately, but you cannot really understand the phenomenon and resolve many seemingly intractable issues of physics till you have a framework where you can measure them both together.

Hence in order to have a growth that is sustainable, equitable and contributes to promotion of greater peace, it seems necessary to evolve and adopt a "composite tool" that could comprise essential elements to measure economic growth, income inequity, social development, conflict assessment and a sustainable development matrix. This Composite Tool could be designated as Growth, Equity, Conflict and Sustainability Audit. As the most powerful political-economic formation in the world today, with the required expertise and resources, the G20 is eminently suited for the development of an appropriate framework and parameters for a GECS Audit that could indeed give a composite measure of holistic development covering growth, equity, conflict mitigation and sustainability. Unless such a composite tool is developed, any talk of inclusive or sustainable growth would be meaningless and would be just a platitude.

Growth-Unemployment Paradox

One of the core objectives of the G20 Summit 2013 is creation of jobs around the world to beat recession and turn economies around. The tacit understanding in the current economic philosophy is that businesses and corporations are the prime job creators and people should be given appropriate training to become workers and employees. However, facts show that technological innovations, even when industry and service sector grow in a healthy manner, employ less and less people. With



ever-growing populations and limits to employment opportunities in businesses – both in national and multinational corporations – unemployment is bound to grow, resulting in a variety of social problems. The only way to create adequate employment opportunities for our teeming billions seems to be through the promotion of micro-entrepreneurs instead of just depending on the formal corporate model.

Micro-Entrepreneurs: The Requirements

There seem to be just three simple requirements that could enable the emergence of successful micro-entrepreneurs. First, identification of candidates from the skill training programs with potential for entrepreneurship and orienting them to basic principles of business management through supplementary courses. Enabling their access to bank loans to start business and finally establish joint mechanisms using internet and modern technology to facilitate in marketing and delivery of their products to a larger, and possibly, global clientele at very low costs.

With these supports, the micro-entrepreneurs will not only employ themselves but also some of their batch mates and others through their ventures to contribute to reduction in unemployment and increase in economic growth.

All of this could be easily possible for all the G20 countries with appropriate changes in the prevailing international business practices and appropriate financial-inclusion initiatives.

Financial Inclusion

All governments and banks the world over are talking of financial inclusion. But unfortunately, financial inclusion mostly seems to mean only opening bank accounts and no serious efforts are underway to also ensure that common people get access to bank credit.

The poor, the salaried class and the lower-middle class put their money in banks, which constitutes over 60% to 65% of the deposits in the banking system, whereas government deposits are around 15% to 20%. The rich, the domestic corporates, the multinationals and other

businesses make up hardly 20% of the deposits in banks, as they invest their money in businesses. However, over 80% of loans given by banks are to the business sector, the rich and the middle classes (who benefit even from some portions of priority sector allocations obtained in the name of medium ventures and housing loans). The lower-middle class and the poor self-employed, who could easily constitute over 75% of the population, and operate in the category of micro and small enterprises are unable to access even 10% of the bank loans and are exposed to the mercy of loan sharks even for their very rudimentary business needs and are unable to grow and prosper due to the very exorbitant interest rates charged.

Pro-Rich Attitude and Systems

There is reluctance on the part of bankers to lend to the poor for two reasons: (i) General, but largely misplaced perception that the poor default on loans and (ii) that the processing time and effort for small loans are also almost the same as medium and large loans and bankers feel it easier to give larger loans and achieve their targets. While the general understanding for financial inclusion seems to be limited only to educating people on accessing banking facilities, the real requirement is to bring about an attitudinal change amongst bankers, especially at the branch level, to give loans without bias to lower sections of society for small business ventures.

Further, the entire banking system seems to be structured to serve big business and corporate sector that prefer monthly or quarterly repayment schedules. However petty and small businesses with small margins operate on a daily basis and for them payments of monthly instalments become difficult and could lead to defaults. Hence, new financial products suitable to small entrepreneur, based on daily recovery rather than monthly payments will have to be explored and introduced. With existing internet and mobile technologies, it should be possible to evolve mechanisms to make deposits in banks on a daily basis through mobile cash cards without visiting banks and thus reducing daily transaction time and costs. Even the statement issued by the Finance Ministers and Governors of Central Banks of the G20 Countries on 20 July 2013 at St Petersburg acknowledges that “the SME



finance gap remains large worldwide” (See document here). It further states that, “We reiterate the importance of long-term financing for investment, including in infrastructure and SMEs, for sustainable growth and job creation”.

A genuine international financial architecture reform would require that the G20 should take appropriate measures to restructure banks as social institutions that would mitigate inequality by making credit available to all, especially to SMEs, and do not operate as purely commercial machines that exclude the poor and worsen inequality.

International Tax Reforms

Despite talk of global recession, economies are not failing as a whole. Indeed people and governments are going bankrupt, but corporates and multinationals are amassing wealth through a variety of stratagem, including unfair business practices, corruption and creation of a global network of tax havens.

The statement of the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of G20 Countries issued on 20 July 2013 admits that “Ensuring that all taxpayers pay their fair share of taxes is a high priority in the context of fiscal sustainability, promoting growth, and the needs of developing countries to build capacity for financing development. Tax avoidance, harmful practices and aggressive tax planning have to be tackled. The spread of the digital economy also poses challenges for international taxation”. It goes on to further add that “Profits should be taxed where functions driving the profits are performed and where value is created. In order to minimize BEPS (base erosion and profit shifting), we call on member countries to examine how our own domestic laws contribute to BEPS and to ensure that international and our own tax rules do not allow or encourage multinational enterprises to reduce overall taxes paid by artificially shifting profits to low-tax jurisdictions”.

Indeed there is an urgent and pressing need to review and revise international tax laws that were formulated around World War I when digital and multinational

economies were virtually non-existent and prevent multinationals from evading taxes causing great financial loss, especially to poor and developing countries. But this cannot happen without plugging all complex and sophisticated loopholes that facilitate tax evasion and unless all tax havens around the globe are restricted.

The Challenge

This is indeed a very tall order and may be beyond the functional ambit of G20 and the present-day governments as most would find it difficult to pass laws against the interests of corporate lobbies and other vested interests that contribute to their election campaign finances. Hence, restructuring international financial architecture and reforming global tax laws may not depend just on the G20 leaders but could also require bringing about a radical transformation in the attitude of multinationals, whose focus, world view and philosophy seems to be profits generally—without regard to anything else.

Hence, we are not to deal only with G20 but also the Fortune 500 for any meaningful transformations in the world order that could ensure a “sustainable, inclusive and balanced growth”!

— **Mazher Hussain (mazherhussain11@gmail.com) is Executive Director, Confederation of Voluntary Agencies (COVA) and is Director, State Bank of Hyderabad. Views expressed are personal.**



Leaders Speak: C. K. Ganguly (Timbaktu Collective)

Mr. Choitresh Kumar Ganguly was born and brought up in Bombay and Bangalore and was motivated by the call of Jayprakash Narayan, as many young people were at that time, and moved to the villages of Andhra Pradesh in early 1978. Over the past 30 years, Mr. Ganguly worked in two voluntary organisations. The first 12 years was spent with Young India Project and the next 18 years with The Timbaktu Collective.

What is your personal experience about this sector?

I joined this sector in 1978 and worked with an organization called Young India project. Young India project at that time was working on Integrated Rural Development Programme. We spent a lot of money trying to work with farmers, but we were somehow not able to reach to the poor basically because we did not know much about the villages. Everybody seemed and looked poor, i.e. the farmer who owned two acre or the one with 50 acre seemed the same to us. During that period I met a person named Mr. Ram Asthawas and he helped us in undergoing a three-month participatory learning process which influenced me and I was drawn towards Marxism. Hence, from 1980 to 1989, I was associated with Young India Project and organized agricultural labourer, and formed unions. With active participation, the Andhra Pradesh Federation of Agricultural Labour Union was formed which had three lakh members. However, in 1988 after the split of union I moved out and became part of the first of the whole gender movement that started in India. During this phase I understood the concept of ecology and started to realize that without an ecological perspective all the analysis is vacuous. Thus, one has to look at the issues from the ecological point of view and understand the impact of every action. So, rather than looking at the problems individually like women's



problem, peasants problem, etc I started looking at the holistic picture and realized that Marxist framework is not enough to understand what is going wrong with society. In order to understand the problems and challenges of the society there is an immense need to go beyond Marxism and unless we understand that what is going wrong with the society we can't take a step further. Later on I worked at a place where workers were getting Rs 5 and Rs 3 as wages and by conducting strikes on regular basis to raise wages we managed to raise it to Rs 50.

Looking at Anantpur District from ecological point of view I noticed that it was soon becoming a desert and there was a need to do something in this regard. At that time I read a book on farming entitled "**The One-Straw**



Revolution" written by "Masanobu Fukuoka" and decided to buy some land and do farming. Though I had no practical knowledge about farming I was inspired by Fukuoka and was a trained graduate in farm culture. We started doing farming and it took many years to learn basics of agriculture. Now, we have established four women's cooperatives, sixteen thousands members with 80 million rupees.

Why did you join this sector?

Because I was a rebel, basically I was the part of those days counter culture and things like that is one side and other side there was **Jai Prakash Narayan** and his call for **total revolution (Sampurna Karanti)** and Israeli movement and basically just wanting to rebel do anything different anything old is bad. So my father has started a factory a steel factory with the whole intention that I would take it. So basically it was a sense of rebellion and it was a fun it was so romantic to go to the villages and start doing this work and then we became Marxist and started organizing. The people feed you and you roam the whole day in the hills and come in the night to the village.

What is your perception about this sector?

In India, society and the community are changing very rapidly and the sector has to change along with it. The relationship and bond that community and voluntary sector used to share 30 years back has also changed. Now a day's people are politically far clearer and not innocent anymore. For example: if you take someone's photograph they wonder and question you that why a photograph is being taken because in the name of voluntary organizations it is being misused. I am also in favour of

professionalism which demonstrates the commitment to accountability and transparency. Now, people in the villages are empowered and have cars, motorbikes, and cellphones. Thus, there is a need to overlook at the patronizing attitude of voluntary organizations of treating people as illiterate and weak.

Secondly, I believe that the market is here to stay, so people like us from the left who always try to protect the interest of small marginal farmers, landless labourer have to do their capacity building to start engaging with market from a position of the strength. Farmers and

“I believe that the market is here to stay, so people like us from the left who always try to protect the interest of small marginal farmers, landless labourer have to do their capacity building to start engaging with market from a position of the strength. Farmers and village people have always engaged with the market individually but they have never done it collectively. So they have to take collective efforts to start engaging with the market. Hence, it is time for all of us to

understand and accept that the market will exist and the voluntary sector and the community has to change their strategy and stop fighting with the market. Time has come to organize and collaborate with the people and engage them with the market in different ways otherwise their survival is difficult because it is the written agreement of the Government of India that small holder farmers are worthless. Industrial farming is the only way out with which Indian government is going to believe since it is large scale farming. But it has been proved time and again that world over there is higher productivity in small farms than in large farms. As a result, the only solution for the sustainability of the small holding farmers is to collectivize and start engaging with the market with greater strength.

— **Views expressed are personal, Interview taken by Dr. Jyotsna M Singh, Programme Manager VANI.**



Organisational Profile: Samarthan

Journey of Samarthan

Samarthan is a leading non-profit organization with significant presence in the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. With a belief that a strong civil society is key to socio-economic development, Samarthan started out in the year 1995 as a support organization building capacities and networks of voluntary organizations working at the grassroots.

We began our work in the Sehore district of Madhya Pradesh, gradually spreading our intervention to other districts. Samarthan's origin was concurrent to the implementation of 73rd Constitutional Amendment in the state. It gave us the distinct advantage of being a pioneer Civil Society Organisation to work on the issue of deepening democracy in the state. Over the years, we realized that underdevelopment could also be attributed, in large part, to poor governance which affects the implementation of development programmes. We believe that good governance is fundamental to sustained and equitable development and effective participation by all stakeholders, especially the marginalised, socially excluded and disadvantaged groups, is in turn crucial for promoting good governance. Having gained confidence in our understanding of issues on the ground, we took up the task of strengthening governance by ensuring greater participation of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and by engaging in advocacy with the administration using evidence generated from our work at the grassroots.

We also promote and encourage involvement of local population in planning, execution and monitoring of development projects thereby challenging the mainstream "top-down" development model. In order to enhance public participation in local governance in rural and urban areas, Samarthan has developed vibrant and replicable models through capacity building of elected representatives and empowering Gram Sabha members. The areas of our intervention have ranged from education,

Vision

Every citizen contributes meaningfully in shaping democratic State and enjoys benefits based on the principles of equality and equity.

Mission

Promote and support participatory governance for equity and inclusion in development processes by capacity building, generating evidences and advocating the perspective of the most marginalized for enriched democracy

employment and social security to water, sanitation and health.

While our work on governance has enhanced our credibility and eminence, we continue to strengthen our civil society partners through training and network building. Over the years, we have also emerged as a knowledge center, producing valuable action research on a range of development issues. Our regular and diverse publications testify to our domain expertise in the subjects of forest rights, gender, decentralization and transparency and accountability. We have harnessed the power of Information Technology for taking our capacity building and outreach efforts to the next level. We have been successfully running e-learning programmes on Social Audit and Decentralized Planning and have a significant presence in the social media.

Social justice is entrenched in our work as we maintain a focus on the deprived and marginalized sections of the society – the SC/ST, women, minorities, the disabled and the destitute. Samarthan proudly shares a healthy relationship with the government and our engagement with it is apolitical and issue-based.

Approach of Samarthan

Over the past decade, the government of India has adopted a rights-based framework to promote development. This is



evident from the legislation of the Right to Education Act, Right to Information and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. However, the realization of these rights is hindered by a number of impediments – both on the part of the government and on the part of citizens.

On the part of the government the challenges to securing these rights and entitlements include inadequate capacities in the government machinery, inadequate resource allocation and inefficient resource utilization. An informed and empowered citizenry can go a long way in accessing and demanding its rights and entitlements. Limitations like lack of awareness and inability to unite in collective action can prevent it from doing so. Similarly, inadequate civil society voice and preparedness is an important hindrance.

Samarthan’s approach involves addressing the citizen-side impediments through capacity building, handholding support and creation of citizen’s groups. The government-side impediments are addressed through evidence-based advocacy for greater accountability and transparency and by promoting greater participation of people’s institutions in governance. Our work of strengthening civil society is an important part of our approach to securing people’s rights and entitlements.

Samarthan’s Reach

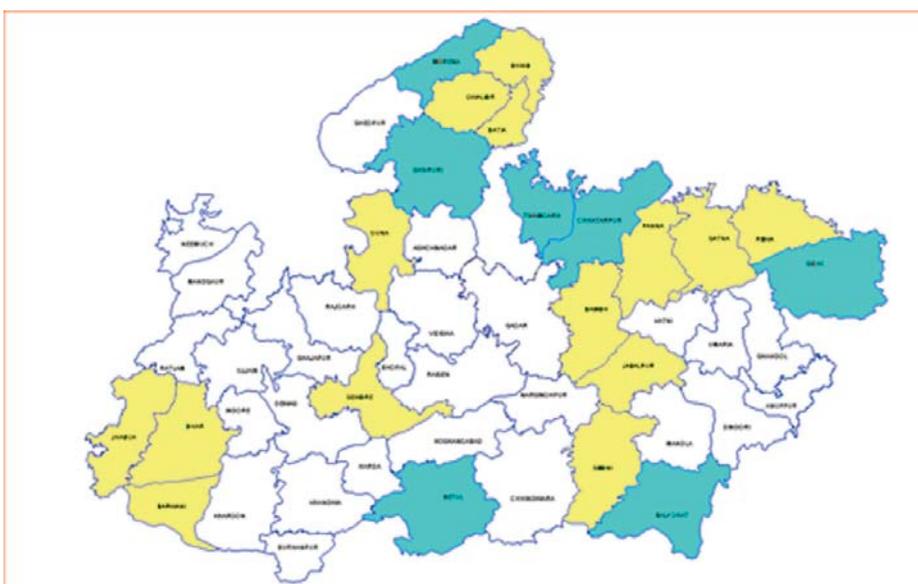
We are working directly in 14 districts of Madhya Pradesh viz. Bhind, Datia, Gwalior, Satna, Panna, Rewa, Dhar, Badwani, Jhabua, Seoni, Jabalpur, Damoh, Guna and Sehore.

Our head office is located in Bhopal and our regional offices in Sehore and Raipur. Our field offices are located in Panna, Jhabua and Jabalpur.

In Chhattisgarh, our intervention is relatively new and we have been intensifying our activities in most of the districts. We work directly in 4 districts (Rajnandgaon, Durg, Kanker and Bastar) of the state, with our regional office in Raipur. In Sarguja, Bilaspur and Janjgir Champa, we work indirectly through a network of partner organisations.

Our collaborative ventures and assignments take us beyond the ambits of these districts to partner with various organisations, institutions, individuals and other actors of the civil society. We work closely with 30 Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and through them have an indirect presence in the districts of Morena, Shivpuri, Tikamgarh, Chhattarpur, Sidhi, Balaghat, and Betul.

Our alliance building efforts have helped us build strong relationships with various like-minded organizations and networks nationally and internationally. We are associated with Society of Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), New Delhi as a network member for promoting participatory process in the state of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Our other NGO partners include Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes (CEHAT), Centre for Youth and Social Development and Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA).



The Districts of Our Direct and Indirect Presence in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh



Samarthan is also a part of a number of NGO networks. We are an active member of Voluntary Action Network in India (VANI), New Delhi a membership organisation promoting and protecting interest of voluntarism in India. Three well-recognised NGOs of India in which Samarthan is one of the members constitute the National Social Watch Coalition. Social Watch Coalition primarily works towards seeking accountability from the core institutions of Governance viz. parliament, judiciary, executive and local self-governance institutions. Other networks that Samarthan is a part of include Wada Na Todo and the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR).

We jointly conduct research and advocacy with our network partners on issues of common concern. We also participate in joint consultation workshops for analysis and consensus building. The ideas and evidence generated in these workshops are used to amplify voices of the poor, dalits, tribals and women in policy-making platforms and jointly engage in advocacy with the administration. These workshops also provide opportunity for knowledge sharing and mutual capacity building. The joint exercises with the network members have also helped in developing the strategic plan of Samarthan. Following are the examples of some of our joint workshops and research publications:

- [Training Workshop on Capacity Building for National Social Watch State Partners](#)
- [A talk on 'Sustainable Development: The right to a future'](#)
- [Grassroots Democracy: Local Governance Watch](#)
- [Samarthan's Campaign to Improve Access to the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in India](#)
- [How Inclusive is the Eleventh Five Year Plan?](#)
- [Tracking Public Investments for Children](#)

Work of Samarthan

All our programmes are directed towards ensuring access to Rights and Entitlements for rural and urban communities through:

1) Direct Field Interventions

In keeping with our mission of supporting development by strengthening local self governance, Samarthan has been undertaking a number of programmes to ensure access to various rights and entitlements including education, water, health, sanitation, social security and employment/livelihoods for rural and urban poor. This

we achieve by empowering and sensitizing communities, building capacities of Panchayats and field-level government functionaries and engaging in advocacy with the various levels of administration through media engagement and use of various 'transparency and accountability' tools like Social Audit, Jan Sunwai, Citizen's Report Cards and Budget tracking.

2) Capacity Building

Consistent with our belief that strong civil society is key to socio-economic development, Samarthan has been engaged in training and capacity building of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Panchayati Raj Institutions and government functionaries. We also promote and strengthen networks of CSOs.

3) Research and Advocacy

Over the years, we have also emerged as a knowledge center, producing valuable action research on a range of development issues. Our regular and diverse publications testify to our domain expertise in the subjects of forest rights, gender, decentralization and transparency and accountability.

Strengths on Reforming Governance Institutions

The governance interventions undertaken by Samarthan can be broadly be seen under the following three heads

- Model Building on issues of Governance
- Research and Policy Level Advocacy
- Capacity Building

Website: <http://www.samarthan.org/>

Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Samarthan-Center-for-Development-Support/292758350753355>

LinkedIn Page:

http://www.linkedin.com/company/samarthan-centre-for-development-support-bhopal?trk=top_nav_home

YouTube Channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/SamarthanOrg>

Twitter Account: https://twitter.com/Samarthan_CDS



Status of state – Odisha

— Based on research study conducted by VANI on Odisha state

Odisha, located in the eastern coast of India is a state with immense potential in natural resources. The state is bounded on the west by the thickly forested hills of the Eastern Ghats and on the east by nearly 500 km coastline of the Bay of Bengal, is a beautiful state covering an area of 156, 000 sq. kms. It is surrounded by Jharkhand on the north, West Bengal on the north-east Andhra Pradesh on the south and Chhattisgarh on the west.



Nature and State of VOs in Odisha:

In Odisha, societies, associations, organizations, trusts or companies registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860; the Indian Trusts Act, 1882; the Charitable

Number of VOs working in Odisha:

S. No.	District	No. of NGO	S. No.	District	No. of NGO
1.	Angul	72	16.	Kandhamal	109
2.	Bolangir	79	17.	Kendrapada	95
3.	Balasore	142	18.	Keonjhar	103
4.	Baragarh	30	19.	Khurda	556
5.	Bhadrak	95	20.	Koraput	57
6.	Boudh	42	21.	Malkangiri	23
7.	Cuttack	226	22.	Mayurbhanj	128
8.	Deogarh	24	23.	Nabarangapur	35
9.	Dhenkanal	157	24.	Nayagarh	110
10.	Gajapati	40	25.	Nuapada	50
11.	Ganjam	171	26.	Puri	259
12.	Jagatsingpur	104	27.	Rayagada	66
13.	Jajpur	110	28.	Sambalpur	56
14.	Jharsuguda	28	29.	Subarnapur	38
15.	Kalahandi	74	30.	Sundargarh	101
Total					3180



and Religious Trusts Act, 1920 or as a charitable company under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 are considered as VOs/NGOs. In addition, there are informal groups working at grassroots level without being registered under any legislation, but may also be considered as part of voluntary sector. VOs are working in the field of welfare of disabled; development of other disadvantaged sections like SCs/STs, children and women in education; environment; human rights; and on issues like resettlement and rehabilitation of oustees by big projects, right to information and so on. VOs may take up issues concerning a particular village or a community to the global issues like impact of WTO or global warming. The range of associations or societies may vary from a resident welfare association to an advocacy organisation. The substantive areas of work of VOs have changed considerably over time.

Number of VOs registered under FCRA:

According to new annual report 2010-11, released by the home ministry, the total number of registered organization under FCRA as on 31.3.2011 is 40575 in India, according to this report 2363 organizations/ associations from Odisha are registered under this act. Total number of associations registered under the Act from Odisha constitutes 5.82 percent of the total number of associations registered in the country.

According to the number of associations registered under FCR Act Odisha has 8th position in the country. Tamil Nadu tops the list having 5214 associations followed by Andhra Pradesh (5018), Maharashtra (3905), West Bengal (3338), Uttar Pradesh (3109), Karnataka (2871) and Kerala (2415).

Issues and themes on which the VOs are engaged in:

Voluntary organizations in the state are segregated in terms of issue and theme operation that that they are engaged into. Some of the major categories in this context based on issues and themes are:

1. Gender
2. Disaster management
3. Livelihood and Food Security
4. Health

5. Education
6. Environment
7. Tribal Development

VOs/NGOs have been working for the target populations including specific categories of the poor and disenfranchised; age and gender-specific groups; selected occupational groups (e.g. farmers and fishermen); and persons adversely affected by disease, natural and man-made disasters, ethnic strife and forced migration. Many NGOs work together as a team locally and nationally, especially in programs aimed at poverty alleviation, sustainable development, and disaster relief. They may be a part of a larger effort coordinated by an international body such as the United Nations and its specialized agencies (UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR) or by multinational organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, The major advantages of VOs include their flexibility, ability to innovate, grass-roots orientation, humanitarian vs. commercial goal orientation, non-profit status, dedication and commitment, and recruitment philosophy.

In addition to supporting innovation, VOs may serve as pilots for larger anticipated projects, help to motivate and involve community based organizations whose constituents may be the primary beneficiaries of a larger project, serve as advocates or ombudspersons, and are in a unique position to share communication both horizontally and vertically. Relief for families and children





affected by the AIDS pandemic, local social development, environmental protection, gender equality, the protection of children's rights and freedoms, and promoting the positive and fighting against the ill effects of economic. They are particularly critical in circumstances where State funds are limited, political situations are fluid, natural disasters resulting from both predictable and unpredictable environmental circumstances.

Challenges faced by the voluntary organizations

During an interview, Prof. Radhamohan, a senior social activist and former State Information Commissioner highlighted the following key challenges faced by the VOs:

- No liberal fund system through Government. NGOs substantially funded by the Government. But they need to pay tax by own raised resources whereas freedom is given to corporate sector for resource mobilization.
- When corporate sectors are mobilizing fund from outside country they are eligible to get export award, subsidy etc. whereas NGOs will be blamed like anything if they mobilizing foreign fund.
- NGOs are entering the bidding process like contractors in order to get funds.
- Now-a-days VOs agendas is becoming donor captured.
- Registration/Renewal (once in 5 years) depends on the mercy of the district administration. So, you have to toe the government line.
- If you depend on government fund you need to compromise with your ethics and enter the corruption channel. For example for approval of the fund you have to pay certain percentage extra.
- In addition to this now change in work culture of the NGOs, changes in life style of the functionaries are also well marked.
- For few the NGO sector became business as well as image building and their expansion of activities and



operations became passion for them.

- The voluntary organization sector was also affected by the bureaucratic culture/red tapism.
- Few NGOs have work specialization but there are others which are only fund driven and without any system and ideology.
- It has been observed that lately the NGOs are now politically influenced.
- There has been a change in the value system and commitment has been replaced with professionalism.

Now-a-days NGOs are engaged in number of activities and entering the competition market for fund mobilization. So it is becoming hard for them to remain transparent and accountable in true sense (expect few). NGOs substantially funded by government come under RTI whereas transparency and accountability is shown before funding agency only. In order to address this and ensure transparency and accountability, social audit is the only tool which can change the scenario.

As per his version **“PPP stands for Public money for private profit”**. Now government virus has infected the VOs culture. NGOs livelihood program is becoming for own livelihood. Working with government is becoming curse for the NGOs and for those who cannot compromise. Government wants to co-opt them and not raise their voice. VOs should be autonomous and their autonomy should be respected and protected. For him,



future of the VOs is quite bright if they work independently and take up concerns and issues of the people. Basically, Government program are corporate sector driven or contractor driven. Thus, here VOs need to take their stand to bring the field reality to limelight and raise their voice for people concern.

But in the present situation VOs should play catalytic role to the public and watch dog function for tracking government policy. They need to critically evaluate the government policies and guide the people. They should lead their life as the people live which will help them to align with the people and not alienate from the people.

The State Government has always had high expectations from the Voluntary Sector, but unfortunately the Voluntary Sector has suffered because of unfriendly relationship with the government. The Voluntary Sector and the Government, instead of being suspicious to each other and work as competitors, they should work together in collaboration and partnership mode. Both the sectors need to forget their old sense of isolationism and rivalry and become partners in the development process in the state. The Government and NGOs should work together to prevent problems rather than look forward to expose each other. Prevention in any way is better than cure; hence Voluntary Organizations have to come forward to help the Government in preventing important government projects from failing.

The role of VOs would be more pronounced if they come forward for strengthening village level institutions such as the Pani Panchayats, PRIs and Joint Forest Management Systems which are important and potential areas for the VOs and the Government to work together. He urged the VOs to suggest better ways of working together.

As the Voluntary Sector is rising, it faces numerous challenges and issues, which are bothering the Sector. Few of such challenges and issues are discussed below:

- The diversity of contexts in which the Sector operates is a problem because then no one-solution would

work. The challenge before the Sector, therefore, is to find innovative and effective solutions in each area.

- There was a great diversity in the nature of the organizations as well. There were networks, coalitions, campaigns, grassroots organizations etc. Therefore can a single framework be effective to understand the Sector?
- There was the problem of competing claims and balancing unequal stakeholders such as the donors, the government and the people. Under the pressure of meeting the accountability needs of the donors and the government, the accountability needs of the people often get relegated to the background.

Recommendation and future policy:

1. There is a need to build trust on person and system which will automatically lead to transparency and accountability.
2. Efforts have been made by the NGO sector for transparency and accountability norms through Credibility Alliance and Networks
3. There should be solidarity among various networks funded by different donor agencies as each pursues their own agenda and with increased professionalism and high cost of living, many groups are becoming service providers.
4. There is a need for revisiting the system. The NGOs are facing identity crisis and legitimacy, crisis of accountability as well as financial resource crunch. Networking of NGOs needs to be strengthened.
5. It is suggested that the credible organizations should be the leader and they should come together and unite. There should be formulation of new legislation for NGOs and they should develop accountability parameters.
6. The national policy for the VOs should be framed in a comprehensive way.

— (Based on research study conducted by
VANI on Odisha state)



Building Bridges: New Age of Voluntarism

Day First:

On the occasion of its 25th year, VANI's National Convention entitled "**Building Bridges: New Age of Voluntarism**" was held on February 20-21, 2013 at VISHVA Yuvak Kendra, New Delhi. The convention was attended by 267 participants from various voluntary development organizations across the country. As VANI is completing its 25 years of service to the sector, national convention was also an opportunity to express solidarity. Since its inception, the contribution of VANI to the growth and development of the voluntary sector has been manifold. It has been providing voice to the voiceless and bringing together issue based national, regional networks and grassroots organizations on a common platform.



The last year has been full of challenges and opportunities for the voluntary sector in India. On the one hand, sector saw restrictions to the space available to the sector, curtailment of funds and demand of accountability, transparency and credibility of the sector from various stakeholders. The preceding year saw not only the cancellation of FCRA registration of more than 4000 organizations, but also harassment of numerous small organizations by local line departments. India also had its share of social movement this year with huge mobilization for forest and land rights, fight against corruption and movement for safety of women. But as after effects of most of such movements voluntary organizations received notices either from Income tax department or FCRA. Interestingly none of such actions

could stop the spirit of voluntarism in India.

Mr. Harsh Jaitli, CEO VANI:

Welcoming all the participants to the national convention stated that this year marks the 25th anniversary of Voluntary Action Network India (VANI). This period provides an opportunity to celebrate the journey so far, reinforce the strengths of the organization's culture and communicate vision for the future and sustainability of the organization. He described this event as an



consultation and urged the participants to actively participate and share their views and experiences with the wider audience. National convention is an opportunity wherein voluntary organizations irrespective of their size, nature, theme or strategy interact with each other as well as with the policy makers.

Mr. Shiva Kumar, Secretary, Gandhigram Trust stated in his remarks that, "The strength of the sector is that we work close to the people and know the realities of the field. On the other hand, we also have to work on our weakness i.e. to improve our solidarity because policies, laws of the government affect our solidarity."

Mr. Jayant Kumar, Chairperson VANI,

On behalf of VANI extended his warm greetings for celebrating 25 years of existence. He stated that all members of VANI should be part of this celebration as they have enriched the journey, given directions and contributed significantly in bringing VANI to this particular level. He discussed about the key issues that are point of concern in today's scenario.

- **Identity/image of the sector:** The VOs face image tarnish due to the lack of communication with society, legislation and the media. A fallback faced by



the VO is we are trained to talk about crisis or the issue but not about organization and our efforts. Therefore people recognize the issue but not the significance of the sector. A lot of issues of perception towards VOs are due to the fact that the media rarely reports the good work carried out by the organization. Policies, bills that are considered best today are the result of pressure generated from the sector.

Secondly, the whole issue of recognition and parity exists. Recognition given to business houses is that they have a very structured procedure mechanism while a very sporadic for NGO. Thus, there is lack of recognition and effort and there is need of sustained work in this area.

- **Harassment on the sector:** Another major issue is of harassment on the organizations operating in disturbed areas. VOs do not believe in violence and expect a fair atmosphere from the government. All this leads to mistrust which needs to be eliminated and it can be done through regular dialogue.
- **The declining resources:** Euro crisis is one of such reason for the declining of resources and there is a whole debate of India emerging as strong economic power after china so there is no need of funds in India. The strategy is to be decided to address this issue. The resource which provides scope for creative work and innovation is declining.
- **The emergence of very strong Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** There is a very strong

collaborative relationship between state and business houses and it has the potential to change the character of work of voluntary organization. CSR is emerging very strongly and we need to have empirical evidence of support from where corporate's resources are coming. VANI has a very important role to play in building bridges with corporates. There is a need to strengthen and enforce this engagement and VANI has ability to materialize this and members of VANI should utilize this opportunity.

- **Declining space:** Space of voluntary action needs to be restored and VANI has a very vital role to play in that.
- **Provide leadership to the sector:** Within the sector there are certain problems like leadership issue. New leadership is not emerging and VANI has huge task to move forward to engage new generation in the sector.
- **Internal governance** is very important and a lot is desired to be done in this regard. A lot of difficulties come across in these areas but internal governance should be improved as it will help in enhancing the accountability and transparency of the sector. Concluding his discussion, he mentioned that the sector is going through a very difficult and challenging time and it is a collective responsibility on all the leaders to work beyond the individual institutions. To initiate the process, focus should not be on the survival of individual organization rather on the sector as a whole.

Mr. A.V. Swamy, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha:

An octogenarian i.e. eighty three year old Sarvadoya leader and voice of voluntary sector in the parliament. Swamy Ji joined voluntary sector at an early age of twelve. In the year 1942, freedom fighters were his inspiration who gave their life for their motherland and the people of their country without expecting anything in return. In current scenario he observed that there is no escape from voluntary action. With so much happening in the world, people associated with voluntary sector are bound to take lead. Time has come when people who believe in volunteerism and work for voluntary sector has to come forward and jump and swim in the ocean whether they know how to swim or not. Society always



looks for the alternative to their problems and challenges. Voluntary sector is that alternative which helps and supports marginalized sections of the society and to meet the evolving requirements of the community we serve. Swamy Ji referred to three principles of volunteerism:

1. **Compassion:** The fundamental part of human being is compassion. A feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.
2. **Continuity:** Stands for consistency in the work undertaken by the voluntary sector leaders.
3. **Commitment:** to encourage, enable and empower an independent and effective voluntary sector and the society.

If you follow all the above stated principles in your chores world is going to follow you. Concluding his speech, Swamy Ji congratulated VANI for completion of 25 years of service to the sector. He said that "This is the time to look back at the past, appraise yourself for the achievements, learn from your mistakes and strive hard to fill the gaps in the future."

Highlights of the session:

- Twenty five years is the time to look back at the past, appraise yourself for the achievements, learn from your mistakes and strive hard to fill the gaps in the future.
- Today the sector is misunderstood as NGOs and it may have earned bad things as NGOs but voluntary sector has done extremely well and has contributed enormously towards empowerment of the people; marginalized section of the society; policy formulation; etc.
- The major reason of increasing control over the voluntary sector is lack of adequate communication with the government authorities. Sector is not able to address its argument and point in an effective manner.
- Currently, major concern is to eliminate the sense of mistrust among voluntary sector and its stakeholders. Better regulation is always welcome but control is something which is not acceptable by the sector.
- The work of voluntary sector should speak louder than its words. So there is an immediate need to bring into light the contribution that sector has made in past years.

After inaugural session the next session started as titled "**Voluntary sector- Voice from the field**"- During the last decade the scenario in which the voluntary sector operates have changed significantly. The national and the state government have come out with many flagship programmes with huge budgets. Many of these programmes although based on innovations by the voluntary organizations have very little space for critical feedback or analysis but are more on delivery. Voluntary organizations get engaged in these programmes more like sub-contractors through tendering process, than as partners. The resource generations for the organizations have also become a very challenging task.



Highlights of the session:

1. Voluntary sector is doing a commendable and immense work in the social and economic transformation of the society.
2. New opportunities for the sector: With the enforcement of the New Companies Bill, two percent of CSR will release an approximate amount of 18,000 crores of Philanthropic funding into the market which is almost double the amount that can be released into the sector.
3. It is essential that in the next 25 years the value restructuring and mentoring is done. Collectivization, handholding and mutual support are the key factors to attain success in the sector.
4. Voluntary organizations to take effective measures and address the issue of bonded labour, forced migration, mainstream the minorities and oppressed which has become very common in the society.



5. VANI to play a significant role in :
 - a) Importance to be given to sustainability of the women headed organization and grass root organizations
 - b) To enhance the capacity building and develop mechanism and improve the communication channel of the small and grass root organizations to meet the funding agencies compliances and for their own survival.
 - c) What strategy VANI can adopt to include more number of organizations under its network and extend its outreach to the interiors of the rural areas since the representation is still a matter of concern.
4. The VO sector should participate and involve itself with the platforms for dialogue with various stakeholders regarding this issue of India as a donor to other nations.
 - a) The VO sector should be able to identify its role in this issue
 - b) The VO sector should cooperate and partake in the synchronization of within the sector and move as one body to protect the people's interests.

The next session started on **“India’s global footprints”**. Regarding global scenario it is seen that India is playing an active role in international platforms like G20, BRICS, IBSA, ASEAN, UN, WB, etc. Reflecting on India’s contribution since the 1950s, the side of India as a donor country has never been discussed in the VO sector. The creation of DPA directly relates to the global policies affecting the nation as a whole. It is important to monitor and analyze the nature of transparency and partnership of India with international alliances as well as the local policies affecting the nation as a whole.

Highlights of the session:

1. Genesis & evolution of the development sector and aid giving.
 - a) In all sectors of the country ie education, agricultural, etc, what has developed from inception to present and see how VO can participate in the process.
2. India as a non-traditional donor receives criticism and is being questioned with the lack of methodologies in systematic storage of data with regard to its provision of foreign aid.
3. DPA is not a new concept but a result of various closed down government departments.
 - a) DPA should evoke accountability, transparency and afford a methodology of systematic presentation of foreign aid and how it support or relates with the government’s objectives and interests.

The evening session titled as **“Solidarity Evening: Voice of Women”** started by a street play by ASMITA theatre group.

The play 'DASTAK' is a street play that attempts to create awareness on increasing incidences of atrocities against women in our country. The play highlights the heinous violence and harassment against women at working and public places.



Ms Kamla Bhasin, Advisor, South Asian Network of Gender Activists and Trainers:

She addressed the audience and mentioned that the women’s participation in the hall is very less and it is very difficult to convince and bring them out here to participate. She further stated that we are going to start a new freedom movement for women i.e.

1. Freedom from patriarchy
2. Freedom from violent masculinity
3. Freedom from violent men
4. Freedom from violent women also
5. The patriarchal mentality is also present in women as well. This fight is between the temperament and mentality of men and women. The fight is between the mindset, psyche or mentality. It is between disgraceful manliness; patriarchal men. She further



reiterated that forty percent husbands misbehave and beat their wives. There is a new campaign named “Men Against Violence Against Women” and the NGO movement is part of it.

Day second:

The second day session start with the title “**Building Bridges - Working with Corporates**” chaired by Mr. Rakesh Jinsi, Secretary General, SOS Children's Villages, he stated that the voluntary sector has skill and knowledge but this is not enough. There is a need to have external resources which by and large voluntary sector doesn't have. Voluntary sector is often called middle sector and here there are many players, namely the government, individual donors, institutions, and corporates.

Highlights of the session:

- The new companies bill will open a new gateway for the private and voluntary sector partnership
- According to the New companies bill it is mandatory for the companies to spend 2 percent of their profit for the social good. There is need to build a platform between corporate and voluntary sector where conversations and dialogues are done to make it successful.
- The two percent money spent by corporate should be monitored.
- Both the sectors have their own distinct attributes i.e. Corporate sector has resources and voluntary sector has skills so there is a natural synergy between them and they can complement each other
- An important part of partnership is the value system and ideologies which should match between the two sectors to carry this partnership forward
- The corporate needs the support of voluntary sector at every step as they lack competency to work at grass root level while the voluntary sector can provide an indebt insight of the ground realities so that they can make a greater impact in communities
- Corporate and voluntary sector should look beyond financial transaction and monetary benefits. Voluntary sector should have a long term vision and reflect upon how the money spent by corporate are being used and what will be the future impact
- Voluntary sector needs to be receptive to the fact

that big companies have their own CSRs and they shouldn't feel intimidated by them as they are the pioneers in social development field.

- Voluntary sector should be able to demonstrate their capabilities, worth and be more transparent so that more companies are willing to partner with them.

The next session started on “**Role and Expectations from Voluntary Sector In today's Challenging times**”- The government on one hand has high expectations for engagement of voluntary sector in planning, delivery and monitoring of the national plans and programmes, but on the other hand deliberate attempts are being made to curtail their operating space. This session aims to deliberate on such critical issues and identify key points which can make the enabling environment more conducive for the genuine voluntary development organisations.

Nisha Agarwal, Oxfam India: She shared the report titled “Future role of Civil Society” prepared by World Economic Forum which is available in the website and for which 200 people were interviewed and 5 round tables took part in five different countries, of which one was in India.

As per the report basically the main and prominent role of the Civil Society includes:

1. The vibrant, diverse and evolving space which is increasingly innovative and attempts to solve challenges and support local, national and global governance.
2. The way the civil society is evolving in the present scenario is no longer a threat to call it as a “**third sector**”. The role the civil society is playing along with the government and the private sector for common purpose defines and designates it as the third sector.
3. **As an enabler and facilitator**, civil society is bringing different players together to solve and answer global issues and problems. In a much more positive and constructive way to say, civil society is playing a role of a constructive challenger with a purpose of creating a political and social space for collaboration. The collaboration has to be based on core values of trust, service and the collective role.



The last session titled as “**Way Forward,**” **Mr. Harsh Jaitly** chaired the last session and presented the deliberation of the past two days. He mentioned that how can we reinforce our past strategy?

The main issues that emerged are:

- I. Outreach:** How can we increase the strength of VANI regarding outreach as India is a vast country and how can the information reach the smaller organizations. For example if new law or rule is passed by the government and they put it on their respective department website how can the smaller organization or people know about these laws or rules and give their feedback? Thus, it is essential to increase the membership of VANI so that reach of VANI can cover greater part of India and we can outreach small villages and smaller organizations.
- II. State and regional workshop:** How can we follow-up the state and regional workshop? How can we activate our member of the state and build a strong network in the states. Through this network we can continuously support the outcome of these workshops.
- III. Existing network:** How can we support existing network like networks working on Women, Dalit and Tribal issue?
- IV. Unity:** How can we unite? How can smaller and big organizations work together? And how can we link it with the new organizations.
- V. Thematic advocacy:** Information regarding thematic issues often does not reach the organization so we also need the advocacy on thematic issue. For example in education, if a new policy on education is issued by the government, how can we inform and engage with the organizations working on education.
- VI. Advocacy research and information exchange:** How can we address the gap of capacity building? Who can fill this gap, VANI or other organization? But it is also a big issue that has emerged from this convention.
- VII. Gender issues:** This issue emerged from this convention and participants suggested that the VANI’s members, supporters and associates should establish CASH committee and work on gender issue.
- VIII. Aid watch:** How can we work on global scenario

on Indian Aid and work as an Aid Watch? How we can constantly observe Indian funds to foreign countries, so these funds can’t be misused by the foreign organizations. We also work as a watchdog on these funds.

- IX. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** We need national level dialog with private sector, CSR and emerging private foundation issues. We not only need the dialog with private sector, but also a comprehensive discussion on these issues in our voluntary sector.
- X. Voluntary sector’s contribution to the nation building:** We can document the voluntary sector’s contribution to nation building and share it with the government, media and masses, so people know the importance of this sector. We also need to work and change the media psyche and get more support from the masses. We also need to work for the credibility of this sector. We need a guideline, which is not a code of conduct, but it should be our ethical guideline. Regarding National Accreditation Council, we need to do advocacy so that the government accepts and recognize our work and credibility. Regarding new emerging donors, how can we present our case in front of these donors?
- XI. Leadership development:** We need to work with youth and promote youth internship programme in colleges and institutions, so that they can actively engage in the voluntary sector. We also need to sensitize the private sector.

Finally by the end of the session **Mr. Shiv Kumar** on behalf of VANI working committee pointed out four major works for VANI these are:

- 1. Information Centre** and information dissemination which is already been done by VANI.
- 2. VANI will draft the rule** and see that how it beneficial for the NGOs of medium and small scale.
- 3. Penetrating in the policy level:** VANI had tried its best regard this.
- 4. Youth training programme.**

— (This is an abstract taken from the VANI national convention report)



News You Can Use

India CSR bill creates ripples in the social sector

March 12th, 2013 by Payal Shah

I recently attended the World Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Summit in Mumbai which brought together nearly thirty heads of CSR departments and as many NGOs. The primary areas of discussion were the implications of the new 2% CSR policy included in the new Companies Bill in India.

<http://blog.acumenfund.org/2013/03/12/new-bill-means-big-funding-for-indias-social-enterprises/>

A bill rooted in apology is the way forward

By Agrima Bhasin

The 2012 draft bill broadens the definition of 'manual scavenging' and prohibits the employment of persons for hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks. But it stops short of the apology that dalit rights groups demand. Legislative and policy documents most often aspire for bureaucratic neutrality in language that is least emotive and most formal. The new Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Rehabilitation Bill 2012, while recognising the need to correct the historical injustice suffered by 'manual scavengers', stops short of declaring a national apology in its preamble. At the outset, the new bill acknowledges that the 'dehumanising practice of manual scavenging' is rooted in the twin evils of dry toilets (without a water flush system) and a highly iniquitous caste system. However, such acknowledgment, although welcome, sustains a neutral discourse that chooses not to explicitly heed the moral dimensions of forcefully condemning generations of dalit women, men and children to manually treating, disposing and handling human excrement.

<http://infochangeindia.org/human-rights/struggle-for-human-dignity/a-bill-rooted-in-apology-is-the-way-forward.html>

Relevance of the public distribution system

By Rahul Goswami

A new report from the NSSO reveals a sharp increase in reliance on the public distribution system for purchase of foodgrain in rural and urban India. This is significant at a time when the country is debating universalisation of PDS, the Food Security Bill, and Direct Cash Transfers.

Are India's households, rural and urban, able to feed themselves to maintain even a baseline daily dietary adequacy? What impact has the steady rise in food prices had on the food baskets purchased by these households? Guiding answers to these questions are provided by the latest report of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), based on its 66th surveying round, which concerns household consumer expenditure. A summary reading of the data leads to three alarming conclusions.

<http://infochangeindia.org/agriculture/analysis/relevance-of-the-public-distribution-system.html>



Project Monitoring System Deployed in Indian State

By Sumedha Jalote | 13 March 2013

The State Government of Odisha in India has launched e-Nirman, an Online Project Monitoring System for public infrastructure projects managed by the Works Department.

E-Nirman will allow senior officials of the Odisha Works Department to track the physical and financial progress of projects such as construction of roads and bridges and electrical works. The system will increase government transparency and accountability in Odisha, and help complete projects efficiently and on time.

<http://www.futuregov.asia/articles/2013/mar/13/project-monitoring-system-deployed-indian-state/>

Digital Media Volunteer Programme Launched in India

By Sumedha Jalote | 8 February 2013 |

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) in India launched 'MyIndia Initiative', a scheme to recruit digital volunteers to share information about the government's policies and accomplishments.

Under the programme, MIB will recruit digital volunteers to discuss government schemes and programmers with their personal social networks. The scheme aims at effectively using social media platforms to engage citizens, especially the tech-savvy youth of India, and disseminating the development message of the government.

<http://www.futuregov.asia/articles/2013/feb/08/digital-media-volunteer-programme-launched-india/>

At 37%, Maharashtra tops donations in country

Namrata Singh, TNN | Mar 29, 2013,

MUMBAI: Regions in India can be distinctly identified by the spoken language, cuisine and the general attire of people. Yet, there are other aspects like cricket and Bollywood that exist as universal phenomena across regions. One would presume donations towards social causes too would emerge from every nook and corner of the country in a uniform manner. However, that is not the case.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/At-37-Maharashtra-tops-donations-in-country/articleshow/19266239.cms>

Slowdown in urban growth

Infochange News & Features, August 2013, by Debolina Kundu

Population growth in urban India has been decelerating over the last three decades, busting the myth of an urban explosion. Most cities with populations of 100,000-plus have recorded a significant decline in their population growth, more so the million-plus cities, suggesting that they have become less welcoming to migrants. Delhi and Chandigarh recorded less than half the growth rate of the '90s, and Mumbai district has reported a decline in absolute terms during 2001-11

<http://infochangeindia.org/urban-india/analysis/slowdown-in-urban-growth.html>



The India behind the new poverty ratio

Infochange News & Features, July 2013, by Rahul Goswami

New poverty claims from the Government of India are being interpreted as (a) proof that the economic liberalisation is working, (b) that the ruling coalition has begun its preparation for the 2014 general election by claiming the largest percentage reduction of poverty ever, (c) that the ruling coalition by lowering the poverty line (and therefore the number of Indians identified as poor) will slash its social subsidies outlay, (d) that the way India measures poverty is desperately in need of repair, if not altogether in need of renewal.

<http://infochangeindia.org/poverty/analysis/the-india-behind-the-new-poverty-ratio.html>

Messing around with waste

Infochange News & Features, August 2013, by Poornima Chikarmane and Anjor Bhaskar

Solid waste management accounts for over 50% of overall municipal budgets and manpower, but municipal authorities collect only 50% of the waste and recycle a negligible 5%. Technology and privatisation are the solutions being proposed everywhere. But public-private partnerships are turning out to be more about using public money for private profit. Is integration of informal sector wastepickers into the management of domestic and commercial municipal waste the solution?

<http://infochangeindia.org/urban-india/analysis/messing-around-with-waste.html>

India seeks transparency with Right to Information Portal

By Medha Basu | 23 August 2013

Following a slew of public corruption cases over the last few years, India fights back with citizens now demanding transparency and accountability through the Government's new Right to Information Portal. They can now submit online requests for information on all central government ministries and departments. Launching the portal, the Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, V. Narayanasamy, described it as "a weapon in the hands of the people".

<http://www.futuregov.asia/articles/2013/aug/23/india-seeks-transparency-right-information-portal/>

India to establish Social Media department

By Clarice Africa | 13 August 2013

The Government of India will be investing Rs. 22.5 crore (US\$ 3.7 million) for the establishment of a new department responsible for promoting the Government's initiatives through various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.

Taking off from the success of its MyIndia campaign, a program designed to recruit digital volunteers to promote government initiatives, the government says it will draw out valuable learnings from the said project as they go about in creating the new department.

<http://www.futuregov.asia/articles/2013/aug/13/india-establish-social-media-department/>



Tax lens on NGOs' foreign funds

LUBNA KABLY, TNN | Aug 8, 2013,

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has instructed that entities that have received donations from abroad in excess of Rs 1 crore during the financial year 2011-12 (FY12) should be scrutinized by the income-tax department. Issued on August 5, the instruction was part of several on cases that should come under tax scrutiny.

Non-profit entities, more popularly referred to as non-government organizations (NGOs) in India, typically file for a tax exemption certificate. If they utilize a set percentage of their funds towards their objectives each year, they are not taxed at all, explains a source from the tax department.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/Tax-lens-on-NGOs-foreign-funds/articleshow/21696937.cms>

Global:

World Bank's new vision on tackling poverty 'very unambitious'

Optimism about the prospects of significant change at the World Bank could fall after leaked strategy documents revealed what critics have called an "unambitious" and "business-as-usual" approach to development, prioritizing economic growth over pressing social issues such as rising inequality.

The documents, outlining "A common vision for the World Bank Group," are due to be discussed by executive directors on Thursday. They introduce two new goals to guide the bank's development work: reducing the percentage of people living in extreme poverty to 3% globally by 2030, and promoting "shared prosperity" by monitoring the income growth of the bottom 40% in every country.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2013/mar/21/world-bank-vision-poverty-unambitious>

Post-2015 development: timeline

guardian.co.uk, Tuesday 26 March 2013 14.34 GMT

With the 2015 deadline for the millennium development goals fast approaching, attention has turned to what should follow. The secretary general of the UN has appointed a high-level panel to come up with a new vision for development, a working group has been commissioned to devise a set of sustainable development goals and a series of public consultations have begun. We chart the key events, and the main news and comment on the post-2015 process

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/interactive/2013/mar/26/future-of-development-timeline>

Child Poverty, Hunger Rates in US Remain Alarming High

[Stoyan Zaimov](#) March 28, 2013

Alarming statistics released by the U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Department of Agriculture earlier this month



revealed that hunger and poverty rates in the country remain high, particularly among African-American children.

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/child-poverty-hunger-rates-in-us-remain-alarmingly-high-92849/>

Child marriage campaigners in south Asia receive \$23m cash injection

By Mark Tran, Friday 23 August 2013

Bangladesh, Nepal and India have three of the highest rates of child marriage, with 68.7%, 56.1% and 50% respectively of girls married before the age of 18. Child marriage is not just a question of poverty – although that is a critical issue – but also of how girls are viewed in society.

"Even with higher levels of income, there is the practice of child marriage," said Care International's gender director, Theresa Hwang. "It is an issue of status; girls are valued in a lesser way. In India, girls are not seen as 'added value'. The issue is squarely tied to gender equality and social norms."

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/aug/23/child-marriage-india-bangladesh-nepal>

Toxic Fukushima fallout threatens fishermen's livelihoods

By Justin McCurry in Hisanohama Friday 9 August 2013

The environment ministry recently announcement that 300 tonnes of contaminated groundwater from Fukushima Daiichi is still seeping over or around barriers into the Pacific every day, more than two years after it was struck by a tsunami in March 2011. Government officials said they suspected the leaks had started soon after the accident, which resulted in a nuclear meltdown.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/09/fukushima-fallout-threatens-fishermens-livelihoods>

30 charity chiefs paid more than £100,000

By Christopher Hope, 06 Aug 2013

The leaders of some of the biggest charities risk bringing "the wider charitable world into disrepute" by taking large pay rises while donations are falling, according to the regulator.

The number of executives receiving six-figure salaries at Britain's 14 leading foreign aid charities has risen by nearly 60 per cent, from 19 to 30, over the past three years.

The charities make up the Disasters Emergency Committee, a 50-year-old group which comes together to coordinate work at times of tragedy around the world.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/10224104/30-charity-chiefs-paid-more-than-100000.html>



My voice: Tarushikha (VANI, New Delhi)

1. What is your opinion about voluntary sector?

Voluntarism has always been part of the Indian society since ages and its nothing new to our society. This sector has many layers to it and is slowly but gradually evolving towards a more professional approach. It's a powerful medium through which we can directly make a difference to the demanding problems of our society.

2. What scenario drove you in this sector?

I as a young student wanted to do something constructive and meaningful in my life which would bring an effective change in the society. As society is evolving the disparity is increasing and the complexities attached to it are also rising. The best way to give my scattered and utopic thoughts a concrete vision was to be part of the social sector so that the issues' bothering me in the society doesn't just become sheer discussions but gives me an opportunity to directly address them.

3. Regarding present scenario what are the main challenges faced by voluntary sector?

- The voluntary sector is like a vast ocean and to consolidate it under one umbrella can be difficult. I have just started working in this sector and according to my limited understanding I feel that we are grappling with the most fundamental aspect – what is the real identity of voluntary sector. Who are we, are we ngos, do we work for the government or against it, are we institutionalized, can we be called agents of change. These debates are ongoing and we still are trying to find the right answers.
- Since volunteerism is in our blood so there is lack of professionals in this sector. There are so many people who are not qualified but have tremendous experience working in grass root levels for years. So what should be the barometers to measure the professionalism in this sector is still a question.
- Funding of voluntary sector has always been a major problem. Voluntary organizations are always dependent on various donors for funding and this leads to lack of stability especially among small organizations. There has been instance where the quality of

programs has been affected and the programs have to be stopped in the mid-way due to lack of funds. Such kind of problems can tarnish the image of this sector.



4. What is the role of youth in voluntary sector for the empowerment of women?

In a country like India women's image has always been debatable; on one hand they are worshipped and on the other hand there are stripped of their very dignity and existence. There is a huge dichotomy in this scenario. The first and foremost thing which voluntary sector needs to do is sensitize the society on gender issues in various institutions, workplace, schools and colleges. There is a dire need to change the mindsets of people and unless and until that won't happen we can't expect any kind change in the society. So as youth working in voluntary sector it's our responsibility to break the stereotypical mindset and be more forthcoming and participate in various social actions and movements to bring changes in laws and policy related to women issues in this country.

5. Where will you want to see the voluntary sector in next 10 years?

This sector has lot of potential and there are lot of opportunities and avenues opening up. I would like to see this sector having its own department of voluntary sector in the ministry so that there is a formal forum provided where issues of voluntary sector can be discussed and it further helps in strengthening the sector from within.

I would like to see more youth joining this sector with fresh ideas and enthusiasm so that a radical approach can be put to practice to achieve revolutionary changes. This sector shouldn't become an option for only retired people to join and do some social service. There should be a clear-cut distinction between doing social service and professionalism.

I would like to see the values and principles of voluntary sector based on an ideology rather than just mere idealism.

— *She is a research and advocacy associate, VANI, interview taken by Mr. S. M. Zaki Ahmad*



VANI Activities: March 2013- August 2013

- **April 9 2013**, Voice of Voluntary sectors in Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Uttarakhand- the three key states of India at Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, New Delhi.
- **April 10, 2013** : Brainstorming session on status of voluntary sector in India at Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, New Delhi.
- **May 22-23, 2013** Workshop on challenges of voluntary organizations in the changing scenario at Odisha.
- **19 May 2013** Meeting on FCRA at VANI office.
- **May 20, 2013**, Meeting on Self-Certification Model at VANI Office.
- **June 26, 2013**, National Launch of Status of Voluntary Sector in India report at IIC, New Delhi.
- **28th June 2013**, Half day meeting to unveil India's Global Footprints study at India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi.
- **3-5 July 2013**, TDH- Western Zone Project Partners Meet 2013 at St. Mary's Villa, Near Shooting Point, Khandala.
- **11-12 July 2013**, Effective Communication Workshop by ICCO India, at USI Residency Resort, Delhi Cantt. New Delhi
- **19 July 2013**, FCRA outreach seminar by Ministry of Home affairs at Guwahati.
- **22 July 2013**, Interactive consultative meet and roundtable discussion and a session on Social Accountability of NGOs taken by Mr. Harsh Jaitli at Country Inn, Saket New Delhi
- **26 July 2013**, Half day meeting on FCRA in VANI office at New Delhi.
- **31 July 2013**, Meeting on role of voluntary organisations for disaster relief and rehabilitation at Dehradun.
- **8 August 2013**, Workshop on Challenges of Voluntary Organisation in the changing scenario at Kolkata West Bengal.

International

- **1-2 July 2013**, South Asia Regional Meeting Legal Constraints to Foreign Funding and the Freedom of Association, Bangkok, Thailand.
- **22-25 August 2013**, Asia Development Alliance- 2nd Asian Regional Meet at Bangkok, Thailand.
- **23-24 August 2013**, Asia-Pacific Civil Society Consultation on a Just and Transformative Development Agenda 2015 at Bangkok, Thailand.

Forthcoming Events

- **12-13 September 2013**, Meeting on FCRA at Mizoram.
- **20 September 2013**, 25th Annual General Body Meeting of VANI and VOICE 2013, Raipur, Chhattisgarh.
- **15 October 2013**, Meeting on "Challenges faced by voluntary sector" at Andhra Pradesh.
- Meeting on GO-VO partnership regarding Private sector and company Bill.



V A C A N C Y

Job Title : Programme Manager

Job Description

- Be updated and collect relevant information regarding policies, laws, rules, notifications concerning the voluntary sector.
- Research on implications of policy for consultations, debate generation, position papers and briefs.
- Analyse the information gathered to enable informed decision making, advocacy, campaign and capacity building
- Ensure budgets and timelines with respect to research projects / programmes.
- Proactively receive information from programmes, members and external sources for content development.
- Provide inputs for communication development and advocacy campaigns
- Work in line with VANIs mandate, participate in meetings, workshops, travel
- Ability to conduct research based on primary and secondary data.

Desired Profile

PhD/ Post Graduation degree in Social Science with minimum 5 years of relevant experience in project planning and monitoring will be additional advantage. Additionally, you should have good interpersonal skills and be ready to work in a multi-cultural environment. Knowledge of computer and internet is required with hands on MS Office, particularly Word, Excel, Power Point and Access.

Candidates from all backgrounds are invited to apply and you must possess excellent communication skills in both written and spoken Hindi and English.

Application Procedure

Please submit your resume along with a cover letter by email to hr@vaniindia.org with "Programme Manager" in the subject line.

Only short-listed applicants will be contacted.

INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR APPOINTMENT AS STATUTORY AUDITORS AND INTERNAL AUDITORS

Voluntary Action Network India (VANI), a member based voluntary organisation represented by direct membership of 492 organizations and an indirect membership of over 8000 organizations, formed in the year 1988 with an objective to promote volunteerism and voluntary sector in India and registered under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1960 in the year 1990 invites Expression of Interest from interested Chartered Accountant Firms for appointment as its Statutory Auditors and Internal Auditors for the Financial Year 2013-14.

For overview of the governing structure; members; programmes and events; and other information about VANI please visit our website www.vaniindia.org

Interested CA Firms may furnish their Expression of Interest with their CVs along with client lists in a sealed cover on or before 15th September, 2013 by 16:00 hours at the following address:

Mr. Harsh Jaitli, Chief Executive Officer, Voluntary Action Network India (VANI), BB-5, 1st Floor, Greater Kailash Enclave-II, New Delhi-110048, Tel: 011-29228127, 29226632, 29223634, Telefax: 011-41435535, E-mail: harsh@vaniindia.org



PRIORITY

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Gram Vikas is looking for a CEO to take over from the founder.

CEO will be responsible for formulating strategy to scale the organization. Fund raising, planning, executing, managing people, influencing Government policies affecting rural poor will all be a part of this role.

QUALIFICATION:

- Strong track record of managing a P&L with 250+ people independently in a well run professional organization will be required.
 - Passion for working with rural/ tribal folks is a must.
- Experience working with multi-lateral agencies, Government organizations etc.; will be a big plus.
 - Exposure to water and sanitation issues will be preferred.

LOCATION:

Bhubaneswar, Odisha

SEND YOUR CV TO:

resume@globalexecutivetalent.com

** Do not forget to mention "Gram Vikas CEO" in the subject line.*

www.gramvikas.org

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