



VANI

VOICE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

ANNUAL

REPORT

2021-22



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FOREWORD BY THE CHAIRPERSON



I am pleased to present the Annual Report for the financial year 2021-22, which was most disruptive and challenging for the voluntary sector and the country. The COVID -19 came with unprecedented devastation On one side and scale which resulted in many frontline workers losing their lives and lives while providing lifesaving services to the communities.

Unfortunately, the supreme sacrifice of these frontline workers was neither registered, recognized, and compensated by the society. In spite of existential challenges, the voluntary sector of India extended all possible support to Government in pandemic mitigation. "The NITI Aayog has asked the CSOs (primarily registered under DARPAN and FCRA) to spread awareness about the disease and sought their support in providing necessary relief to the affected people. Despite massive resource crunch and explicit restrictions on movement, the response from CSOs was outstanding".

At the time when country was trying to put all its institutions to mitigate negative impact of COVID, new restrictive regulatory changes were introduced for non-profit sector in India. Almost all aspects of CSOs operations, ranging from FCRA, Income Tax, Registration etc, were arbitrarily modified. When it was total lock down and majority of offices were closed due to curfew in the streets, the CSOs were expected to open bank account in State bank of India under FCRA or apply for renewal of charitable status under Income Tax Act. Another shock came when not only sub-granting was prohibited but even permissible limit of administrative expenses under FCRA was reduced from 50 to 20 percent.

The above stated period also reiterated VANI's commitment for the use of digital technology in strengthening the sector. Many interactions between civil society and experts were organized during this period. VANI produced digital E-Newsletter highlighting the achievements of the sector. The prevailing crisis was used as an opportunity to redefine the voluntary sector and its voice.

I would like to thank IM, HBF, Global Standard and FORUS JANIC in supporting VANI in these difficult times. I am also grateful my colleagues in Governing Board for their valuable advice and suggestions in achieving objectives of VANI. The vibrant membership of VANI is the strong pillar of strength for VANI who with their participation make us relevant and effective. I would also like to extend my gratitude to VANI team for keeping the flag high in spite of numerous challenges.

Mr. Binoy Acharya
Chairperson, VANI

PREFACE

During the FY 2021-2022, VANI reiterated its commitment towards collectivising and strengthening the Civil Society Sector through building their capacity. The immediate challenge in front of Voluntary sector is to remain viable and relevant in challenging times. This also includes building positive narrative in public domain including improving compliance and accountability systems.



Today Civil Societies operate in very complicated and complex environment which require constant updating of skills, systems, and mechanisms. Unfortunately, lots of misconceptions exist about the sector in public domain which become excuse for shrinking civic space. The major challenge faced by VANI is to document the achievements and challenges of the sector in a language which people can understand.

The year 2021-2022 was historic not only due to most devastating pandemic of recent human memory but also it exposed the gaps in various socio-economic and health systems. VANI worked towards providing recognition to the exceptional work done by CSOs and sacrifice of frontline workers on call of duty. One of the major initiative this year was to create a wall on VANI website to recognise those who sacrificed their lives while serving the community. The second initiative was to strive for developing mechanism for financial security of grass roots workers.

We are also approaching the 75 years of India's Independence and VANI motivates sector to also celebrate the contribution of voluntary sector in nation building. "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav India@75" is being celebrated by intensive and inclusive documentation of stories and narratives. VANI documented the contributions of Civil Society Organisations to India's social development and tried to trace their journey of bringing social change.

VANI also conducted a survey to analyse the relationship of CSOs with government and other external stakeholders. It was found out that COVID has taught all of us to strengthen the partnership and collaboration between government, private sector and CSOs. We need to reinforce the relationship of transformation above transactions.

In its efforts towards developing global solidarity among Civil Society, VANI analyzed the South-south cooperation for Infrastructure. It was found out that unplanned loans as infrastructure support have led to bankruptcy in many countries. The study found out that it must be a mix of technical support as it is done by India and other traditional donors.

To collect and organize key civil society asks for the BRICS 2021- VANI produced a civil society policy paper which was submitted to the multilateral to draw their attention to increasing spending, focus and interventions for development priorities.

In its efforts towards making CSOs accountable and transparent, VANI undertook number of initiatives.

Not only innovations and development themes, but VANI also started recognising the contribution of leaders and social activists, who contributed to the growth and development of the country .VANI has been collecting information on the life and contribution of the great CSO leaders who have contributed to the development of India and the civil society.

As India is going to host the presidency of G20 in 2023, we have started mobilizing the CSOs from grass roots to global level. This is an opportunity to show the achievement of Indian CSOs to the world.

I would like to sincerely thank the IM, HBF, FORUS, Global Standard & Janic for their support and solidarity with VANI. I would also like to express my gratitude to the vibrant and valuable members of VANI. They guided and supported us in these difficult times. The Governing Board has always been a strong pillar of support for us. My heartfelt thanks to Chairperson, treasurer and members of the Board. No story of any organization can be told without the contribution and sweat of team.

With Best Wishes,

Harsh Jaitli
Chief Executive Officer
VANI

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SECTION - 1

STRENGTHENING ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN INDIA



VANI does not work directly with right-holders. But ensures inclusiveness of organisations working in remote areas and at the grass-root level with some of the most marginalised and vulnerable populations. Throughout 2021, VANI worked towards collectivising the Civil Society Sector, building the contemporary skills to face the challenging times and to stay on the right side of law by improved compliances.

Harmonising the Regulatory Framework



The sector received a shocker in the form of amendment to the FCRA Act (2020) in September 2020, which brought in serious disruptions for organisations working with foreign funds. The changes included mandatory opening of an account to receive foreign grants, with State, Main Branch in New Delhi, complete stalling receipt of sub-grants from organisation to another FCRA registered organisation), re-jigging of permitted Programme to Admin expense ratio from 50 percent to 20 percent. This year government also introduced the renewal of charitable status after every five years under Income Tax Act. These changes led to new style of working, re-tweaked structure, diminishing scale and operational area, mode, and drastically reduced financial resources. All these were in addition to crisis created by COVID. As the existential crisis started gathering storm the demand and expectations from VANI also took a huge leap. We also tried our best to modify our interventions by adding components of skill development, resilience, compliance etc.

VANI organised workshops on skills including Financial Management, Programme Planning and Management, Donor Reporting and MIS, Proposal Writing, Human Resource Management, Writing Effective Case Studies and so on.

VANI observed lack of Awareness at two levels, first at institutional level and secondly between the stakeholders. So, VANI organised digital webinars at both levels. One was at the level of CSOs and other digital interface with external stakeholders like State Bank of India's nodal officers, CSR and experts.



CSR for CSOs

The relationship was redefined between CSR companies and Vos during this pandemic period. As most of companies had no funds to grant, their relationship was purely based on technical collaborations. VANI organised two online workshops on CSR for CSOs of Uttar Pradesh and those of Hilly Terrain respectively.



Revisit of the National Policy for Voluntary Sector

VANI also took forward its work on resuscitating the call for revisit of the National Policy for Voluntary Sector. VANI finalised its report, undertook advocacy around it by organising online dialogues across different states and regions. It also held a social media campaign on the subject. VANI's CEO was therefore requested to share a copy of the report by NITI Aayog.



Collectivising the Sector Digitally

To Avoid Disruption in Work

The Government of India announced a nation-wide lockdown. The time was crucial, as on the parallel front Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India, had put up on its website draft amendments inviting suggestions from the sector. One of the alarming proposition amongst the proposed amendments was exclusion of Societies and Trust from CSR ambit. VANI immediately got into action and started collectivising the sector digitally because of movement restrictions due to lock-down to urge members to send suggestions in individual and collective capacity. The efforts yielded results and the proposition was later dropped. Without wasting time, VANI also got itself a Zoom license.

VANI had to focus its attention on salvaging the position on more urgent newly developed need areas

Capacity Building on Compliances (FCRA Act 2020, Finance Act 2020)

Operational issues related to compliances

Busting myths around newly proposed Council for Social Work (National Council of Social Work Bill)

Advocating with Government for interim relief in recently introduced legislative change in order to enable VOs to contribute towards alleviating the suffering of people during the fierce second wave

Advocating for improved partnerships (VO-VO; Government-VO) by revisiting National Policy for the Voluntary Sector, 2007. NITI Aayog asked for the report prepared by VANI.

During and after the second wave focus also shifted to immediate need -Stakeholders' acknowledgement to VO workers as frontline workers to enhance their safety through priority vaccination access (so as to allow them to go out in the field and serve people) Drawing of people's attention to ask for social security (insurance) for VO staff and workers-Acknowledgement to the COVID-affected VOs staff who lost their lives while serving communities during pandemic, also advocating for financial relief for poor frontline workers.

SECTION - 2

RECOGNISING THE SACRIFICE OF THE FRONTLINE WORKERS OF CSO AND VANI' EFFORTS FOR THE 'INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SECURITY' OF CSO FRONTLINE WORKERS

Introduction

Just like any other country, India also did not realize the gravity and scale of COVID when initial lockdown was declared by the government in March 2020. This sudden wave of disease came with additional challenge of loss of livelihood and migration for urban poor. In spite of lack of resources and knowledge about the disease, the CSOs came forward to provide food, shelter and medicines to effected people. However, the second wave was more disastrous as huge loss of human life was experienced by the country. Somehow, people and government became lax after first wave as common believe of immunity was predominant. Unfortunately, second wave which started in mid-March 2021 had more than 4, 00,000 case per day which literally crumbled the health system. The death and diseases was everywhere in the streets of urban India. People were gasping for breath, as well as beds in the hospitals.

The dark shadow of disease, deaths, and hunger was seen everywhere in the major cities of India. There was acute shortage of oxygen, oxygen concentrators and medicines. In many states testing like RTPCR was suspended. There were reports of rush of dead bodies in cremation grounds. The actual data about the gravity is still under dispute.

However, it is only the frontline workers who came forward to save the lives in these difficult circumstances. The staff and volunteers from many organizations were active in hospitals, cremation grounds, in slums to take care of needy be it providing food and shelter in the first wave or medicine in the second wave, these grass roots workers came out from their secure and safe habitats to help people.

Many frontline workers lost their lives while providing services to the communities. Unfortunately, many of these lives were not recognized, diagnosed or registered which led to denial of compensation to them.

Nation-wide Survey to understand how CSOs had responded to the challenges posed by the pandemic

After the second wave began to subside, VANI and the Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) conducted a nation-wide survey of about 600 CSOs, with bulk of them operating in 2-5 districts and with annual resources of under ₹1 crore to understand how they had responded to the challenges posed by the pandemic.

PRIA and VANI published a 29-page report titled 'Civil Society Support to Covid-19 Affected Families – Outreach and Resourcing in the Second Wave', giving an outline of

CSOs' contribution during the pandemic period and the kind of challenges that they faced in this process.

About 40 per cent of the CSOs were unable in mobilizing additional resources. Yet, about one-fifth of them helped the communities in setting up quarantine facilities, 91 per cent of them provided personal hygiene material, while 78 per cent of the CSOs offered food.

In this process, the CSOs themselves were affected badly by the pandemic. About 200 CSOs said their staff themselves were infected with Covid-19, while 50 of them reported deaths.

Activities of VANI in Pursuit of Recognising the Sacrifice

VANI convened a virtual meeting in June 2021. This consultation had more than 50 organizations represented. The meeting was to discuss the voluntary sector has been at the forefront of mitigating COVID-19 and in the process has lost many of its activists who were providing comfort and relief to many reeling under this disastrous pandemic. Unfortunately, this sacrifice of these frontline workers is not recognised by the government or society at large, because no one knows about it.

Notably, we intend to remember the lives of these people and generate awareness among policy makers at centre and state, government agencies, media and private sector on the service rendered by the sector, which has largely been ignored. We also feel that like all other sectors, there is a need to develop a support system for our civil society workers and employees which would at least assure that their families are supported.

The overall sentiment of the conversations was the urgent need to support the activists and field workers of civil society (and their families) who have become infected or lost lives while continuing to serve the communities. It was also clear that there is an urgent requirement of informing the society at large about the contributions of these activists and civil society as a whole, despite continued risks faced by them.

As immediate follow-up, it was proposed that four Task Forces started functioning right away.

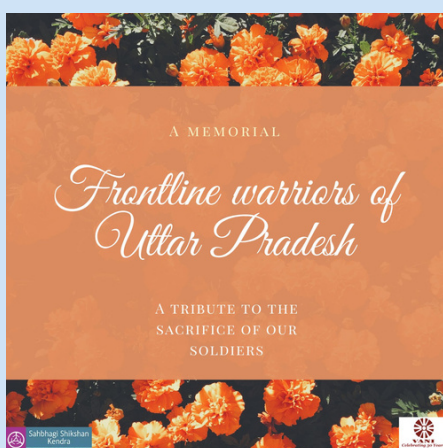
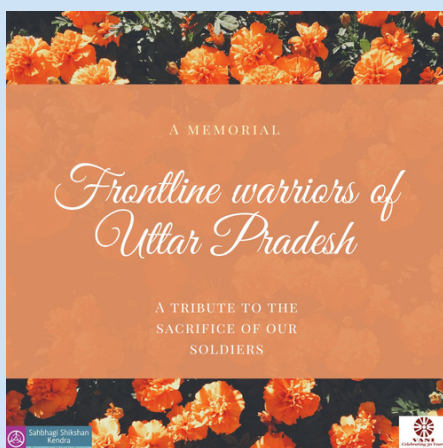
One Time Financial Grant Families of COVID-19 Victims

VANI with support from Ivolunteer and Give India supported families of COVID-19 victims with one time financial grant. The cash help was directly transferred into the account of family of victims as compensation. VANI formed a group consisting of PRIA, SSK, Unnati, Samarthan and CYSD and responded collectively.

Meetings Playing Advocacy Role

VANI while playing advocacy role for strengthening solidarity, collaboration and collectivization in post COVID-19 time organised meetings:

1. State Level Meeting on COVID-19 and Voluntary Organisations in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh - 35 CEO and representatives from organisations from UP state network UPVAN participated in the dialogue.
2. State Level Meeting in Chandigarh - A physical meeting was organised in Chandigarh on 29th and 30th November. 19 participants from six states including Chandigarh, Delhi, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir participated in the meeting.
3. State Level Meeting in Jharkhand - The meeting was organised on 8th and 9th December in Ranchi was attended by 37 CSO representatives from Jharkhand.
4. National Level Meeting in Delhi - VANI organised a meeting, "Redefining Social Transformation Pathways in Post COVID-19 Times" on 1st and 2nd December. 21 sector leaders and representatives from seven states (Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana and West Bengal) participated in the meeting.
1. Online virtual meetings were organised and Participants of this virtual meetings discussed social Security issues of CSO Staff. They desired acknowledgement of field staff as frontline workers, and compensation is to be advocated by VANI to deceased CSO staff while serving the communities during COVID-19.



'Shradnjali Sabha'

In order to honour frontline workers' sacrifices and acknowledge their contribution towards the sector, VANI organized an online memorial meeting 'Shradnjali Sabha' for the martyrs of Uttar Pradesh and other states like Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan.

Survey to Find Out the Loss of Front Line Workers

VANI conducted a survey to its members and a number of other CSO data base to find out the loss of front line workers. It is noticed through the responses that many CSOs had lost their staff, at an average of 2 persons and some times more than two. This loss was during second wave of COVID-19. The average age of the persons was 40+ with dependent family of parents, wife and children. Most of them were with the organisation for more than 3 years. But the sad thing to notice is that majority of the organisations did not have any social security for the dependent family. Some CSOs managed to give jobs to one family member and also some CSOs managed monetary help.

Few Stories to Give an Idea of the Kind of Workers Lost

Pandit Arjun Jadav



Shri. Pandit Arjun Jadav, was an executive of PRADAN, New Delhi. He was with PRADHAN

PRADHAN for more than five years. We lost him during second wave of COVID-19. Jadav was in the age group of 21-50. He was married and leaves behind dependent parents, wife and children. Fortunately, PRADHAN has a Group Life Insurance Policy. So, after Arjun died they were able to give a substantial financial payment to his wife. PRADAN has also provided a full-time job to his wife appropriate to her educational qualifications.

Subal Kumar Das



Shri. Subal Kumar Das, was a frontline worker of NIRMAN Bhubaneswar

Odisha. He expired in Wave 1 of the COVID-19 pandemic on 13th September, 2020. Das was in the productive age group of 21-50 years and he was with NIRMAN for more than 2 years. He was married and leaves behind his wife and dependent children. The sad thing is NIRMAN does not have a group health insurance policy. Hence Subal Kumar's family did not get any financial help.

Prem Prakash Sharma



Shri. Prem Prakash Sharma was associated with CECOEDECON for more than five years.

He died on 19th April, 2021 during the second wave of COVID-19. He was a frontline worker. A married man falling in the age group of 21 – 50. He leaves behind a dependent wife and children.

Prem Kumar Verma



Shri. Prem Kumar Verma a village hero fought against flood for his fellow

villagers in his entire life, could not rescue himself from COVID-19 and left for his heavenly abode. Verma, Secretary of a non-profit organization Samta Khagaria (Bihar) was associated with the villagers of flood affected areas in his district. He ran programs for their rescue, relief, relocation during every flood and inundation and breakage of embankments. He helped in rehabilitation of the villagers after flood. He was one of the pioneers working towards safe drinking water to the rural families in flood affected areas.

Hanumant Marhari Gude



Shri. Hanumant Marhari Gude, was working with Abhinav Samaj Seva Mandal in Maharashtra. He was a

Frontline Worker and was associated with the organisation from 2-5 years. Hemant died in the second wave of COVID-19 on 13th May, 2021. He was in the age group of 21-50 years, married leaving behind parents, wife and dependent children. The Abhinav Samaj Seva Mandal does not have any health insurance policy.

Ignatius Xess



Shri. Ignatius Xess, was associated with Oxfam India, New Delhi. He was an executive working with them for more than

5 years. He was in the age group of 50+ and married. He died on 4th May, 2021 in the second wave of COVID-19. He has left behind wife and children. Oxfam India, New Delhi has a Group Insurance Policy hence his family was given financial support.

Fr. Diago D'Souza

Fr. Diago D'Souza, was associated with Jan Seva Mandal, Maharashtra. Fr. Diago, died in the second wave. He was 50+ Christian Father and did not have a family. He was with Jan Seva Mandal for more than 5 years. We lost an Executive of a CSO serving the society during COVID-19 on April 22, 2021. Jan Seva Mandal, Maharashtra did not have any Group Health Insurance Policy nor any of its staff had any health insurance.

Uttam Sonbaji Kannake



Shri. Uttam Sonbaji Kannake, was an Executive of National Institute of Women

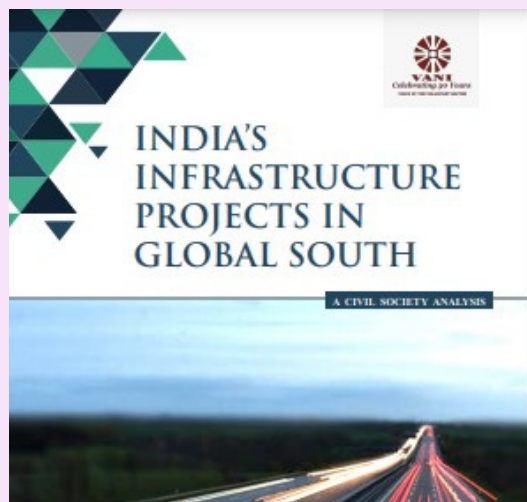
Child and Youth Development, Maharashtra, working with them for more than 5 years. He was of 50+ years old, married man. We lost him to COVID-19 Second wave on 29th April 2021. He has surviving wife and children. National Institute of Women Child and Youth Development, Maharashtra has Group Health Insurance.

SOS Children's Villages of India

SOS Children's Villages of India, faced 9 deaths of their Executives during the Second Wave. Out of the 9 deaths, 4 persons were in the 21-50 age group, and five of them were in the 50+ age group. These Executives were five male and 4 Females. One was unmarried but all the seven were married people and one was a widow. SOS Children's Villages of India, has a group Insurance Policy. These stories along with stories of CSO leaders lost to COVID-19 are also uploaded on the VANI website.

SECTION – 3

ANALYSIS OF INDIA'S GLOBAL SOUTH COOPERATION IN INFRASTRUCTURE



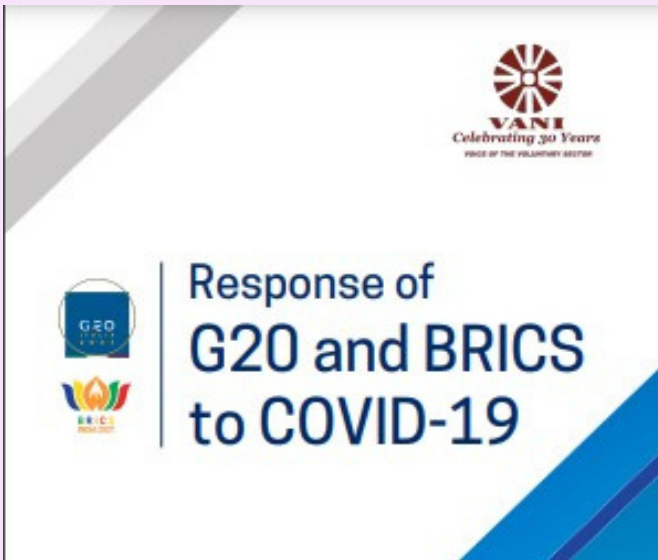
Analysis of India's Global South Cooperation in Infrastructure: VANI produced a research on Analysis of India's Global South Cooperation in Infrastructure, which primarily dealt with an analysis of infrastructure projects undertaken by Indian government with global south countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Africa also and the socio-development benefits and negatives produced by them. It extensively scoped and assessed the projects on various human development, environmental and gender indicators based on institutional and independent matrixes established by UN and other development institutions.



Policy paper on Indian civil society's key asks from BRICS: To collect and organize key civil society asks for the BRICS 2021- VANI produced a civil society policy paper which will be submitted to the multilateral-drawing their attention to increasing spending, focus and interventions for development priorities. The paper contains specific asks for various thematic areas and act as a preliminary statement from civil society to the BRICS and the Indian government.



Online meeting with Civil BRICS countries: The need for collaboration among CSOs from BRICS countries was important for sharing knowledge, strategies and agendas for approaching this multilateral. The meeting took stock of the current global challenges and the way BRICS countries devised strategies for containing the COVID-19 pandemic and the needed plan in global recovery.



Desk Study on BRICS and G20 Response to COVID-19: The study examined the range of responses undertaken by BRICS and G20 to arrest the fallouts from the COVID-19. The study is divided in two parts with the first focusing on individual BRICS country responses and the second part focusing on G20's response as a multilateral. It also focused on how civil society in these countries has been assisting government's efforts to mitigate COVID-19.



Physical Meeting with Indian CSOs on Indian Development Cooperation: In order to gain insights from practitioners, researchers and CSOs working on development cooperation-VANI will be hosting a one day physical meeting on discussing the various development cooperation programs of Indian government with a focus on infrastructure, G20 and BRICS.



SECTION – 4

STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICES AND FOSTER RESILIENCE ACROSS CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN INDIA

Alignment of VANI's key interventions with Global Standard

VANI escalated its interventions on internal system strengthening aimed at reinforcing the message around compliance to Global Standard, system strengthening and accountability practice adherence amongst Indian CSOs, to prevent voluntary organisations of getting caught on the wrong side of law

Capacity Building of grass-root level CSO

VANI built the overall capacities of over 2,595 individuals from approximately 1,750 organisations on various aspects of Internal and External Enabling Environment. In addition to the two online dialogues organised under the Global Standard Project on Accountability with CSOs of Rajasthan and West Bengal, VANI organised 13 capacity building workshops for CSO staff on Responsible Leadership, Data Driven Decision Making, Employee Empowerment and Engagement Strengthening Partnerships and Financial Management. Capacities of over 1,157 CSO representatives were built on different Global Standards commitments through such sessions during the year.

Strengthening Responsible Leadership

Through the year VANI collectivised the senior leadership of the sector to initiate a strategic discourse on future action in times of uncertainties. The need for responsible leadership is critical, at a time when Indian CSOs are facing an existential crisis. The National level dialogue organised in December had senior leadership from across seven states in India. Given India's federal governance structure, the CSO leaders, as part of members of Special Groups, Task Force and Think Tanks formed by the Government, thematic networks, play a critical role in strengthening advocacy about the Global Standard tool at National, State, District levels.

Strengthening Partnerships

VANI advocated for improved partnerships (CSO-CSO; Government-CSO, Corporate - CSOs). VANI advocated with CSOs (self funded intervention) on revisiting National Policy for the Voluntary Sector, 2007 (developed to strengthen inclusion and partnership of CSOs with Government).

VANI's CEO is a member of Empowered Group formed by Niti Aayog. A meeting of the empowered group was organised in mid-April. On sectors' behalf, a joint request was made for deferment of announced FCRA and Income Tax Amendments.

SECTION-5: RESEARCH AND SURVEYS

CONTRIBUTIONS OF CSOs IN THE LAST 75 YEARS

To mark the 75 years of India's Independence and on the Occasion of "**Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav, India@75**" VANI documented the contributions of Civil Society Organisations to India's social development and tried to trace their journey of bringing social change.

History of CSO Activity in India

The report starts by explaining India's long history of civil society based on the concepts of daana (giving) and seva (service). During the second half of the 19th century, numerous organizations were established, including the **Friend-in-Need Society (1858)**, **Prathana Samaj (1864)**, **Satya Shodhan Samaj (1873)**, **Arya Samaj (1875)**, the **National Council for Women in India (1875)**, and the **Indian National Conference (1887)**.

Civil Society Scenario in Contemporary India

The report based on secondary research identifies various types of civil society roles in terms of functions. One of them is that of social innovator which incubates new ideas, models and practices for specific developmental problems, such as HelpAge India for problems of the elderly, Sulabh International for sanitation, Mahila Udyog for women's empowerment.

Civil Society Groups and Movements in India

According to VANI's research the legitimacy of civil society groups and movements is based on their pursuit of rights for people. India has a history of an active engagement of civil society groups and movements with the state.

CSO Role in Disaster Management: From Relief to Recovery

It is an open secret that whenever natural disaster occurs it is the local civil society that stands up for the occasion. This documentation tries to find out the help extended by the Civil Society Organisation. The study has identified the CSO contribution in helping Kashmir Floods disaster, 2014; Uttarakhand Flash Floods, 2013; Bihar flood disaster 2007; The Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004; Gujarat Earthquake, 2001; Super Cyclone, Odisha 1999.

The thematic areas covered are: Inclusive Education and The Role of Civil Society; Civil Society Organisations and their Efforts in Environmental Protection, Conservation, and Awareness; Civil Society Organisations and Health Care For The Poor and Civil Society and Livelihoods for the Marginalised.

CIVIC SPACE SURVEY IN INDIA

The survey shows that all the respondents did not hesitate in giving their names and names of their organisations. Email ids have also been received. Very few that is 4.08% have chosen to remain anonymous. Highest number of responses have been received from Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar. Majority of the respondents “Agree” and ‘strongly agree’ to Speak in public, speak to media, hold assemblies, in their respective provinces.

For the questions of free to Join civil society groups, receive foreign funding, again there is not much hesitation and majority have responded ‘agree’ and ‘Strongly agree’.

The majority of CSOs distance themselves from the question of CSOs as independent actors and choose ‘Moderate’ for their response.

But from questions of 7 onwards one starts noticing the opinion of the respondents change for the questions of, if government wants to control CSOs, control foreign funding and that CSOs are moderately respected as independent actors. Majority feels that this control is not due to COVID-19 epidemic. The specific reasons amount to government wants to control CSOs and considers them a hindrance to their undemocratic activities.

VANI Recommendations

- Legislative changes have undermined the independence of civil society actors, and restricted their capacity to function effectively.
- Defamation laws, criminalisation of previously permitted activities, bans on organisations funded by foreign sources, branding civil society organisations as foreign agents, and strict media reporting regulations are among just some of the legal measures that limit, or in some cases entirely suppress, civil society.
- These are the worrying trends and we need to strengthen the counter-narratives for developing more resilience, among the Civil Society.
- It is lack of courage on the part of CSOs, is causing them to assume that they cannot act and stand up and face the situation. In this way they are shrinking their own space, doing serious damage and self-confidence to the sector.
- VANI India suggests, encourages and supports organisations to work collaboratively with each other and with other stakeholders to strengthen the case for an enabling environment for civil society.

MEMORIES OF OUTSTANDING CSO LEADERS

VANI has been doing survey and collecting information on the life and contribution of the great CSO leaders who have contributed to the development of India and the civil society.

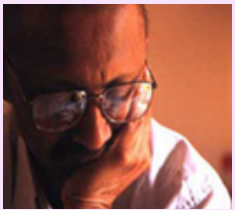
To mention a few here:



Shri. A. V. Swamy was a renowned social worker, and was director of NGO Oxfam. He had started his own NGO Viswas at Khariar Road.



Shri Ambarish Rai will be remembered as a stalwart in the Education Movement of India, who devoted his life to the cause of the right of education of India's children.



Shri Anil Kumar Agarwal was the founder of the Centre for Science and Environment, a Delhi-based research institute.



Shri Arvind Ojha, often referred to as Guruji by his colleagues and staff, dedicated over four decades of his life for the empowerment and sustainable growth of disadvantaged vulnerable groups, in Rajasthan and other parts of the country.



Shri. Biplab Halim, was a champion of the poor and landless peasants. He brought significant change in their lives by promoting land reform and bringing a change in unequal power structure in rural belt.



Shri. Mitraniketan K. Viswanathan was a social reformer, philanthropist and environmentalist in Kerala, India. His core educational principle was that rural communities and society as a whole can best be promoted through the total development of individuals, and all of Mitraniketan's programs seek to support this vision.



Smt. Kamla Bhasin, worked with underprivileged women from tribal and working communities, often using posters, plays and other non-literary methods to get through to communities with low literacy rates.



Mario Noronha, 55, CEO of Charkha Communication Development Network, strengthened its communication work empowering aspiring journalists and development activists through writing skills to access government facilities and entitlements at the grassroots.



Dr. Martha Farrell was a passionate civil society leader, renowned and respected in India and around the world for her work on women's rights, gender equality and adult education.



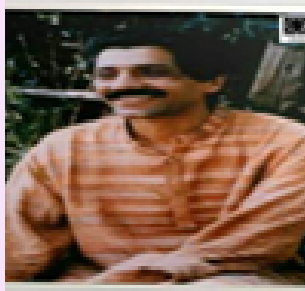
Shri. Mohan Singh Mehta was the Founder President of Vidya Bhawan – a progressive co-education complex; Founder President of Seva Mandir, a Centre for Social Service and Rural Development.



Shri Om Shrivastava is well known for his association with Astha Training Centre. His professional interests have always been Training at all levels on people participation and participatory development, Adult Education, Participatory Training, Evaluation of adult education and development projects, Development of Non-formal Education, Integrated Rural Development, Rural women's education and development and Development of University Adult Education as a discipline.



Smt. Renuka, was CEO of Pardada Pardadi Educational Society. Her area of work concentrated in rural development, health, SHGs, Livelihood initiatives and also in school sanitation programme, eliminate child labour etc.



Shri. Rippan Kapur was a champion of children with the unshakeable conviction that Indian children were India's responsibility. He was Founder of CRY.



Shri. Sanjoy Ghose was an Indian rural development activist known for his pioneering contributions to community health and development media. He set up the URMUL Rural Health and Development Trust — in the desert district of Bikaner in Rajasthan.



Shri Sharad Joshi, a leader of the development sector worked on livelihood security of marginal farmers and organizing communities has been recognized widely and has been accepted as a model. He realized that without having a sustainable development approach, it may be difficult to connect the vulnerable communities with mainstream development. He was passionate about helping in the rehabilitation of these communities, which led to the foundation of CECOEDECON in 1982.



Shri. Thomas Chandy the founding CEO of Save the Children in India truly believed and lived the organization's mission to bring immediate and lasting change in the lives of children. He would describe his move from the corporate to the social sector to serve children as follows –“For me this job is a vocation; it is a higher calling. When you are driven by vocation, it is the passion that keeps you going.”



Vicente Ferrer born in Barcelona worked all his life in India with the most disadvantaged communities with the philosophy of action as a fundamental pillar. Through his way of thinking and acting, Vicente Ferrer managed to involve people and their communities in improving their living conditions and their own progress. This way of understanding development has been recognised by many people.

This information with more details is uploaded on VANI website: <https://www.vaniindia.org/about-sector-leaders>

BRIEFING PAPER HIV, TB AND MALARIA COMMUNITIES

To build the capacities of HIV, TB and Malaria communities and educate the communities about their roles in C20 a briefing paper was prepared.

Globally 37.7 million People were living with HIV in 2020. In India about 2.40 million Indians are living with HIV with 83% in the age group 15-49 years. 39% (930,000) are among women.

Education and health care of a community is and will continue to be an important consideration to lessen the impact of this disease in the society. It is important to know the implication of HIV on infected, family and community and then consider behavioural modification. The information will go a long way in guiding health care workers as well as those involved in home nursing of HIV/AIDS patients.

From the study of HIV/AIDS, it was understood that misinformation and ignorance have made HIV/AIDS the most fearsome threat to the public health system everywhere. AIDS is not a single disease, but rather a complex of symptoms caused by infections primarily due to disruptions of the immune system in the body by an underlying viral infection. With no vaccine available as of date to stop the HIV infection, prevention is the only answer.

DIGITAL WALL OF DECEASED FRONTLINE WORKERS



VANI has collected through a survey of CSOs the deceased frontline workers and uploaded on the VANI website.

CAPACITY BUILDING OF THE SECTOR

VANI undertook studies on contemporary issues for the capacity building of the sector.

1. Effects of COVID-19 on Women Workforce in the Voluntary Sector - A Report

Introduction

The COVID-19 induced lockdown brought the entire world to a halt. Not only was there a complete wreck in the public health system but also in the social, political and economic systems which govern our daily lives. Apart from the collective issues, the pandemic aggravated the situation for the women in the workforce. With the lockdown, unemployment rates were sky-rocketing and millions of jobs lost. It is suggested that working women were pushed to the financial brink. VANI conducted a research study to see that the women in the VS have also had to face problems due to the pandemic.

Objectives of the study:

- To understand the transition in the working style in the VS.
- To identify the effect of COVID-19 on women workforce in the VS.
- To understand and come up with effective strategies in terms of the specific challenges that women workforce in the VS have faced during the pandemic.

2. Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 2020 - Guidance Manual

Introduction

The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) has been functional as a security law since 1978, undergoing several changes in its architecture over the last 4 decades. The act has been used for monitoring and regulating foreign funding to non-profit entities that are primarily engaged in development and relief. In 2020, the Act underwent through a complete overhaul in terms of ending collaborative approaches utilized by different entities for achieving common objectives. It limited the scope for administrative expenditure which meant curtailment of staff costs and inward organizational investment. It has made centralized banking as the core process of receiving funding from overseas.

The manual aims to provide a detailed understanding for organizations in becoming more compliant and knowledgeable about FCRA 2020 and will certainly aid them in becoming effective in FCRA management.

Objective of the Manual:

The objective of manual is to compile various provisions and clauses of FCRA, Amendment, 2020 to provide simplistic information for organizations to follow and comply with.

The manual only sets to offer solutions to organizations and touches upon the operational issues entailing the amendment. It does not seek to provide critical commentary on the spirit of the law but is intended to provide information to organizations and enlist many challenges they face in FCRA, 2020. Neither will the manual be used for advocacy purposes.

3. Compendium of COVID-19 Related Success Stories from the Voluntary Sector of India

Introduction:

Voluntary Organisations (VOs) that were working extensively on diverse causes for decades, emerged as soldiers in this fight against the deadly virus. They helped mobilise as well as respond to the situation. They have been working individually and in partnership with other VOs, government, and companies to provide relief to the affected and vulnerable communities of the society. They have also been at the forefront for mobilising resources to aid COVID-19 mitigation related activities.

The VOs have a unique selling pot that they have access to the interiors of the country. They operate in even those remotest areas of the country, where no one else has reached. Therefore, they have a pivotal role in connecting the weakest links to COVID-19 relief services. They have done some path breaking work in extending support to vulnerable, women, children, elderly, migrants, daily-wagers, homeless, sick, etc. and left no one behind. Their access to such areas, experience in interacting with the community, knowledge about the needs of the community and passion proved extremely significant in reaching out to the vast population of India.

However, in doing so, due to the magnitude of the crisis, and the amount of resources that had to be invested in countering the effects of it, the VOs in India soon ran out of funds. The existing funders ran away, and their ongoing projects came to a standstill. They were not able to sustain their employees. The existing skills were inadequate to fight the pandemic. The survival of their own organisation was at stake.

Despite all these challenges, the voluntary sector remained at the forefront and generated innovative ideas and techniques to combat the challenges. Come what may, they were able to find unique ways to solve those problems and continue supporting those in need.

VANI, being a network of VOs all over India, felt the need to highlight the success stories of the sector in these trying times and acknowledge their contribution in navigating the effects of COVID-19.

Objectives:

- To assess the innovative methods adopted by VOs across India to overcome organisational challenges during COVID-19 crisis.
- To document the good practices adopted and practiced by the VOs in India.
- To inspire other VOs to continue efforts and learn from the success stories of others.

4. Digital Adaptability Quotient during COVID-19: Stories of Innovation from the Indian CSOs

Introduction:

The COVID-19 pandemic caught the entire human race by surprise. During this phase, ensuring the livelihoods of people was of utmost importance. The pandemic, brought about a change in the way companies and various sectors carry out their daily functioning and activities. All the sectors underwent complete digitization, be it with their customers, beneficiaries, supply chains or their internal operations. Being digitally literate or tech-savvy became a necessity.

This study is a sincere effort towards measuring the digital adaptability quotient of the voluntary organisations and recognizing their innovative practices to overcome the impact of the pandemic on their work. This study has been undertaken by VANI, to understand the digital adaptability in the voluntary sector during the pandemic in India -to understand how they became digitally resilient, the effectiveness, their stories of innovation to combat the hurdles created by pandemic and how this shift or transition to digital platforms affected their working style. VANI has done this by collating data from the member organizations.

The story of VANI is one of resilience, transparency and making the most even during difficult situations. Same is true with NBJK, believes in innovation and does not hesitate from using newer techniques for smoother operations. Deeplaya story shows where there is a will, there is always a way.

5.Response of G20 and BRICS to COVID-19

Response of G20 to COVID-19:

The G20 is determined to spare no effort, both individually and collectively, to:

-Protect lives

- Safeguard people's jobs and incomes
- Restore confidence, preserve financial stability, revive growth and recover stronger
- Minimize disruptions to trade and global supply chains
- Provide help to all countries in need of assistance
- Coordinate on public health and financial measures

Response of BRICS to COVID-19:

The BRICS recognized that the current global challenges, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic, are a powerful reminder of the imperative to strengthen cooperation amongst States. While acknowledging the measures taken by the WHO, governments, non-profit organisations, academia, business and industry in combating the pandemic, they also expect the international community to reform and strengthen policy responses of WHO to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and other current and future health challenges.

Conclusion:

The global recovery from COVID-19 will take much time some time given that mutations of the virus threaten and dampen economic temperament.⁴⁷ However, there are signs that G20 may get to see some semblance of economic revival due to mass production of vaccines, but on the development front there is a need for more cooperation and action.

6. Renewal Of Income Tax For Voluntary Organizations, 2020

Guidance Manual

Introduction:

On 27th March 2021, the government of India issued a gazette notification that introduced many changes to the Income Tax Act, 1961. In a nutshell, the changes dealt with renewal and re-validation of all charitable organizations commencing from 1st April 2021 via applying certain forms. Last year in April 2020, the government announced the plans to introduce re-validation and renewal of charitable licenses under Income tax, 1961 in a measure to monitor and control non-profit activities undertaken by organizations. In an act towards controlling the ambit of charitable exemptions provided to 'trusts, society and association' the renewal and re-validation was introduced on similar lines to the FCRA renewals.

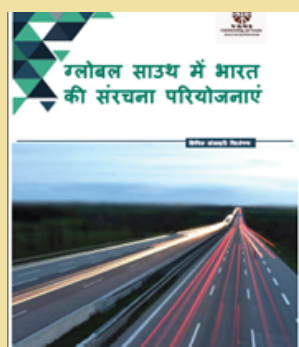
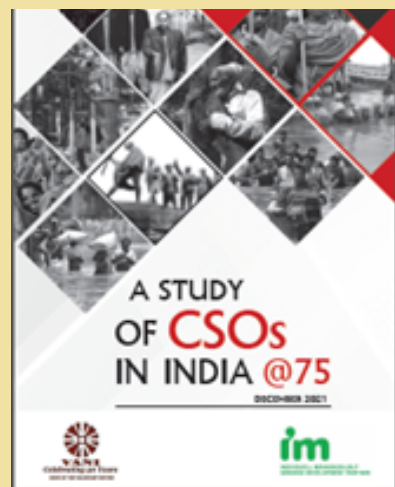
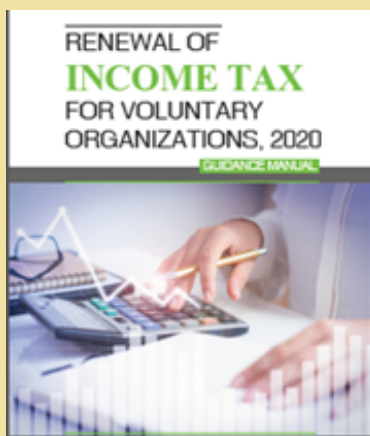
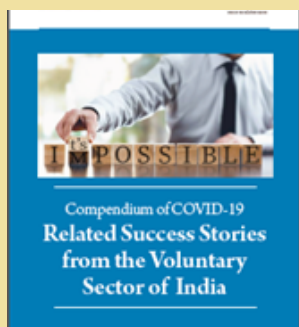
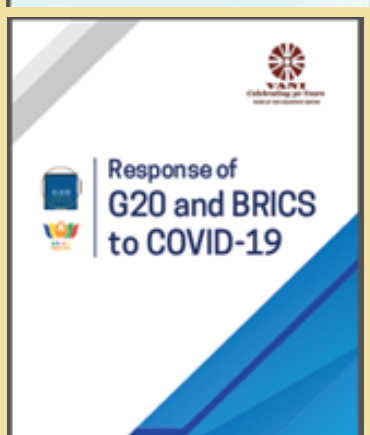
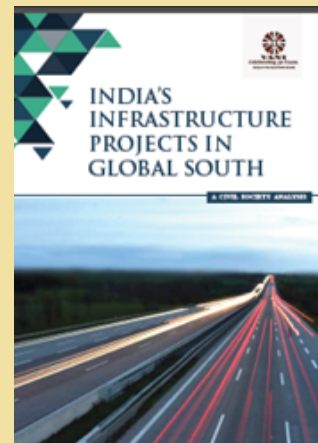
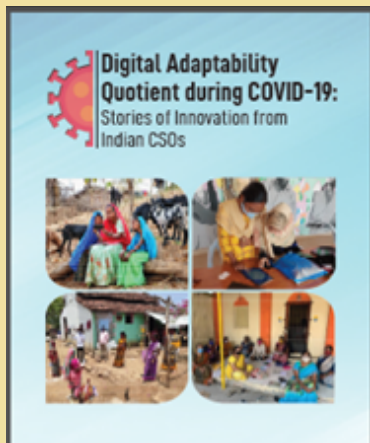
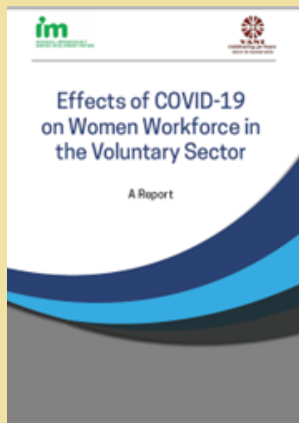
VANI has prepared this manual to ease the understanding of voluntary organizations to comply with this law in the coming years. The manual is meant to help organizations with the different forms provided by the amendment and is designed with a simplistic presentation of facts and information, not providing critical commentary on the intention behind the law. Apart from this the manual covers other issues under Income Tax that are troubling voluntary organizations at the end of the manual.

Objectives of the Manual:

The manual provides a step wise presentation of various compliances required to be fulfilled by voluntary organizations.

- Renewal for 10 (23) (C) and 12A
- Renewal for 80 G
- General Challenges in Income Tax (compilation of questions and cases)

SECTION – 6 PUBLICATIONS OF VANI IN 2021-22



SECTION - 7

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications helped VANI become more effective.

Newsletters

VANI brought to fore the range of contribution of the sector during the pandemic by coming out with newsletters to showcase the work of CSOs. These newsletters were widely disseminated across different stakeholders. During the period, the sector received appreciation from all quarters including the Government.



Social Media Campaigns

Through Social Media Campaigns, VANI tried to build a positive narrative of the sector throughout the year. Our organic reach on Facebook was with over 27,000 people with over 65 social media creative (24 social media campaign).



Videos Showcasing the Work of Indian Civil Society

For the first time, VANI engaged external professional agency to develop nine videos (five with sector leaders on the contribution of sector during the 75 years of India's independence and four on the work of CSOs during COVID-19). VANI initiated the task of developing videos showcasing the work of Indian Civil Society during pandemic and also contribution of CSOs in 75 years of India's independence.

VANI Website (www.vaniindia.org)

VANI Website is updated and redesigned to provide ready information on the current issues of the sector, current projects of VANI, Initiatives of VANI and Blogs to give perspectives of VANI.

SECTION - 8

WEBINARS & WORKSHOPS



Meetings, Physical and Online Workshops & Webinars

Four physical meetings (three state level in Uttar Pradesh, Chandigarh and Jharkhand and one National Level in Delhi). 25 online workshops/webinars on both conventional topics including (FCRA, Income Tax, CSR, Financial Management, responsible leadership, employee engagement and so on) and neo skills including those on Digital Marketing, Video Making, Canva, data-based decision making and so on. Some of our members shared concern around digital fatigue and wanted VANI to resume scheduling of physical interventions for inter-personal discussions. VANI was able to reach out to 2,385 (unique) individuals belonging to 1,594 organisations. Some of the individuals mentioned above participated in multiple interventions during the year.

Online meeting with Civil BRICS countries:

The need for collaboration among CSOs from BRICS countries was important for sharing knowledge, strategies and agendas for approaching this multilateral. The meeting took stock of the current global challenges and the way BRICS countries devised strategies for containing the COVID-19 pandemic and the needed plan in global recovery.



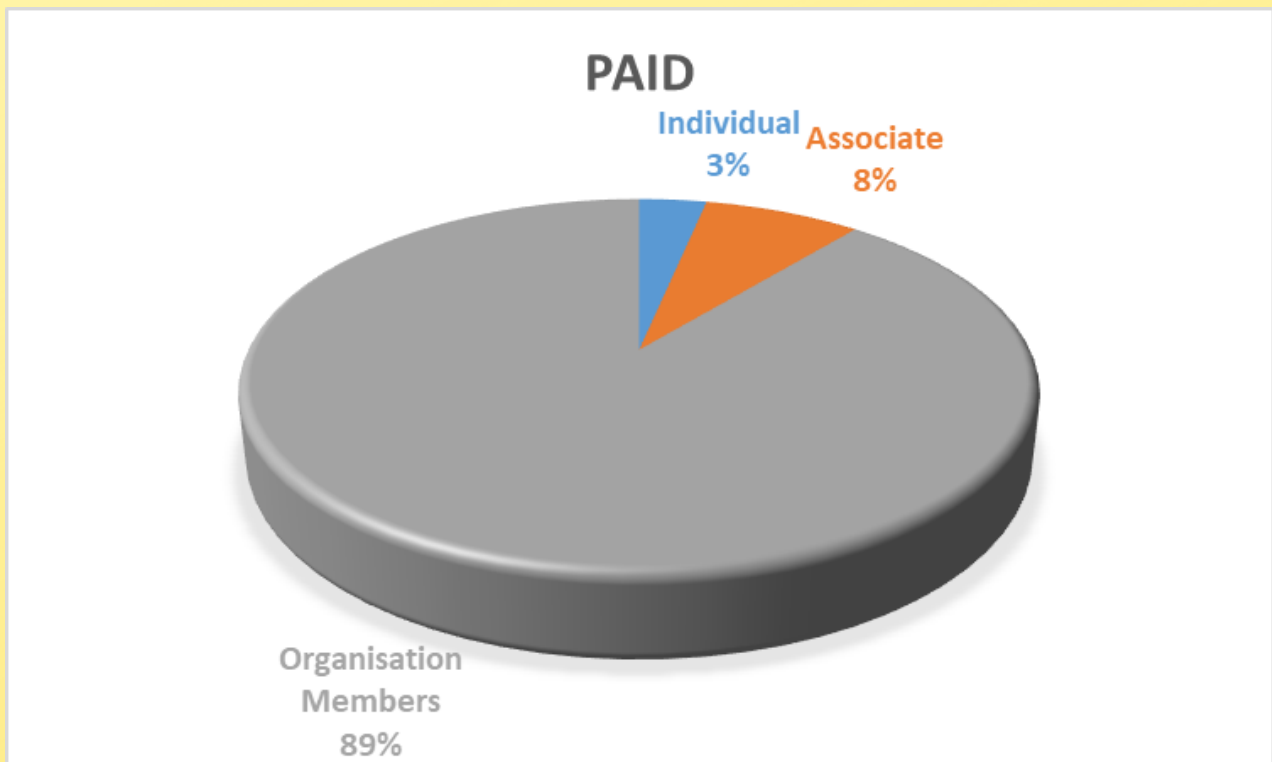
VANI conducted three Virtual Knowledge Sessions:

For India Working Group VANI conducted Virtual Knowledge Sessions on G20 Processes & C20 Policy Pack & Roles of Communities in C20 to the HIV, TB & Malaria Communities with the agenda- Health Working Group in India for C20 background & status update, Process on G20/C20 and other CSO Platforms, Opportunities in front of communities in C20/G20

Section – 9

Membership Management

Membership Management			
F.Y. 2021-22			
Category	Paid	Due	Total
Associate	7	85	92
Individual	3	49	52
Organisation Members	81	397	478
Grand Total	91	531	622



Total Amount Received 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 = Rs. 6,61,925/-

Section – 10

Resources: Summary of Income, Expenditure, Balance Sheet

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

Year ended 31.03.2022

Extracted from Audited Statement of Accounts 2021-22

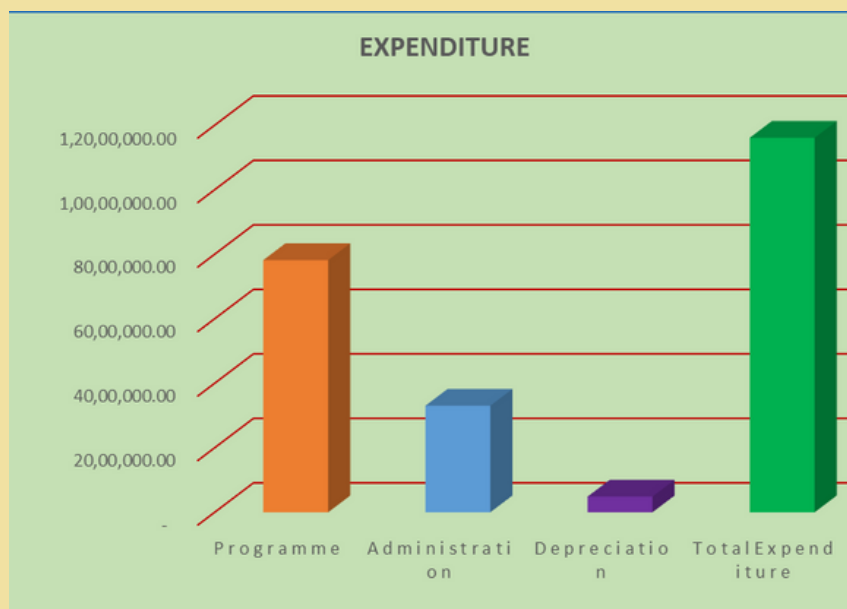
In INR

Income

Grant Foreign Source	97,39,008.44
Other Income	20,87,043.22
Total Income	1,18,26,051.66

Expenditure

Programme	78,19,305.44
Administration	33,04,778.41
Depreciation	4,87,239.27
Total Expenditure	1,16,11,323.12
Excess / (Deficit) of Income Over Expenditure	2,14,728.54



Annexure – I
VANI Team
(as of 31st March. 2022)

Mr. Harsh Jaitli, Chief Executive Officer
Mr. Arjun Phillips, Programme Manager
Mr. Dhiraj Kumar, Incharge Admin & Facility
Ms. Kavita Rakheja Coordinator (KMM)
Ms. Mamta Soni, Programme Secretary
Ms. Maumita Banerjee, Program Associate
Ms. Nivedita Datta, Programme Manager
Ms. Neha Shrivastava, Account Assistant
Ms. Pallavi Rekhi, Programme Officer
Mr. Ravi R Rawat, Accounts Officer
Dr. Shabeen Ara Research Consultant

Annexure – II: Governing Board Members

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

(as of 31st March. 2022)

Chairperson

***Mr. Binoy Acharya, Director,
Unnati, Organisation for Development Education***

Treasurer

Ms. Jaswant Kaur, New Delhi

Chief Executive Officer

Mr. Harsh Jaitli, Voluntary Action Network India, New Delhi

Working Committee Members

Mr. Amod Kanth, Founder & General Secretary, Prayas JAC Society

Mr. Basant Yadav, President, Sahabhagi Samaj Sevi Sanstha

***Mr. G. Placid, Director, SAHAYI- Centre for Collective Learning and
Action***

Ms. Hemal Kamat, Director & Secretary, Concept Society

***Mr. K. Panchaksharam, Secretary & CEO, SIPA-Federation of South
India Producer Associations***

Mr. K.N.Tiwari, Director, Disha Social Organisation

Ms. Puja Marwaha, Chief Executive, CRY - Child Rights and You

Mr. Saradindu Banerjee, SHG Promotional Forum

About Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)

VANI is a national network of Indian Voluntary Development Organisations (VDOs). Currently VANI has 648 members with an outreach to around 10,000 VDOs across India. The membership of VANI ranges from grass roots to the national organizations. The members work on a range of priority development issues of the government including education, health, nutrition, integrated child development, livelihood, skill development, environment, natural resource management, climate change, water and sanitation, emergency response and preparedness, agriculture, poverty and so on, in some of the most remote areas of the country. In the year 2017-18 our network collectively reached out to over 32 million people belonging to vulnerable and marginalized groups including children, disabled people, women, elderly, farmers, dalit, tribals, disaster survivors, unemployed, youth, LGBT, sex workers etc. VANI through its efforts and strategies aims to build a strong civil society sector not only at national but regional and local level as well.

VANI was set up with the mission to promote voluntarism, create space for the sector by fostering value based voluntary action. VANI's interventions are focused to strengthen the external and internal enabling environment. To ensure the external enabling environment, VANI conducts evidence-based advocacy which includes regulatory frameworks and resource generation. In order to achieve this VANI works with the government, private sector, bilateral, multilaterals and other stakeholders. For strengthening the internal enabling environment, VANI works towards building resilience and promoting accountability, transparency and compliance through the interactive educational events and information dissemination. VANI strives to become a resource centre by conducting evidence-based research; publishing studies, articles and reports not only at state level but national and global level as well.



Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)

(An Apex Body of Voluntary Organisations)

VANI HOUSE, 7, PSP Pocket, Sector-8, Dwarka, New Delhi-110077

011-49148610, 40391661, 40391663

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OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

Youtube @VANI Perspective, Twitter @vani_info, Facebook-@TeamVANI,