



VANI
Celebrating 30 Years
VOICE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR



AN APEX BODY OF VOLUNTARY DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATIONS

VOLUNTARY ACTION NETWORK INDIA, VANI

Committed to promote Accountability & Transparency in the Civil Society

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20



MISSION

“Convene to defend and promote Civic Rights of Collectives and Voluntarism”

VISION

Works towards building a society where voluntarism and voluntary organisations play dominant and constructive role in social cohesion, economic empowerment and national building.

- We aim to facilitate the growth of the voluntary sector in India
- Be a catalyst for change through leadership, research and membership engagement
- Work with the government to shape policy on areas governing the space of voluntary organizations
- Provide platforms for members and other stakeholders to interact and network.

OUR CORE VALUES

We are a values-led organization and thus believe in these core values.

JUSTICE

To advocate on behalf of the voiceless and oppressed individuals and groups of people ensuring the access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

EQUALITY

VANI is committed to promote equality and respecting diversity. We offer opportunities and resources with shared cultural needs, preferences and beliefs to make sure that we deliver truly a person-centred working environment.

DIGNITY

We strive to uphold the dignity of every person and believe that each individual should be met with compassion and treated with dignity and respect.

SOLIDARITY

VANI with its National, Regional and Global partnerships extends its solidarity based on collective – civic rights, advocacy and participation

www.vaniindia.org

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Civil society has a very important role in the making of new India. India is a country that has a historic past, eventful present and an aspiring future. The futuristic idea of new India is being marketed by the present government with a hope for better living standards, prosperous economy, powerful defense settlement, and harmonious society in the years to come. The budget has been allocated, schemes have been launched and advertisements, awareness campaigns have been started to achieve the objective of a new India. However, this seems to be inadequate as far as creating a newer version of India is concerned without the active participation of the civil society.

In this regard, India needs the effective role of civil society in the making of new India. All the new initiatives of the government require the participation and awareness of people and there is no better organisation than the civil society to achieve this objective. Involvement of civil society in the Swachha Bharat Mission has made it a huge success. Role of Swacchagrahis has a visible impact in changing the behaviour of people to stop open defecation practices in rural areas. Similarly, Swachha iconic places and SwachhataPakwada are instances of roles of civil society in bringing out transformation.

As a society, we need civil societies like anything because it will protect the basic human needs against the tyranny of the state. The rights of the minority, depressed class along with individual rights of freedom, liberty are protected duly by civil society. Further, civil society has a great role in stopping the majoritarian tendencies and protecting the spirit of diversity in India.

Mr. Binoy Acharya
Chairperson, VANI

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Voluntary Action Network India (VANI) is recognized as the leading apex body/national platform of Indian Voluntary Organizations that primarily work on issues of development, rights entitlements, environment and social justice. As a network of Voluntary Organizations, VANI enlists the membership of leading Voluntary Organizations of India extending from the national level to the grassroots. VANI also draws legitimacy and support from Non-Member Voluntary Organizations which actively participate in its mandate to represent the Voluntary Organizations.

As a national level organization VANI has been striving for research-based advocacy towards an enabling environment for Civil Society. VANI also leverages this research for practical purposes intended mostly to generate knowledge in Voluntary Organizations on procedural modalities and compliances that are required for a Voluntary Organization. Therefore, this expertise and committed research materializes in Capacity Building of Voluntary Organizations that aims to mitigate risks, build accountability and promote transparency. These are virtues demanded by Voluntary Organizations as necessary factors for building an enabling environment for the sector in India. VANI's Capacity Building initiatives are based on three pillars: *first, positive enabling environment for VDOs; second, capable and effective Voluntary Sector, and third, effective partnerships and collaborations with government and private sector. The overarching strategy to achieve this objective is evidence-based advocacy, interactive educational events, and collectivization of sector, multi-stakeholder engagement and promoting positive narrative in public domain.*

This year VANI held a series of joint meetings with NITI AAYOG across India to address the twin problems of reforming the regulatory regime and ensure sustainability of the sector. VANI organized 5 multi-stakeholder development conclaves across different states with an objective to promote discussions around SDG-17 and convergence of different sectors. By building multi-stakeholder ecosystem among these three sectors the effort is to synergize experiences, knowledge and resources for achieving goals of common good as well as incentivize all actors to derive benefit from the partnership.

This financial year VANI organised a National Level Consultation on CSO Accountability for Strengthening Partnerships. The discussion enabled VANI to draw the sectors attention to the urgent need to demand a government recognised regulatory framework for the Indian Civil Society and also initiate a process to review and revise sector defined accountability indicators that were framed over two decades back.

VANI undertook a research amongst its member organisations to assess their awareness on SDGs. Hence, VANI organized a Round Table Consultation, "Collective Action – Gearing up for India's VNR 2020 and Furtherance of Agenda 2030". The findings of the study affirmed the anticipation about an extremely low awareness and understanding levels about SDGs amongst CSOs. VANI also successfully organized a Round Table Discussion – CSR@5: From CSO Lens, where CSO leaders, CSR experts, industrial bodies, corporate, public sector undertaking, from across the nation participated in the deliberations on building effective ways to collaborate.

To accelerate the Women Leadership Forum discussions, VANI and UN Women – India Chapter organised a Round Table of Women Leaders Forum in May 2019. The deliberations resulted in developing of an action plan to take forward the initiative and encourage adoption and implementation of gender safe and friendly work place policies across the sector.

2019-20 is also a year when in March 2020 the whole world faced the unprecedented times in the history of human Kind - the COVID-19 crisis. VANI also started working from home and was able to adapt to this new normal work life. VANI became the first few organisations to bridge the information gap and communicated government guidelines, travelling instructions and other key issues related to the ongoing COVID crisis in India. In the new digital landscape VANI has lived to the expectations and has worked strenuously to support the grassroot CSOs understand the digital medium and strengthen them with capacity building initiatives.

VANI is very fortunate to have a very conducive and productive relationship with our partners and funders. We are also thankful to various departments and ministries of government at national and state level for giving VANI and its member's space to raise the concerns of the sector. We extend a special gratitude to Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Home affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions and Prime Minister's Office. This year we are very proud of our association with Finance Industry Development Council (FIDC), NITI Aayog, Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) for giving us an effective platform for multi-stakeholder interaction on India's Development Cooperation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank each and every member of VANI for his or her continuous support and guidance to the VANI team and also for keeping their trust in VANI. I am also thankful to our financial and technical supporters. We are highly grateful to Civic Engagement Alliance, Heinrich Boll Foundation, FORUS, Global Standard, and IM in making this financial year successful. The working committee of VANI has also been very supportive throughout the year, and we are very appreciative to their constant guidance and engagement. We are also grateful to Chairperson and Treasurer of VANI for creating mechanism for effective governance, management, and financial systems. For any organization, its team plays a very critical role in realizing its mission and mission therefore a huge thanks to the VANI team and its members spread all across the country.

The current Annual Report captures the status of the past one-year activities and achievements. Numerous significant developments, indicates that VANI is undertaking its role in the advancement of the voluntary sector. We welcome the valuable comments and suggestions of our readers for strengthening VANI and providing future direction.

In solidarity,

Harsh Jaitli
Chief Executive Officer
VANI

ABBREVIATIONS

ADA – Asian Development Alliance

AND – Asia Democracy Network

BBIN – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal

BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India China and South Africa

BIMSTEC – Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation

C20 – Civil 20

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

CSO – Civil Society Organisation

FCRA – Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act

FIDC – Forum for Indian Development

GO – Government Organization

GST – Goods and Services Act

IBSA – India, Brazil, South Africa

IFP – International Forum of National NGO platforms

IMF – International Monetary Funds

MEA – Ministry of External Affairs

MoRD – Ministry of Rural Development

RIS – Research Information System

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals

UN – United Nations

VANI – Voluntary Action Network India

VO – Voluntary Organization

VDO –Voluntary Development Organisation

CONTENTS

Chairman’s Note	iii
Chief Executive Officer’s Note	iv
Chapter 1 – VANI the Voice of the Sector – An Introduction	2
Chapter 2 – Strengthening External Enabling Environment	4
Chapter 3 – Bolstering Sector from Within	6
Chapter 4 –Communications	10
Chapter 5 – Building Partnerships	15
Chapter 6– Resources – Summary of Income, Expenditure, Balance Sheet	17
<i>Annexures I – VANI Team</i>	18
<i>Annexure II – Research Publications</i>	19
<i>Annexure III – Board of Directors</i>	20

VANI – Voice of the Sector

An Introduction

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), across the globe are currently facing challenging times due to rapid changes in the socio-political and economic landscape. The civic space is dwindling; regulatory requirements are becoming harder and stifling, frequent negative portrayal in the media is affecting their image, raising questions on their credibility. They are being subjected to increased scrutiny. All these are in-turn affecting their resource availability and sustainability.

In India's context, the Voluntary Sector has played a rather significant role in India's development since independence. Over the years organisations working within the sector have witnessed a substantive growth in size, number as well as nature of work. There has been emergence of several new entities in the form of Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Social Movements, Social Entrepreneurship Initiatives, Corporate Foundations, Network Bodies, Theme Based Groups, on the horizon. However, along with growth, ominous developments in social sector landscape are being witnessed in recent time.

There is enhanced scrutiny from multiple quarters, retaliatory backlash as a repercussion to questioning the status quo, stifling of fundamental freedom. Thus, there is an urgent need for setting of strategic priorities for the sector, to explore possible synergies and interactions within CSOs, in order to build resilience and ensure long-term sustainability. Here comes the role of Voluntary Action Network India (VANI) who is on a mission to strengthen the voluntary development organisations. VANI provides a common platform to dialogue and discuss the pressing needs of voluntary organisations. These views and suggestions are then used for evidence-based policy making with the government, policy makers and donors to bring their attention to these issues. Not only this, VANI also focuses on building capacities of voluntary organisations on the inward mechanisms of associations and organisations for producing optimum impact.

30 YEARS OF VANI

VANI is an apex body of voluntary organisations in India. Set up in 1988, the network was envisioned to build a society where voluntarism and voluntary organisations play a dominant and constructive role in social cohesion, economic empowerment and nation building.



Key Achievements

Some out of many of VANI's achievements on regulatory framework, internal system strengthening and leadership in the international arena are enlisted below:

- VANI played a critical role to advocate for and widely disseminate Model Bill for Society Registration among the state level networks.
- The Indian Voluntary Sector, through VANI, proposed the historic Alternative National Budget, an unfathomed move amidst TINA campaign (There Is No Alternative) of the government. This was later acknowledged by the then Prime Minister of India Mr. P V Narisimha Rao.
- Advocacy initiative under Lokpal Bill resulted in relaxation in government's ask for personal information disclosure of governing board members and their family members

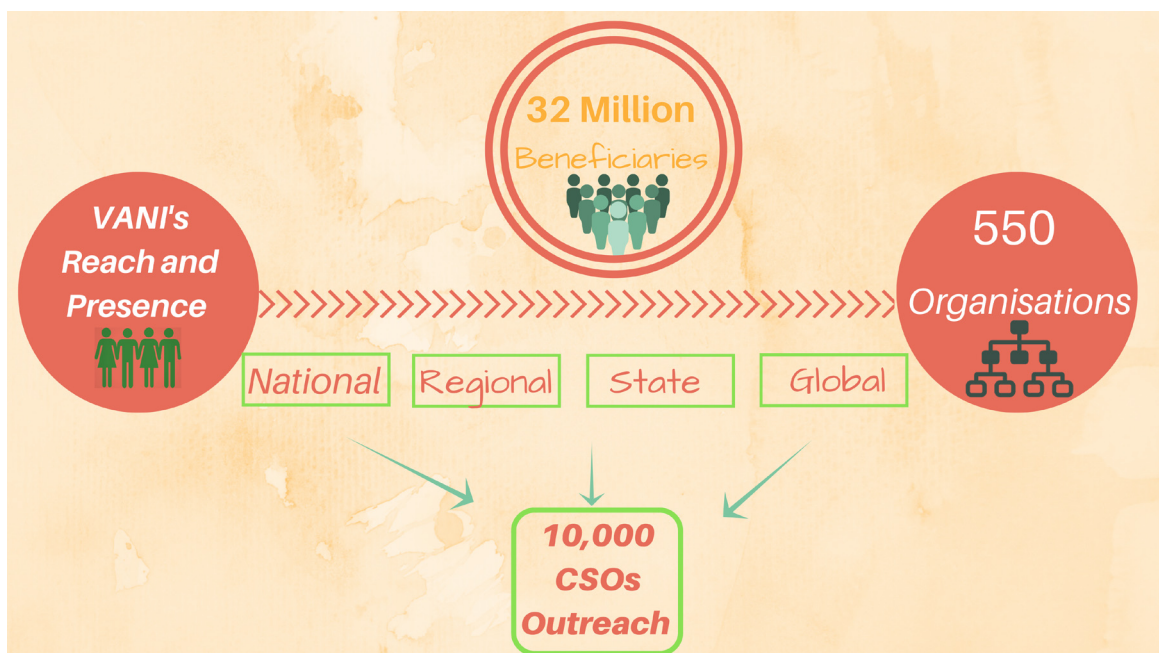
Building Compliances

- After the amendment of FCRA act, VANI conducted FCRA Clinics around the country to de-mystify law, create awareness and prepare the voluntary organisations (especially grass-root level organisations) about the changed requirements and their adherence.
- VANI was closely associated with Planning Commission to develop and disseminate the National Policy for the Voluntary Sector.

Global Initiatives

VANI has played an important role in establishing global footprints of the Indian VDOs on global development discourse.

- Civil Society (which are primarily issue focused) to involve seriously in the monitoring of implementation of SDGs.
- In its endeavor to link Indian Voluntary Sector with the world it has fraternal relations with CIVICUS, International Forum of National Platforms (IFP), Affinity Group of National Associations (AGNA), International Civil Society Center, Asian Democracy Network, Asian Democratic Alliance, CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) and work in congruence with International development bodies such as G20, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, BRICS grouping, World Bank etc.
- VANI is the founding member of Forum for Indian Development Co-operation (FIDC) for exploring the various facets of development co-operation. VANI partnered with FIDC and organised CIVIL BRICS.
- In addition, VANI has been drawing attention of the voluntary sector to monitor social implications of international development partnerships including BBIN, BIMSTECH, and Blue Economy.



Strengthening External Enabling Environment

Creating Impact Since 1988

VANI believes that for the just and equitable growth of the country, effective and vibrant voluntary development organizations (VDOs) are prerequisite. The state, VDOs and private sector are the essential pillars for such growth and mutual partnership is necessary. This can only happen if there is enabling external environment for VDOs to function and VDOs are capable, efficient and supported. Hence, the dream of VANI is based on three pillars: first, positive enabling environment for VDOs; second, capable and effective Voluntary Sector, and third, effective partnerships and collaborations with government and private sector. The overarching strategy to achieve this objective is distinguished as the following:

1. External Enabling Environment consisting of Harmonizing the Regulatory Regime of Voluntary Sector and Positioning Positive Narratives through Information Exchange
2. Promoting Effective Partnerships, encompassing facilitation of Global Linkages, Participation, Local and Regional Networking

Focus Areas

1. **Addressing Regulatory Framework:** The regulatory framework for the Voluntary Development Organizations suffers from the blind men and an elephant in the room syndrome. Various rules and regulations are made in bits and pieces which are sometime contradictory in nature. The outdated registration laws have resulted in 3.5 million Non-Profit Entities which are not necessarily development actors. Similarly, Section 2(15) needs redefining to promote partnership between VDOs and various flagship programs of Government for gaining exemptions in charitable activities. The gap is also felt between the provisions of CSR laws and Income Tax Act, to promote domestic fund mobilization.

To effectively address twin problems of reforming the regulatory regime and ensure sustainability of the sector; VANI held a series of joint meetings with NITI AAYOG across India. In its meetings with NITI AAYOG, the Government of India's Policy Think Tank is looking towards soliciting ground level inputs from VANI members in its efforts to reform the current regulatory regime. In total 5 regional meetings have taken place, which saw a vibrant representation of grassroots Voluntary Organizations interfacing with NITI AAYOG's committee and feeding their concerns.

2. **Building positive narrative of the sector:** There is very less information in public domain about the challenges and achievements of the voluntary development sector. In last decade or so, we have made our language so complicated with jargons that people on the street don't understand the nature, functions and challenges of the Voluntary Development Sector. Being a voice of the sector, VANI undertook number of initiatives to motivate grassroots organizations to document their success stories and challenges. The emergence of social media should be seen as an opportunity to further this objective. Notably VANI's website was used to further the agenda of advancing communication

- 3. Global Solidarity:** In its endeavor to link Indian Voluntary Sector with the world it has fraternal relations with CIVICUS, International Forum of National Platforms (IFP), Affinity Group of National Associations (AGNA), International Civil Society Center, Asian Democracy Network, Asian Democratic Alliance, CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) and work in congruence with International development bodies such as G20, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, BRICS grouping, World Bank etc. Additionally, it extensively pursues SDG 16 and 17 for searching effective instruments of partnerships.
- 4. Multi-stakeholder partnerships:** India is undergoing an accelerated phase of growth, which has produced seminal economic gains in the last five years. As we incrementally advance, it is perceptible that our trajectory for achieving sustainable development is on the right track of progress. The Prime Minister has referred to ensuring grassroots outreach and laid stressed on inclusive development as a non-negotiable pathway to make India a powerhouse for future. Notably, Government of India has launched ambitious schemes and projects, which ensure end-to-end coverage and make considerable strides towards realizing a collective vision for India's future. However, ensuring that no one is left behind, it is critical that development initiatives are cognizant of ground-level realities and provide equitable representation of the marginalized, vulnerable and have-not communities to be part of this development pathway. Thus, an inclusive agenda can be confirmed by providing adequate bandwidth for Civil Society to emerge as a key collaborator with the Government and Private Sector, given that they are at the frontlines of tackling socio-development challenges and are effectively intimate with most pressing issues troubling the under-developed parts of India. A significant aspect of this inclusive agenda premises itself on establishing a framework for meaningful collaboration, a model for Multi-Stakeholder interaction which offers a fertile ground for provoking conversation of Indian Civil Society with Government and Private Sector. By building multi-stakeholder ecosystem among these three sectors the effort is to synergize experiences, knowledge and resources for achieving goals of common good as well as incentivize all actors to derive benefit from the partnership. VANI organized 5 multi-stakeholder development conclaves across different states with an objective to promote discussions around SDG 17 and convergence of different sectors.
- 1. Promoting Inclusive Sector:** With different internal policies being adopted by various organisations, such as Gender Policy, Anti Sexual Harassment Policy, Environment Policy, Child protection Policy etc., Disability policy, which protects the rights of persons with disabilities within the organisation and workplace has not been visibly adopted by the sector. Therefore, there is a need to encourage and cultivate the climate of inclusive policies that promote the equality of opportunities of people with disabilities within the institutional arrangement. The discussion is going to be a pillar focused on putting forth the strategies to make the sector more inclusive and mainstreaming Disability within the CSOs to promote inclusion.

Bolstering Sector From Within

VANI, since its inception over thirty years back, has been playing a critical role in promoting self-regulation amongst a very large Indian Civil Society, which comprises organisations that are geographically dispersed, have varied size, differing human skills and capital resource, infrastructural constraints and so on. With changing times, constantly diminishing civic space and stifling, confusing and contradictory regulations and decreasing foreign funding, the Civil Society in India is facing extremely challenging times. Despite the intent, the Civil Society Organisations face constraints in adhering to all the high standards of accountability and transparency required of them due to above mentioned reasons. Thus, they (especially the micro, small and medium level voluntary organisations) require constant hand-holding to build their institutional capacities, for which little or no financial resources are available locally.

Promoting Accountability

Over the last few years, VANI has been encouraging Civil Society Organisations in India and South Asia, to widen their horizons and adopt globally acknowledged 12 commitments of Global Standard for CSO Accountability. Supported by self-assessment toolkit, the standard are based on the approach of Dynamic Accountability, that focuses on enhanced stakeholder engagement and feedback-based work culture. Adoption to these are aimed at promoting a positive narrative of the sector.

In April 2019, VANI organised a National Level Consultation on CSO Accountability for Strengthening Partnerships. This was a multi-stakeholders dialogue with participation from Civil Society Leaders, CSO Heads, representatives from accreditation agencies, donor agencies and academic institutions. The discussion enabled VANI to draw the sectors attention to the urgent need to demand a government recognised regulatory framework for the Indian Civil Society and also initiate a process to review and revise sector defined accountability indicators that were framed over two decades back. During the same month VANI also organised a South-East Asia Level Consultation to promote inter-region collaboration on CSO Accountability. Representatives from different South and South East Asian countries including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Malaysia and Cambodia participated in the discussions.

Between 1st to 4th October, 2019 on the occasion of Global Accountability week, VANI played a very active role promoting accountable practices amongst Indian CSOs, through the following innovative digital collaterals were prepared and rolled out on social media as well as shared directly with stakeholders (560 Vani Members and estimated 8000 individuals including non-member CSOs, networks in Social Asia and members of international civil society networks including AGNA, ADA and Forus) via e-mails:

1. Audio-visual clips for Youtube, Facebook & Twitter



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4mLwkvTsVg&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1yU5HwSsfr-W48GRzrwYS3_Z8Xt6xbMAGYn07F_rBjhEOq-Q2wOfk4dAs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WteHBYPkoCA>

2. VANI promoting Global Standards on Twitter



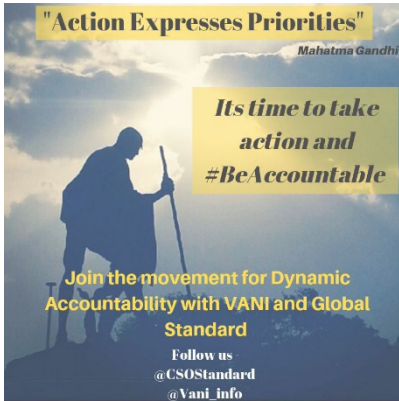
VANI's Journey with Global Standard and its relevance to Indian CSOs and those in South Asia.

https://twitter.com/vani_info/status/1179626093524840448

3. Facebook Posts



@TeamVANI



Linking Facebook Posts to relevant contexts for better receptivity.

For example - Our Facebook Post linked 150th Birth Anniversary (2nd October 2019) celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi and message to be accountable and further creating a linkage of the message with Global Standard.

4. E-Brochure prepared on VANI and its work on accountability and association with Global Standard, shared via e-mails to over 560 member CSOs and about 2,500 non-member voluntary organisations and some CSOs in Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

5. Factsheets on Global Standard for CSO Accountability on Facebook

Localisation of SDGs

In India, it was felt that conversation on SDGs had mostly been limited to UN, Government and macro level organisations. Despite implementing development projects, VDOs, especially those working at the grass-root level, lacked interest in discussing about SDGs as they failed to recognize its relevance to their work. VANI undertook a research amongst its member organisations to assess their awareness on SDGs. The findings of the study affirmed the anticipation about an extremely low awareness and understanding levels about SDGs amongst CSOs. Subsequently, three regional consultations were organized one each in West, South and East (covering states in East & North East) between April to June 2019. A discussion paper was prepared and circulated. 90 representatives from 80 organisations from across 13 states (Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh during West India Consultation; Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Manipur (North-Eastern State) during the East India Consultation and Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and Telangana in South India Consultation);

Thereafter, VANI engaged with government functionaries from Niti Aayog, Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Department of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises. Personal visits were made to all the above by the Senior Management Team of VANI. During the meeting A detailed note along with findings from the Study and recommendations for enhanced inclusion of CSOs in SDG processes was submitted.

On 21st November, VANI organized a Round Table Consultation, “Collective Action – Gearing up for India’s VNR 2020 and Furtherance of Agenda 2030”. 40 participants from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Academic Institutions, Government and Public Sector Undertaking deliberated on ways to strengthen Civil Society’s role in Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting on SDGs. The timing of the meeting was extremely crucial since India is gearing up to submit its second VNR at the UN in 2020. Firsthand experiences from CSOs and sector experts who had previously participated in the High-Level Political Forum or had been involved in the process were shared. VANI was thereafter invited to a meeting organised by Niti Aayog, Government of India, on 27th November, 2019 on India VNR 2020 on Implementation of SDGs. During the meeting Government’s intent on planning ways to integrate CSOs perspective, data and inputs into India’s VNR 2020 were discussed and CSOs working on 14 areas, comprising the most vulnerable communities were identified for further engagement for inputs into India’s second Voluntary National Review report to be submitted in 2020.

Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative from CSOs Lens

The year 2019 marked the fifth anniversary of the CSR Act 2013 (effective from 1st April 2014). Over the five years there were a number of studies undertaken on CSR by professional bodies, private institutions and even development sector platforms. However, the assessment about CSR initiatives in these studies was primarily based from the corporate perspective. Seldom were details available from the perspective of CSOs. VANI conducted an indicative online study amongst its member organisations to assess the CSR Fund access by voluntary organisations. Further, VANI organized a Round Table Discussion – CSR@5: From CSO Lens, in December 2019. 41 participants representing 33 organisations including Government, industrial bodies, corporate, public sector undertaking, CSR Experts and CSO Leaders, from across the nation participated in the deliberations on building effective ways to collaborate. During the discussions, the findings of study on CSR undertaken by VANI were also shared. In February 2020, Ministry of Corporate Affairs constituted an Advisory Cum Technical Committee for development of CSR Exchange portal to which CEO of VANI, Mr. Harsh Jaitli was invited as a member.

Social Stock Exchange and Indian CSOs

On 5th July, the Union Minister of Finance, Government of India, Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman, in her Budget announced about creation of an electronic fundraising platform – a social stock exchange for realisation of social welfare objectives. VANI undertook a preliminary study on the subject and initiated a dialogue amongst the Civil Society Organisations in February 2020 on the subject.

Promoting Women Leadership

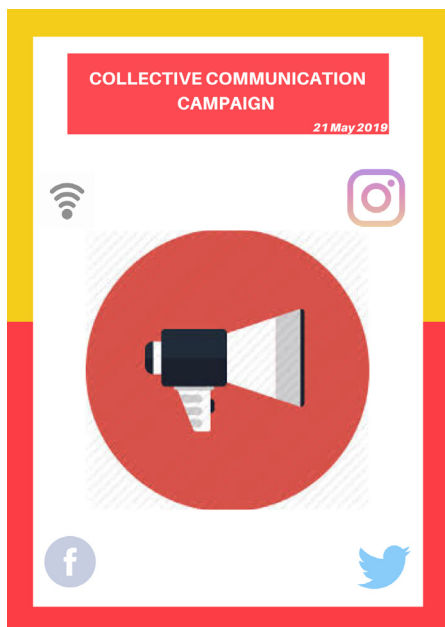
In February 2018, VANI collectivized and facilitated a critical meeting of women leaders and drew sector's attention to the widely accepted but feebly action-ed agenda - Leadership of Women. The initiative received wide appreciation from one and all within and outside the sector. As a step further in this direction, VANI and UN Women – India Chapter organised a Round Table of Women Leaders Forum in May 2019. The deliberations resulted in developing of an action plan to take forward the initiative and encourage adoption and implementation of gender safe and friendly work place policies across the sector. A subsequent meeting with potential funding organisations for the initiative was organised in October 2019. Furthering the agenda, VANI launched an online study, on the occasion of International Women's Day on 8th March, 2020, amongst our member organisations to assess the status of gender centric policies and practices amongst the civil society sector.

Covid-19 – Global Pandemic

The first case of the COVID-19 was reported in India in late January 2020 and the number of cases have been on the rise ever since. Efforts were stepped up by the government since February by way of issuance of advisories restricting travel (first international and subsequently domestic) and suspension of meetings. Thereafter, schools and educational institutions were closed. Prime Minister of India announced a 'Janata Curfew' on Sunday, 22 March, followed by a 21-day complete nation-wide lockdown to fight the Covid-19 outbreak on 24th March which got extended in different states depending on the incidence of disease spread. VANI was not only able to adapt to the new normal of communicating through remote mediums quickly, but was also amongst the first few organisations to communicate about the changed work-style requirements to its stakeholders, informing them about the Government Guidelines, travelling restrictions and work place preparation. Digital Meetings and communication was organized for sector on crucial topics including Finance Bill 2020 and proposed CSR Amendments.

Through the above initiatives, VANI has been striving to fulfil the role of congregating, facilitating, aggregating and being the 'Voice' of the sector, as reflected in its latest strategic review. The current challenging and foreseen repercussions on health, well-being and economic due to the pandemic Covid-19, have amplified VANI's determination to trudge the path towards building a strong and effective Indian Civil Society.

Towards Effective Communications



With the fast – changing technology, the digital ecosystem is also expanding hence to keep up with that pace of change is critical for the civil society. Therefore communication plays a very vital role and is an integral part of the society.

Voluntary sector too is using this channel for effective communication across its stakeholders and other audiences. It not only ensures transparency and accountability from within but caters to a range of objectives: to boost awareness around the issues, to lobby political and business actors to alter their behavior, and to raise funds, reach out to news media and promote the organisational brands across masses.

Looking at the present scenario one can easily establish the fact that the shrinking space of civil society has left very little room to collaborate, partner and negotiate with variety of stakeholders. This whereas has led to a negative narrative of the sector amongst the general public of this country.

Need of Collective Communication

In various conversations around the topic, we have been advised to work on the model of collectiveness and synergy. Undoubtedly, there is shortage of resources to address sectoral issues, but there is no dearth of willingness within the sector to stand together. Every organisation has treasure of success stories of impact, and changes made in the lives of most deserving people in the society, but the bridge to collect, link and amplify is missing. To bridge this gap and start a collective journey of pooling our experiences, learnings, challenges, and success stories together; a **Collective Communication Campaign** has been initiated by VANI and other partner organisations.

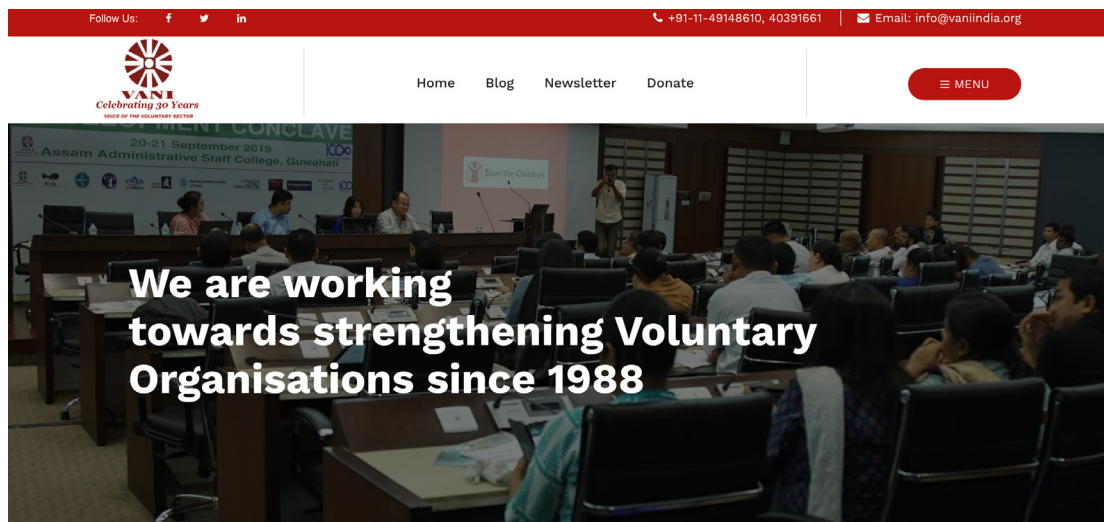
The Communication Officers of some NGOs were asked how they deliver communications on behalf of their organizations, how they promote their corporate brand and how they are structured to do this work. In addition, the way that they support both donor relations and government relations was also discussed. The use of social media and new media was a focus of discussion as were measurement and evaluation techniques.

Leveraging Technology

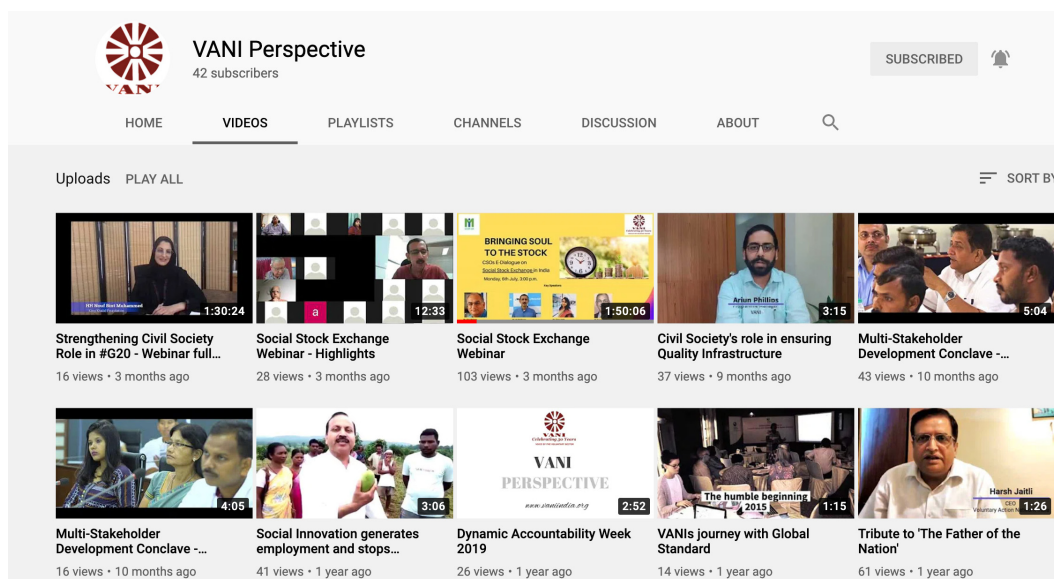
Today, digital technology is the powerful force that drives the industry innovation. Digital Technology holds great promise in helping develop new interventions, improving service delivery, gaining meaningful insight and supporting community engagement in the development sector. Therefore, this financial year VANI initiated its efforts towards digital transformation with some fundamental changes in the way it conducts its interventions pan India. For the greater outreach with the targeted audience, VANI enhanced its presence across all the digital mediums.

Website revamp

Website acts as a backbone for any organization. This year VANI revamped the whole look and feel of its website with some great content. VANI’s website works like a great tool that adds value to its interventions and helps with a greater outreach.



You Tube Channel Launch



VANI embarked on a new digital journey. Looking at the changing times and demand of the sector it contemplated various innovative ideas and collectively decided on many new initiatives. So, to give this journey a start, VANI launched a YouTube channel. The channel is named as “VANI Perspective”, which essentially aims at communicating with audience about challenges, success stories and ideas of voluntary sector.

VANI Perspective – A one Pager



11th November, 2019 Vol - 1

Multi-Stakeholder Development Conclave – Towards a Vibrant Civil Society

Dear Friends

It gives me an immense pleasure in sharing with you all that the 'Multi - Stakeholder Development Conclave' held in Guwahati was a huge success. Around 100 Civil Society Organisations participated along with representatives from the Government and the corporate sector.

It was felt that there is an urgent need to synergize and collaborate to solve the issues hindering development with just a decade left to achieve the Agenda 2030. Partnership is required at every level and not just among equals but also with everyone. The organizations working at different levels from national to state to regional needs to partner with one another and with different sector to achieve the developmental goals of the north-east. With this rationale VANI organised a two - day development conclave in Guwahati as part of its efforts to stimulate a triangular cooperation that works for the well being, upliftment and prosperity of the Assam state.

Carefully curated sessions were invigorating and helped everyone in understanding the needs of Assam and other states of North East. With an experienced list of panelists, many issues were discussed pertaining to the people and children of North East. The increased rate of **human trafficking** and the need to **combat it together** was deliberated. Not only this but the **children's progress** in the last decade was also discussed with the challenges being faced as far as **nutrition** is concerned.



Further it was highlighted that **livelihood and Employment** should not just be looked from economic

A short and crisp format of writing information was launched in the form of a One Pager. It was designed to share the relevant highlights of the workshops, dialogues or any event held at VANI to its stakeholders across India.

Collaterals

Many Brochures and collaterals were designed around the campaigns and themes of VANI.

VANI MEMBERSHIP

We aim to build and sustain responsible and credible membership base covering the whole country

Message from the Chairperson

About VANI

Dear VANI Member

I am writing this with reference to the revised structure of VANI membership. For the last three decades VANI with all your support has been striving towards strengthening, promoting and protecting the voluntary sector in India. The network has always projected the values of social inclusion and equity and the contributions of the voluntary organisations in building a society with cohesiveness, economic empowerment and social justice contributing to nation building. Along with our contributions to development and nation building, we all have been continuously working to improve our institutional statutory compliance and practice transparency and accountability. We are always concerned and careful about our credibility and relevance before our stakeholders - government, private sector, bilateral and multilateral development organisations.

Voluntary Action Network India (VANI) is an apex body of Indian Voluntary Organizations that primarily work on issues of development, rights entitlements, environment and social justice. VANI has also works towards research based policy analysis.

BRIDGING THE KNOWLEDGE DIVIDE
In focus - Partner Organisations

Strengthening CSOs

WHO WE ARE

Voluntary Action Network India (VANI) is an apex body of Indian Voluntary Organizations that primarily work on issues of development, rights entitlements, environment and social justice. VANI has also works towards research based policy analysis.

OUR THEMES

- Strengthening Enabling Environment
- Bolstering Voluntary Sector
- From Within
- Advancing Voluntary Sector Through Public

- Works towards to strengthen Voluntary Organizations since 1968
- Bringing the VOICES together
- Committed to promote Accountability

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

forus CONNECT SUPPORT INFLUENCE

AFD

Social Media

Through its presence on all the social media platforms, VANI's online engagement was enhanced with live posts and detailed postings of its events. It helped in connecting to its audience with various social media campaigns and strategies.

Visual Medium

This year VANI produced several videos in order to show the impact and reach of its programmes and interventions in India.



Multi-Stakeholder Development Conclave - Assam



Multi-Stakeholder Development Conclave - Jharkhand

Articles Published



GLOBAL
STANDARD
FOR CSO
ACCOUNTABILITY

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Fostering Accountability in the Third Sector in India

By CSO Admin | February 19, 2020 | CSO Standard, NMedia

By Richa Sharma

The Indian civil society, which grew enormously in size over the last few years, is facing external challenges such as a shrinking civic space, diminishing foreign aid, and decreasing public trust. In addition, laws for voluntary organizations (VO) have become quite complex, with the possibility of varying interpretation leading to confusion. An instance of non-compliance with VO regulations could lead to serious implications invoking penalties and at times even resulting in closure of organizations. On the other hand, internal constraints such as lack of human, financial and technical resources also become part of existing challenges faced by the third sector in India. Within this context, Civil Society Organization

<https://www.csostandard.org/csostandard/fostering-accountability-in-the-third-sector-in-india/?preview=true>

Quality Infrastructure and civil society

Civil society can be an effective participant in influencing G20's Quality Infrastructure roadmap in Indian policies and priorities.

19 March 2020 by [Arjun Phillips](#)



<https://in.boell.org/en/2020/03/18/quality-infrastructure-and-civil-society>

Workshops/Training participation by VANI staff in 2018-19

TRAVEL DETAILS

PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL EVENTS

- *Social For Good Facebook workshop organised by DASRA in Delhi on 9th August, 2019*

PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

- Tokyo Democracy Forum (TDF) of the 2019 C20 Summit in Tokyo, 19-24 April 2019
- AGNA AGM in Jordan, 10-13 June 2019
- C20 Hand Over Event in Tokyo, 17-19 November 2019
- C20 Kick-off Meetings in Riyadh, 12-13 January 2020
- CSO Meeting in Rome, Feb 4-6 2020
- National Convention - CSO Conference on Accountability and Localisation, Dhaka, Bangladesh on 6th July
- Policy Forum for Development Asia Regional Meeting in Kathmandu. Nepal 24th to 26th September
- National NGO Summit 2019 and 4th SDG Anniversary Celebration on 25th September

Building Partnerships

VANI was formed in the year 1988 with the mission to promote voluntarism and create space for the voluntary sector by fostering value based voluntary action. Since then, using advocacy as its principle instrument to catalyze change, VANI has taken up a series of advocacy initiatives at global, national, and state level. Being an apex body of voluntary organizations, VANI works as a catalyst between the Indian voluntary sector and other actors like central and state governments, bilateral and multilaterals.

Eligibility for becoming a VANI Member

- Voluntary development organizations including women's and youth organizations (excluding religious and political organizations, corporations [local and foreign], government agencies, funding agencies, family trusts and international organizations);
- Organizations that regularly publish/print annual and audit reports;
- Legally registered and democratically functioning organizations working for the promotion of development;
- Individuals with a track record in voluntary action and currently not working with any voluntary organizations (maximum 15 % of the total existing membership base).

Types of engagement with VANI

VANI has three ways of association with organizations and taking up membership.

1. Individual Membership:

Individuals who believe in voluntarism and are engaged in practicing the objective, principles and values of VANI as defined in VANI's "Statement of Purpose", and who are committed to work for achieving the objectives of VANI.

2. Organizational Membership:

Organizations that believe in voluntarism and are engaged in practicing the objective, principles and values of VANI as defined in VANI's "Statement of Purpose", and who are committed to work for achieving the objectives of VANI.

3. Associates:

Organizations that believe in voluntarism and are engaged in practicing the objective, principles and values of VANI as defined in VANI's "Statement of Purpose", and who are committed to work for achieving the objectives of VANI.

Benefits

- ***100% compliance achieved by trained voluntary organisations***
- ***99.99% organisations have not faced FCRA, IT problems after workshops***
- ***550 organisations made sustainable, activated and resilient***

Rights and Privileges of the Members

- To work actively to fulfill the objectives of VANI and to make its programmes effective.
- To be a part of all the General Body meetings of VANI
- To receive minutes of the General Body meetings
- To contest elections for the Working Committee
- To encourage new social development organisations and individuals to apply for VANI membership

Membership Entails

- Immediate access to updated Membership databank, Research and Studies done by VANI
- Opportunity to participate and vote for becoming governing board member
- Priority given during workshops and events
- Get a chance to feature in VANI's Communication system
- Receive reliable solutions to all your compliance issues

Roles and Responsibilities of Members

1. *VANI members will always conduct themselves in an ethical, responsible and respectable manner in all circumstances, and not engage in or write offensive action/material on behalf of the network, as in alignment with VANI's vision, principles and values.*
2. *Submit its annual and audit report to VANI secretariat so that database of CSOs could further be strengthened*
3. *Sign and follow VANI's "Declaration for Responsible Governance and Management of Voluntary Organisations"*
4. *VANI members do not represent VANI members will not act as official representatives, nor speak of and/or in the name of VANI network unless otherwise stipulated in writing by the board or secretariat*
5. *Pay Annual fee on time*

How to Apply?

VANI's membership process is very simple and user friendly. Membership can be availed in two ways -

(a) Through the online process -

Please visit the link here <https://www.vaniindia.org/membership-form.php>

(b) By using the registered post method

Organisations/individuals who are sending the application via registered post are requested to do the following –

1. Send all the required documents
2. Make a Cheque or DD in the Name of – Voluntary Action Network India. Post it to VANI's Office in New Delhi.

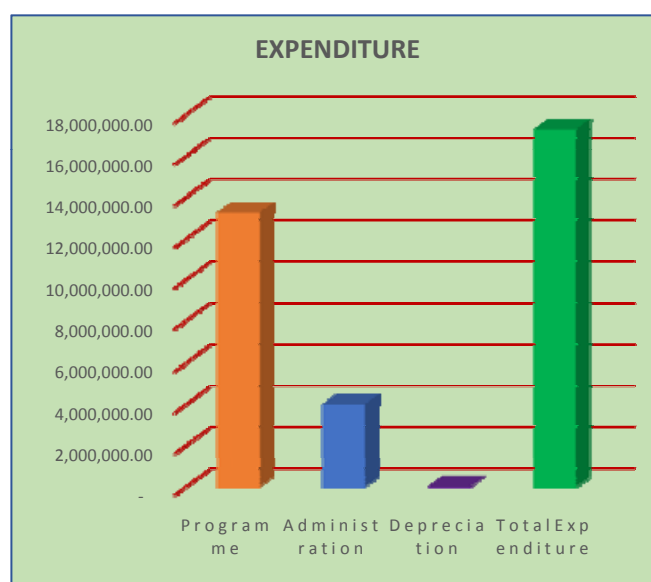
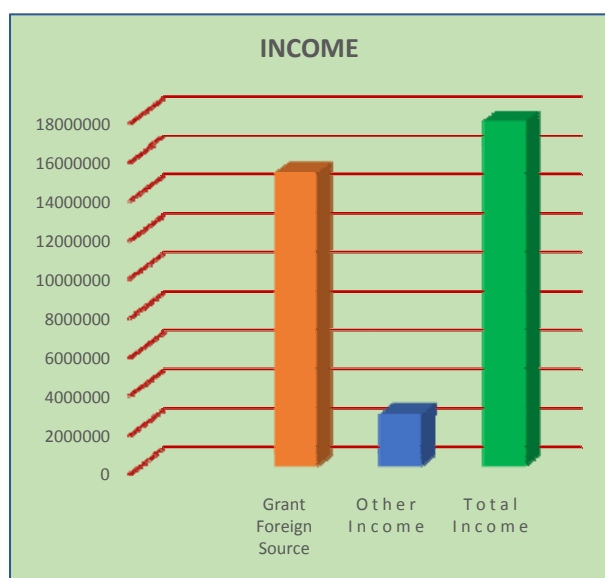
Address: VANI HOUSE, 7, PSP Pocket, Sector 8, Dwarka, New Delhi-110077

Phone: +91-11-49148610, 40391661 Email: info@vaniindia.org

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

Year ended 31.03.2020
Extracted from Audited Statement of Accounts 2019-20

	In INR
Income	
Grant Foreign Source	15,047,892.44
Other Income	2,640,119.50
Total Income	17,688,011.94
Expenditure	
Programme	13,242,892.44
Administration	4,018,199.60
Depreciation	22,657.46
Total Expenditure	17,283,749.50
Excess/ (Deficit) of Income Over Expenditure	404,262.44



VANI Team

Name	Designation
Apurva Ajmani	<i>Programme Officer</i>
Arjun Phillips	<i>Programme Manager</i>
Dheeraj Kumar	<i>Facility Supervisor</i>
Harsh Jaitli	<i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
Mamta Soni	<i>Programme Secretary</i>
Nivedita Datta	<i>Programme Manager</i>
Ravi R Rawat	<i>Accounts Officer</i>
Raj Kumar Sharma	<i>Admin Assistant</i>
Ram Lal Mehra	<i>Office Assistant</i>
Richa Sharma Puri	<i>CIVICIUS Fellow, Communications</i>
Sagar Yadav	<i>Accounts Assistant</i>
Shruti Sharma	<i>Programme Officer</i>
Syed Abdul Rafey	<i>Secretariat Support</i>
Vanshika Bhatnagar	<i>Programme Officer</i>

Board of Directors

General Body - is the supreme body comprised of all members of VANI (networks/federations, organisations and individuals).

Governing Body - makes decisions on behalf of the members and is composed of 16 elected members from the General Body, which also elects two office bearers, the Chairperson and Treasurer. The Working Committee has four subcommittees namely: Programme, Networking, Membership, Finance and Management Committees.

Secretariat - is headed by a Chief Executive Officer appointed by the Working Committee, and is an ex-officio member of the Working Committee. The Secretariat has programme units, each led by programme officers/managers with their respective professional and support staff. The CEO liaises between the Secretariat and the Working Committee for planning, implementation and monitoring of the organisation's activities

Governing Board of VANI

S. No.	Name	Gender	Occupation	Position in the Board
1	Binoy Acharya	M	Director, Unnati-Organisation for Development Education	Chairperson
2	Harsh Jaitli	M	Chief Executive Officer, VANI	Member Secretary
3	Anuja Bansal	F	Executive Director, Plan India	Treasurer
4	Jaswant kaur	F	Executive Director, Deepalaya	Member
5	Saradindu Banerjee	M	SHG Promotional Forum	Member
6	Hemal Kamat	F	Director & Secretary Concept Society	Member
7	G. Placid	M	Director, SAHAYI – Centre for Collective Learning and Action	Member
8	Puja Marwaha	F	Chief Executive, Child Rights and You (CRY)	Member
9	K. Panchaksharam	M	Secretary & CEO, Federation of South India Producer Association (SIPA)	Member
10	Basant Yadav	M	President, Sahabhangi Samaj Sevi Sanstha	Member
11	K. N. Tiwari	M	Director, Disha Social Organisation	Member
12	Sunil Kaul	M	Director, The Ant	Member

**Research Publications
(2019-2020)**

-
1. Financing Development in India

 2. Impact of Indian voluntary sector in COVID-19 Relief

 3. Reality of Aid Network Report on South-South Cooperation

 4. State Network Pamphlets- JHARVAN and NEVAN

 5. Jharkhand Case Study on COVID-19 Response

 6. ADN/COD report on SDG Monitoring and COVID-19

 7. Study on National Policy for Voluntary Sector

 8. Study on Social Stock Exchange

 9. Exploratory Research on CSO Status in Himachal Pradesh

 10. Exploratory Research on CSO Status in Uttar Pradesh

 11. Exploratory Research on CSO Status in Uttarakhand

 12. Joint Report of VANI and PRIA on Response of CSOs towards Covid-19

 13. PRIA and VANI's Joint Report on Indian CSOs Covid-19 Response

 14. India's Development Cooperation with ASEAN

 15. C20 Engagement Strategy for India's Civil Society
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PS – For more publications please visit the link here -
<https://www.vaniindia.org/details.php?id=167>

About Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)

VANI is a national network of Indian Voluntary Development Organisations (VDOs). Currently VANI has 624 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)

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