

INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION WITH ASEAN

 Laos

 Vietnam

 Myanmar

 Thailand

 Malaysia



India's Development Cooperation with ASEAN

Author: Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)

January 2019

Copyright (c) Voluntary Action Network India

The content of this book can be reproduced in whole or in parts with due acknowledgement to the publisher.

Supported by: Heinrich Böll Stiftung

Published by:

Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)
VANI HOUSE, 7, PSP Pocket,
Sector-8, Dwarka, New Delhi 110 077
Phone: 91- 11 – 49148610, 40391661, 40391663
E-mail: info@vaniindia.org
Website: www.vaniindia.org

Designed & Printed by:

Print World
Email: printworld96@gmail.com

INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION WITH ASEAN

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	04
<i>Executive Summary</i>	05
<i>Abbreviations</i>	06
Introduction	07
Trade and Economic Dynamic	12
Social Issues: Challenges and Gaps	15
Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in ASEAN	18
Civil Society Engagement	21
Conclusion.....	29
<i>References</i>	31

Preface

ASEAN as a global platform provide many opportunities for economic growth, social development and cultural progress and linkages or cooperation. India in many ways is a natural partner as it shares close historical and cultural linkages with ASEAN. The relation between the two has witnessed remarkable growth in recent years and their mutual interests have been a driver of their 25 year partnership. The relationship is set to deepen as both the sides i.e. India and ASEAN step up their collaboration across the range of economic and strategic issues including trade and connectivity, culture, people to people contacts, security etc. With ASEAN and India working towards establishing a Comprehensive Free Trade Area through Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) their cooperation will be the key to promoting political stability and economic prosperity in our shared region.

Economic engagements between India and ASEAN have been moving forward at a steady pace, still there are a number of challenges that need effective policy interventions. Further, in this rapidly changing environment of digitization and the pre-existing challenges like rural/urban and gender divide, India and ASEAN must ensure equality of opportunities, outcomes and social mobility. India and ASEAN should facilitate greater knowledge sharing and best practices in promoting inclusive growth. This should include consultations between private sector and the government with a focus on connectivity and development. Dialogue between relevant stakeholders and the government as well research, capacity building, training programmes in the areas of poverty eradication, climate change and promoting gender equality must be undertaken. Inclusive growth needs to be at the core of economic and social collaboration between these partners.

Moreover, as a regional association ASEAN must avoid the pitfalls and must be flexible to the needs and demands of ASEAN people, member countries and partners. This is where a strong social presence of CSOs is necessary when the next major ASEAN roadmap is drawn to ensure the participation and to ensure that development challenges are addressed. Further, making the important link and connect between the ASEAN and its people are the efforts of civil society organizations.

In a phase of geopolitical vulnerability in Asia, India and ASEAN have an imperative role to fulfill and the opportunities for collaboration are enormous. India and ASEAN have proven to be appropriate partners for addressing the pressing challenges that exists and are arising with changing environment. India-ASEAN thus, holds a promise for the future to change and the next period of collaboration is an opportunity to map new ways and prove the capability of this compelling partnership. This study research explores and investigates the India-ASEAN partnership from a civil society perspective.

I would like to extend my thanks to the VANI team and Ms. Shruti Sharma, Programme Officer, VANI for drafting and writing the study and Mr. Arjun Phillips, Programme Manager, VANI for overall guidance. I would also like to thank Heinrich Böll Stiftung for supporting this study.

Best Regards

Harsh Jaitli
Chief Executive Officer

Executive Summary

ASEAN was established in 1967 in Bangkok, initially with five countries namely, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and Singapore. Later Brunei Darussalam, Lao PDR, Vietnam, Myanmar and Cambodia joined in. ASEAN's relation with India traces back to the historical linkages and shared culture. ASEAN reaped the benefit of economic growth, social development and standard of living. However, India was left out from all these major developments as ASEAN was early to liberalize and get advantage of it. ASEAN has a robust growth in economy since its formation. International trade has gained a lot of importance with the establishment of ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) which increased not only the amount but volume of the inter-region trade. However if we look at India, it has remained a fastest growing economy according to the World Bank and India's trade has steadily been increasing over the past few years. ASEAN and India are connected through free trade area, people-to-people connectivity etc.

ASEAN apart from India, have different partners such as UN, ADB, and SAARC. Partners support and contribute to the ASEAN's commitment. The partners support in form of study research, activities/programs and trade and physical infrastructure and connectivity are few of them. India has also started exploring various facets of development cooperation through FIDC which bridged the gap between civil society organizations and government. Though, ASEAN integration is highly successful and appreciated but still there are some gaps in development among ASEAN member states and ASEAN and partner countries. Recognized social issues that are common across the world such as poverty, trafficking, economic gap, climate change, terrorism and crime, digital disparity are few examples. There is a need to bridge those development gaps especially among the less developed countries and highly developed countries and measure the impacts.

Further there was a strategic shift from Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals. ASEAN is committed to two processes: the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 (ASEAN Vision 2025) and United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). ASEAN countries are focused on sustainable production and sustainable consumption, sustainable use of resources, sustainable cities, ecological and maritime environment, climate change etc. Similar was the case of India, where government has set up forums which focuses on elimination of poverty, gender equality, education, health care through meticulous outcome based monitoring.

Civil society engagement is an important part and plays a pivotal role in the development. However, there are some gaps between government and CSOs for quite a while now. Also not only the participation of CSOs in ASEAN is weak but also CSOs of ASEAN member countries are facing difficulties due to legal environment. CSOs have more people connectivity and more reach to the regions and can be an important link between the governments and people thus, ASEAN should be more inclusive of the participation of CSOs. The civil society wants their contribution to be recognized and expand the participation of civil society and people in ASEAN.

ASEAN's partnership with India opens various opportunities to engage at global platform thus, the study explores this partnership from a civil society perspective and further was to look at the opportunities from this cooperation and scope for strengthening the cooperation; identifying gaps and challenges that restrict the development and connect between countries and CSOs engagement and also to explore the implications of this partnership on civil society organizations.

Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Area
AHA	ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance
AIA	ASEAN Investment Area
AIFTA	ASEAN-India Free Trade Area
AIG	ASEAN Investment Guarantee
AIMMAF	ASEAN-India Agriculture Ministers Meeting
AIPA	ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly
APCT	ASEAN Promotional Chapter for Tourism
APF	ASEAN's People Forum
APFTA	Asia-Pacific Free Trade Area
ASCC	ASEAN Cultural Community
BIMP-EAGA	Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
CECA	Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement
CLMV	Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam
CoP	Culture of Prevention & Conference of the Parties
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSSTEAP	Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific
DELSA	Disaster Emergency Logistic System of ASEAN
ERIA	Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FY	Financial Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMS	Greater Mekong Sub-region
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IMT-GT	Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle
ISRO	Indian Space Research Organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MNRE	Ministry of New & Renewable Energy
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NDGI	Narrowing Developmental Gaps Indicators
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAMCA	Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Climate Action
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
TAC	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation
TTC	Tracking Telemetry and Command
UN	United Nations
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USA	United States of America
YDI	Youth Development Index

Introduction

The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8th August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by five countries, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand which were the founding fathers of ASEAN. The association was formed to promote intergovernmental cooperation and facilities, economic, political, security, military, educational and socio-cultural among its members and other Asian countries. Later, Brunei Darussalam joined and became member of ASEAN on January 7, 1984, Vietnam on July 28, 1995, Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) and Myanmar on July 23, 1997, and Cambodia on April 30, 1999, making up the ten member states of ASEAN. The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a community of more than 600 million people living in ten countries in one of the most dynamic regions of the world.

ASEAN has surfaced as fastest growing regions in the world since its inception. The social and economic growth has been unexpected and extraordinary for ASEAN over the past 50 years. ASEAN intensified intra-ASEAN cooperation and bridged the developmental gap within and across ASEAN region. ASEAN was proclaimed a Community through a Declaration signed by ASEAN Leaders at their 27th Summit in Kuala Lumpur on November 22, 2015. This declaration maps the road for ASEAN Community building over the next ten years. It is a forward looking pathway that articulates ASEAN's goals and commitments to realize further consolidation, integration and stronger cohesiveness as a Community.

At the beginning India and ASEAN were friendly and share deep rooted culture and historical links. They have enjoyed a strong socio-economic relationship which has strengthened over the years. However, in economic policy they followed different paths. ASEAN was early to liberalize and reaped the benefits of accelerated growth and a rapidly improving standard of living. However India in comparison was left behind in the race and felt excluded from these major developments.

In 1990, a liberalized budget was presented by Dr. Manmohan Singh which opened the new gates of opportunities for India with other countries worldwide. The relationship of India with ASEAN has emerged as a keystone of our foreign policy and has evolved from "Look East Policy" articulated in early 1990s which steered India to become a Sectoral Partner of ASEAN in 1992, a Dialogue Partner in 1996 and a Summit-level Partner in 2002. The partnership strengthened and upgraded to strategic partnership in 2012 during the 20th anniversary commemorative summit at New Delhi. As



both sides, India and ASEAN was equally interested and responded actively to engage in cooperation.

India looks to Southeast Asia as a region where it can enhance its international standing and can establish a well known status. Since the 1990s, India has adopted “Look East” policy, where India sees its future as being aligned and linked to the fortunes of Southeast Asia. India also has one enormous advantage that is not enjoyed by any other country in the world including China and the United States, namely its long history of civilization contact with the region.



Source: The ASEAN Post (<https://theaseanpost.com/article/empowering-civil-society-asean>)

In order to further strengthen ASEAN-India relations and as an attempt to provide boost to the regional integration that India has with its eastern neighbors, India's 'Look East' Policy was transformed to the 'Act East' Policy in 2014. ASEAN gave the needed encouragement and support when India moved from "Look East" to "Act East". The objective of 'Act East Policy' is to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationship with countries in the Asia-Pacific region through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels thereby providing enhanced connectivity to the states of India's North-Eastern Region.

The geopolitical uncertainty gives new impetus to ASEAN's cooperation with key partners like India. ASEAN and India share common interests in peace and security of the region; open, balanced and inclusive architecture. India is located strategically along the major sea lanes from the Indian Ocean to Pacific. These sea lanes are also vital trade routes for many ASEAN member states. Both sides share an interest in preserving these vital maritime medium of trade. Further, India and ASEAN should work together to conclude a high quality Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), surpassing the existing AFTA. This would create an integrated Asian market comprising nearly half the world's population and a third of the world's GDP. Stream-lining rules and regulations will stimulate investments in both directions, complement India's 'Act East' policy and facilitate 'Made in India' exports to the region.

The measured steps had the impact of bringing India within consultative circle of ASEAN so that there is constantly expanding network of contact and communication. Further the expansion of trade and investment of this bilateral relation showcased the intensity of economic engagements between India and ASEAN. Recently in the year 2017, India and ASEAN has marked 15th year of Summit level partnership and the 25th year of Dialogue partnership. The Delhi Declaration is an annual event in which India and ASEAN discuss the issues of economics, socio-cultural, political and security cooperation etc.

The Ministry of External Affairs held Delhi Dialogue in order to bring together civil society to be engaged in economic development further, the representation of civil society organizations is to bring in social sector sensitivity as well. It is a very essential step to bring out semi-academic articulation of leaders in the issue of resource generation of India's Development Cooperation. The Delhi Dialogue has evolved into a premier event for taking stock of global geo-political movements and their impact on ASEAN-India relations and making recommendations for future direction of this landmark relationship. The ASEAN- India Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation (CECA) was signed between India and ASEAN on October 8, 2003 in Bali, Indonesia, to institutionalize a framework for future economic cooperation.

India has been making various steps for co-operations and collaborations like creating a forum, "FIDC" (Forum for Indian Development Cooperation) in January 2013. The engagement between government and civil society organizations in India was boosted with the launch of FIDC and in last few years FIDC has made vital efforts to close the gap between CSOs and government. The idea was to have a forum for exploring various aspects of development cooperation which will also seek to draw upon India's own experiences. The Research and Information System currently work as a Secretariat. FIDC has emerged as multi-stakeholder forum with representatives from government, think tanks, CSOs, academia. It aims to encourage detailed analysis of trends in south-south

Delhi Declaration of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit 2018

The Heads of State/Government of the Member States of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Republic of India gathered in New Delhi, India on 25th January 2018 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations, under the theme of “Shared Values, Common Destiny”.

This reaffirms the commitment to guide ASEAN-India dialogue relations by principles, purposes, shared values norms enshrined in the Charter of United Nations. Recognizing and appreciating the efforts and achievements made over the past 25 years. Further strengthen and deepen the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership for mutual benefit through the range of political-security, economic, socio-cultural and development cooperation.

India will continue to support and contribute to the ASEAN integration and ASEAN building process towards the realization of ASEAN Community Vision 2025. India also supports the ASEAN's efforts in narrowing the development gap within and between ASEAN member States by implementing the work action plan.

Delhi Declaration was adopted on 25th January 2018 in New Delhi, India.

cooperation and contextualize Indian policies by facilitating discussions across various subject streams and stakeholders based on theoretical and empirical analysis, field work, perception surveys and capacity building needs.

The relations between India and ASEAN strengthen and advance as both the sides are ready for future progress. Further through such forum available for cooperation, India can flourish and strengthen its networks. The strategic arrangements have a sense of potential and responsibility with regard to the partnership. India and ASEAN looking at the history and culture have strengths and capacities of developing into more structured and long term exchanges in future in various fields.

ASEAN and Other Partnerships

ASEAN is also focusing on regional and sub-regional integration along with networks at global level. The countries from regional and sub-regional level also participate and contribute to the ASEAN's commitment. In the early 1970s United Nations (UN) and ASEAN's relation started through cooperation with the UN Development Programme (UNDP). A two year study was sponsored by UNDP to assist ASEAN in its economic cooperation activities, which in turn later provided the basis for ASEAN to develop cooperation in industrial development, agriculture and forestry, transport, monetary and insurance services etc. The ASEAN-UNDP sub-regional programme aiming to better assist ASEAN with its regional cooperation and integration effect was launched in 1977.



While at the regional level Asian Development Bank (ADB) works closely with ASEAN and is bound by shared goals and vision in quest of integration and sustainable development across the ASEAN region. Since past 5 decades, the two organizations have been travelling along the road of integrated regional development. The ADB directly assists ASEAN at the regional level through cooperative programs at sub-regional level, the goals of which are aligned with those of ASEAN and by assisting member states in meeting their ASEAN commitments at the national level. ADB's direct assistance to ASEAN covers several strategic areas: cross-border infrastructure development, trade and transport facilitation, monetary and financial cooperation and integration, social development, agriculture and food security, environmental sustainability.

The logo of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is displayed in white serif font on a dark blue square background.

ADB has been primarily assisting activities in three major sub-regions: Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT). These three sub-regional programs have helped promote the ASEAN integration agenda in several ways.

Further ASEAN also seeks to enhance relations with external partners at sub-regional level such as SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) and South Asian countries. There is a long historical linkage between the two regions and how some SAARC members- such as Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka-participate in the ASEAN driven regional processes such as ASEAN Regional Forum. In addition to ASEAN's experience from the ASEAN Community building process, SAARC further took the opportunity to learn about the works of other ASEAN related institutions- including the ASEAN Foundation, the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance (AHA) Centre and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA).



ASEAN and SAARC enjoy a healthy trade relation and agreement such as AIFTA & APFTA acting as a way to increase trade between the member states. However, there is a development gap among member states as only major economies and dominant member countries of both dialogue forums enjoy the profits in between. Member states such as Afghanistan, Maldives, Sri Lanka & Bhutan in SAARC did not establish free trade area like India and Pakistan with the ASEAN. Similarly, member states like Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam do not enjoy trade relations with every SAARC member. Thus, the regional power balance between ASEAN and SAARC is weaker as only India and Bangladesh has been granted the position as regional forum partners.

From the research, several key outcomes can be gained. SAARC is moving towards ASEAN mainly trade sharing, expanding imports-exports, political stability, market size, infrastructure capacity and economic openness. Various studies show that ASEAN plays a major role in trade transaction of SAARC as nearly half of the trade share is coming from ASEAN. Also the bilateral trade agreements between the regions have affected the two regions to get closer. Further, SAARC countries are trying to implement more bilateral trade agreements with ASEAN in searching more advances in trade. SAARC can benefit more from ASEAN as these two regions do not have any geo political conflicts. SAARC can work closely with ASEAN to find solutions for the issues and for their economic upliftment. ASEAN should provide more economic freedom and open its borders for association.

Trade and Economic Dynamic

Since the inception, ASEAN has seen a vigorous growth in its economy and has a total GDP of US \$ 2.55 trillion with a share of 6.2 percent of world's GDP. In the year 2016, the combined GDP of ASEAN as a single economy was placed as 6th largest in the world and 3rd largest in Asia. If we look at trade accounts of ASEAN, it has 7.1 percent share of the world's total trade and it is the world's fourth-largest trading region, behind the European Union, USA and China. ASEAN has witnessed rising in their total trade over the past decade which is from US\$ 1.6 trillion in 2007 to US\$ 2.3 trillion in 2016.

Further it was observed that the intra-ASEAN market collectively is the largest market for ASEAN trade. Since 1995, the share of Intra-ASEAN exports has continued to be increasing varying between 21 percent and 28 percent while the Intra-ASEAN imports increased from 16.5 percent in 1995 to 22.2 percent in 2016.

Amidst global economic qualms, the ASEAN region has benefited from growing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows. FDI flows have significantly evolved from US\$ 3.0 billion in 1984 to US\$ 96.7 billion in 2016, growing at a CAGR of 11.4 percent, attaining its peak in 2014, at US\$ 133.1 billion. Particularly during the past decade, FDI inflows to ASEAN have more than doubled, from US\$ 41.9 billion in 2005 to US\$ 96.7 billion in 2016.

While on the other hand, India's diversified economy includes modern agriculture, and a wide variety of industries, a range of services and has placed India as the world's 7th largest economy based on nominal GDP and the world's 3rd largest economy based on GDP measured in PPP terms in 2016. In recent years India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been progressively increasing and had witnessed a growth rate of 8 percent in FY 2015-16, followed by a modest slowdown in FY 2016-17 to 7.1 percent. According to the World Bank, India remains the fastest growing economy in the world and it will get a big boost from its approach to GST which will reduce the cost of doing business for firms, reduce logistics costs of moving goods across states, while ensuring no loss in equity.

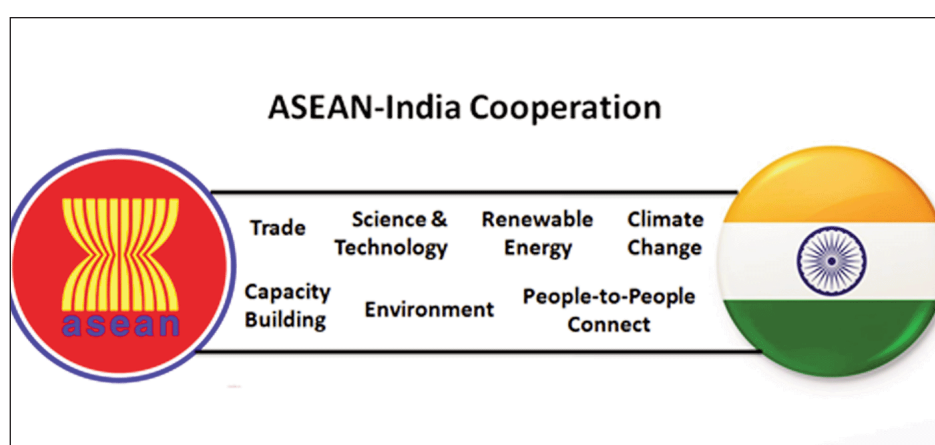
Looking at the trade economy of India, its total trade has been steadily increasing over the past decade, at a CAGR of 4.8 percent and amounted to US\$ 660.6 billion in FY 2016-17 as compared to US\$ 414.8 billion in FY 2007-08. Subsequently, India's share in global trade (products and merchandise) increased to 1.9 percent in 2016 from 1.1 percent in 2007. Over the period India has been able to retain its position as a net exporter of services. The Indian export's share in global services has increased from 2 per cent in 2005 to 3.3 percent in 2016, enabling India at the place of 8th largest service exporter in the world in 2016 from its previous rank of 15 in the year 2005.

There has been an increase in FDI inflow into India i.e. US\$ 60.1 billion in FY 2016-17 in comparison to US\$ 34.3 billion in FY 2012-13, while FDI outflows from India stood at US\$ 24.9 billion in FY 2016-

17, witnessing a positive growth from US\$ 22 billion in FY 2015-16, after having dropped for two consecutive years. Service sector is the top FDI attracting sector within India, with a share of 17.9 percent in India's total FDI inflows in FY 2016-17, followed by computer software and hardware sector, and construction development, among others. On the other hand, India's FDI outflows were mainly directed towards financial, insurance and business services sector in FY 2016-17, followed closely by agriculture and mining, manufacturing, and wholesale & retail trade, among others.

ASEAN-India Trade & Economic Relations

While the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area is fully functional from July 2015, India is also actively engaged in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations involving ASEAN and its six Free Trade Area partners, which, when completed, is expected to be the largest regional trading arrangement, accounting nearly 40 percent of the world trade. Over the years, India and ASEAN have been cooperating with each other through the implementations of various programs and projects in various fields.



A) India's Bilateral Trade and Investment with ASEAN

- Due to their trade and investment linkages, India and ASEAN witnessed rapid expansion owing to the increase in economic engagements.
- India has acquired the 11th position in ASEAN's largest trading partner in the year 2016.
- In last five years, India's total trade with the ASEAN has witnessed moderation from US\$ 75 billion in 2012 to US\$ 64.6 billion in 2016.
- Both exports and imports have declined over the period, from US\$ 32.3 billion and US\$ 42.7 billion respectively in 2012, to US\$ 26.4 billion and US\$ 38.2 billion respectively in 2016.

B) Investment Opportunities for India in ASEAN

- ASEAN with its diverse market of 10 countries has been marked as a key growth hot spot in

the world today. Its 10 diverse markets are progressing to be developed nations and some are in the developing stage, there are wide range of opportunities in business and investment.

- The proposals have been made to improve investment environment of India-ASEAN through the implementation of the ASEAN Investment Guarantee (AIG) scheme an ASEAN Investment Area (AIA) which is the result of ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement. FDI between ASEAN and India is expected to improve in the near future with these measures in place.

C) India-ASEAN Trade & Economic Cooperation

- In 2009 the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement was signed and on ASEAN-India Trade-in-Services and Investments in 2015.
- The ASEAN-India Free Trade Area is complete with the signing of these agreements. ASEAN-India trade rebounded in 2016-17 to reach USD 70 billion after few years of static growth due to global slowdown.
- Cumulative FDI outflows from India to ASEAN countries as per the data by Ministry of Finance was about US\$ 38.67 billion from April 2007 to March 2015. FDI inflows into India from ASEAN in between April 2000 to December 2016 were US\$ 54.97 billion, which represents 16.81% of the cumulative inflows received by India.

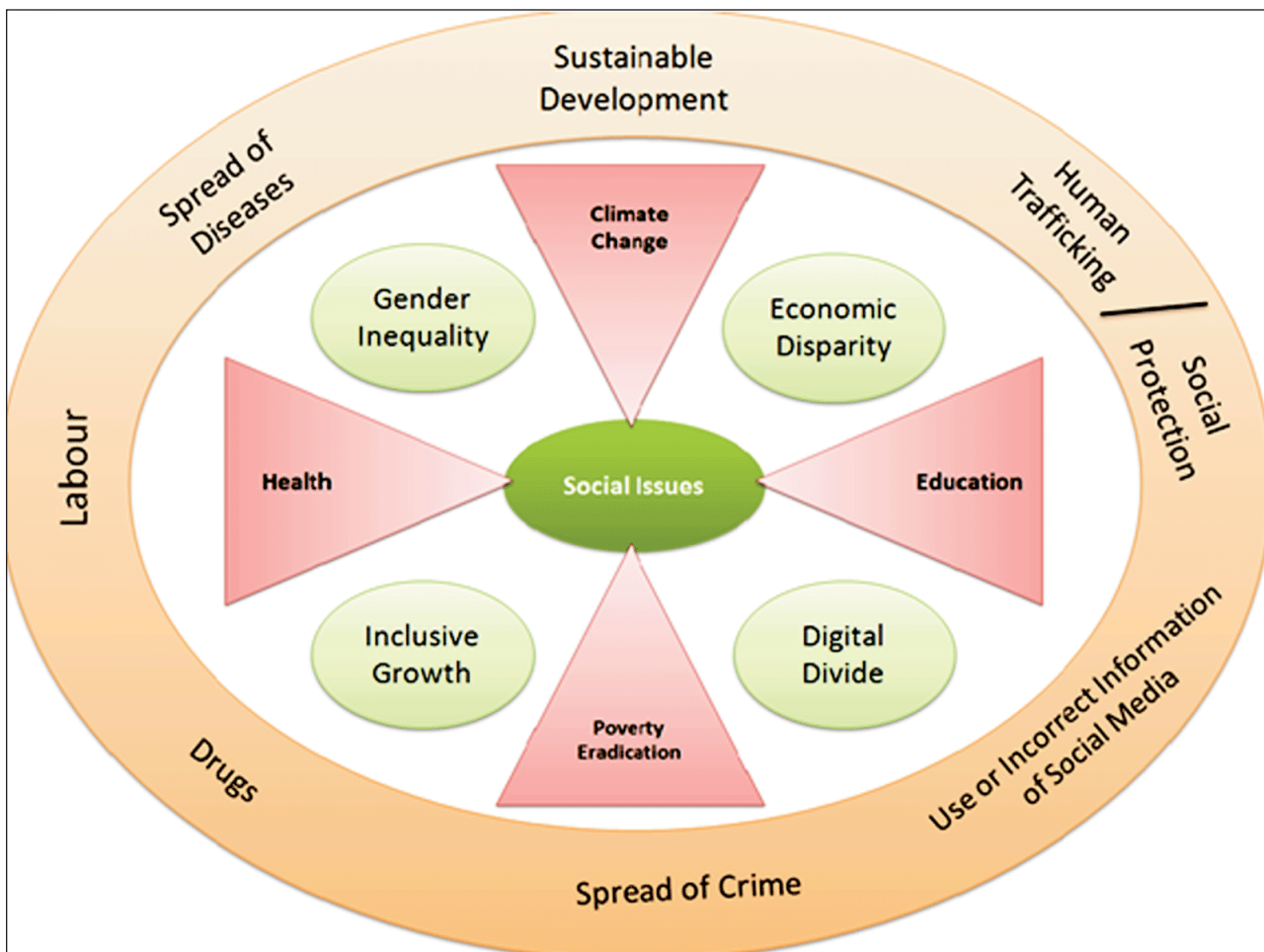
D) ASEAN-India Plan of Action

- A Plan of Action (2004-2010) was developed in order to implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity.
- The 3rd Plan of Action for 2016-2020 has been finalized and lists of prioritized activities are planned out for 2016-18.
- It envisages functional cooperation in a range of sectors in the political, economic and socio-cultural spheres with the objective of capacity building and development, particularly to narrow the development gaps between ASEAN member states under their Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) programme. The financing of POA projects is done through ASEAN-India Fund, Science & Technology Development Fund and Green Fund.

Social Issues: Challenges and Gaps

The countries around the globe are dealing with social issues, challenges and developmental gaps which occur when there is a difference in either per capita income or other social development between regions or countries. Despite the ASEAN's integration process, still member countries and partners are facing issues in terms of social and economic development and challenges of climate change, health, education, poverty eradication etc. Another key challenge includes digital disparity and economic disparity as ASEAN comprises of heterogeneous group of countries with wide socio-economic development disparities and there is a difference in their levels of development, political systems, investment environment and economic structure.

A conference held by the Secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on 23rd May in Jakarta. The main purpose of conference was strategic directions for dealing with root causes of social issues. The representatives from delegations of countries at ASEAN, ASEAN's dialogue partners, senior officials of ASEAN Cultural Community (ASCC), ASEAN's developmental partners,



ASEAN organizations and the United Nations participated in the conference. The objective of the conference was to promote the ASEAN Declaration on Culture of Prevention (CoP) for a peaceful, inclusive, healthy, resilient and harmonious society that was adopted in November 2017 at the 31st ASEAN Summit in Manila, Philippines.

The Secretary General of ASEAN, Lim Jock Hoi highlighted the challenges that needs attention and addressed those challenges in the conference which includes issues such as spread of diseases, drugs, crime, trafficking (human), incorrect information on social networks. Further, the issues that ASEAN is facing difficulties in seeking solutions to long term problems related to education, health care, environment and social services etc.

For instance, climate change is a global challenge as recognized by the world so is by the ASEAN countries and partners. The widespread impact of climate change on ASEAN countries causes the losses of US \$ 4.4 billion every year. The Secretary General Lim Jock Hoi stressed on preventive way of thinking that means instead of direct intervention rather ASEAN is trying to adopt an approach that is preventive in nature by dealing with the root cause of the problem. He shared six aspects of prevention philosophy which were good governance, resilience and care for environment, awareness, respect, a healthy lifestyle and values of moderation. These factors will facilitate the idea of diversification, gender equality, women empowerment as well as opportunities for the weaker section of society.



Source: <http://www.asianage.com/india/all-india/090718/global-partnership-needed-to-achieve-sustainable-development-goals.html>

Along with the important role of civil society organizations towards ASEAN commitment and approach, educational institutions and religious groups also helps in boosting the preventive philosophy. ASEAN also acknowledges the role of cooperation with its partners and related parties in seeking effective solutions and best practices to promote the Culture of Prevention (CoP) among ASEAN.

There is a need to focus and provide direction to policy makers at country and regional level as well regarding developmental differences and disparities in ASEAN, particularly between less developed member countries of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV) and prosperous, highly developed country (ASEAN). The Narrowing Developmental Gaps Indicators (NDGI) that were designed by the OECD Development Centre and the ASEAN Secretariat, used to measure progress or lacks in between the development, to bridge the developmental gaps between countries. The NDGI includes six areas- human resource development, trade and investment, information and communication technology; infrastructure; tourism and poverty.

With respect to India's social issues and challenges its development path is based on its unique resource endowments, the overriding priorities of economic and social development and poverty eradication and many other issues that country is facing from long time. However, India's objective is to establish an effective, cooperative and equitable approach towards these social issues and not only at local and national level but the approach must also be compatible with India's role as a responsible and enlightened member of international community, ready to make the contribution to the solutions of a global challenge which impacts the whole world.

While the Indian government emphasizes on reducing poverty and economic development as country's highest priority, recent stances on domestic emission reduction indicates that India is taking considerable steps and has shown signs of more proactive engagement on climate change issues both internationally and at home.

Taking similar example of climate change, it is one of the major challenges that the world is facing and India is also not untouched by it. India engages actively in multilateral negotiations in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in a positive, constructive and forward looking manner. Our global approach is based on principles of common and differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities enshrined in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). At national level, in order to achieve a sustainable development path that simultaneously advances economic and environmental objectives the National Action Plan for Climate Change is there.

Achieving Sustainable Development Goals ASEAN and India

There was a thoughtful and strategic shift from Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals with respect to conclusiveness, comprehensiveness, universality and inclusiveness with a motto “leaving no one behind”. Succeeding the MDGs, the SDGs are the new universal goals adopted by 193 countries including India. SDG includes 17 goals and 169 targets build on successes of MDGs while including new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice among other priorities. Thus, SDGs integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions in the goals. The goals are interconnected thus the key to success on one will involve tackling issues connected to other. The timeline for these goals and targets is 2030.



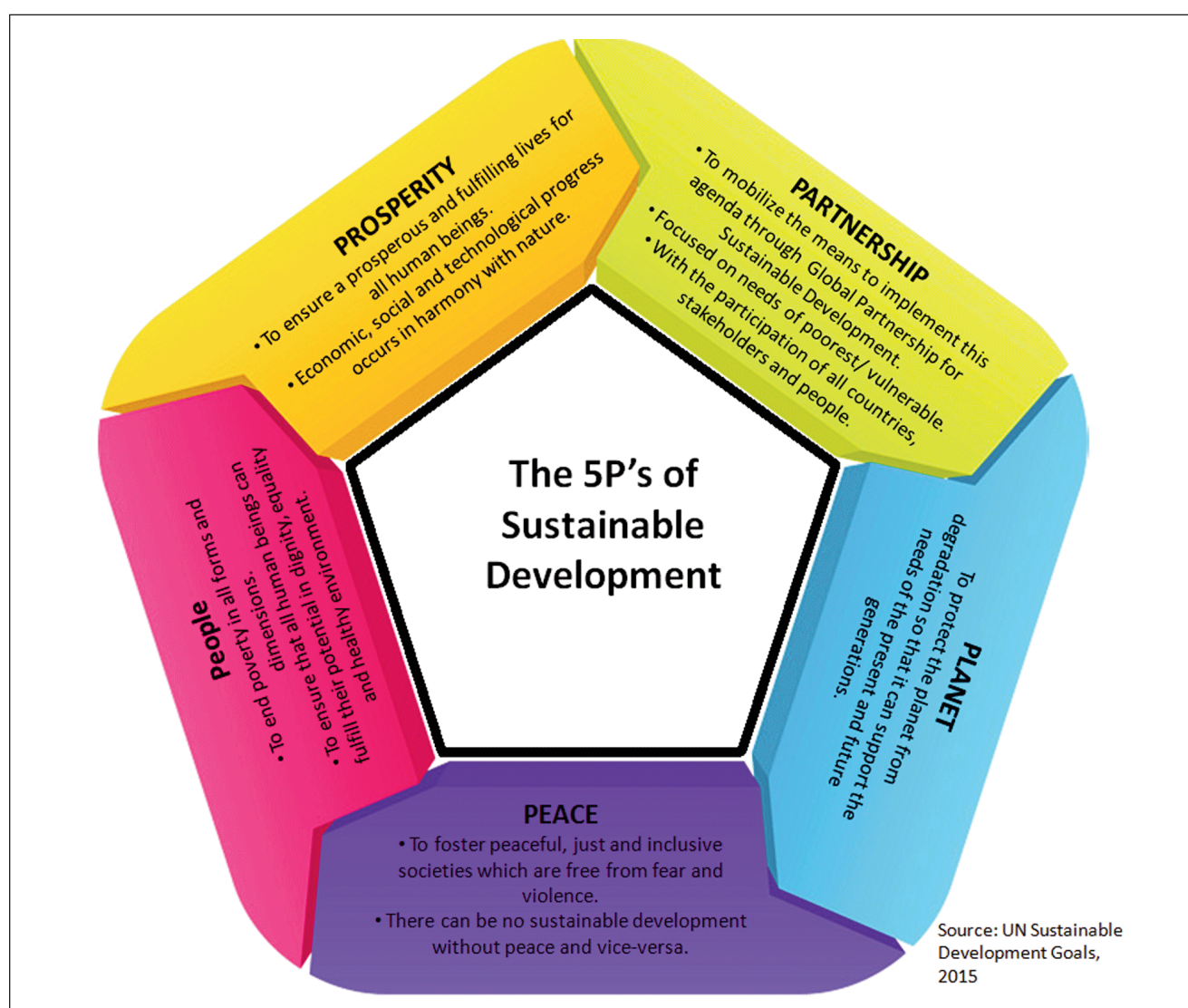
ASEAN's Approach towards Sustainable Development

ASEAN is committed to two parallel processes which are inter-related: the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 (ASEAN Vision 2025) and United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). To ensure a balance between development and sustainability the regional efforts built on concrete environmental measures and initiatives have been ramped up. ASEAN continues to focus on conservation, the sustainable use of natural resources, environmentally sustainable cities, the coastal and marine environment and sustainable consumption and production among other things.

Tackling climate change is also a priority and to list out the region's climate change priorities and how the ASEAN region can strengthen its cooperation on climate change, an ASEAN Climate Change Partnership Conference and Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Climate Action (SAMCA) was organized in 2018.

ASEAN has collectively continued to strengthen regional cooperation in disaster management and disaster risk reduction to enhance the resilience. ASEAN also continued its commitment to enhancing its capacity for swift, scalable disaster response through the Disaster Emergency Logistic System of ASEAN (DELSA) and its satellite warehouse.

The priorities and ongoing work of ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Pillar for 2018 includes promoting green jobs, mainstreaming the right of persons with disabilities and cyber wellness. These priorities will be translated into outcome documents to be elevated at the 33rd ASEAN Summit. The ASCC Pillar also supported 20 youth programmes covering leadership, volunteerism, employment, resilience, intercultural understanding and life skill development. To assess and document the outcomes and effectiveness of youth programmes, ASEAN developed an ASEAN Youth



Development Index (YDI). The ASCC Pillar also works to prepare people to be more competitive in labor market. By improving the competitiveness and productivity of ASEANs workforce including through skill development and vocational education & training; ASEAN is working its population to meet the demands of the market.

As the proactive member of global community, ASEAN is committed to realize Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The ASCC Pillar has supported ASEAN member states as well as Thailand as the country coordinator for SDGs in promoting complementarities between the ASEAN vision 2025 and SDGs.

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint highlights the need to promote and ensure balanced social development and sustainable environment that meets the needs of the people at all times. Fittingly, the 2030 Agenda provides the right framework with which ASEAN can bring its community building approach in complementarity with its sustainability objectives as reflected by the four priorities in Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025: conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources, environmentally sustainable cities, sustainable climate, sustainable consumption and production. All the four priorities are also SDGs, respectively: Goal 15, Goal11, Goal 13 and Goal 12. Both the ASEAN and the UN have emphasized the need for sustainable development to address all three dimensions- environmental, social and economic- in an integrated manner.

Enhanced Connectivity also plays an important role to lower the trade costs, reduce trade time, enhance supply chain efficiency and facilitate agglomeration. These in turn enable a country to be better integrated into cross-border value chains, enhance competitiveness and productivity, generate jobs and reduce poverty. Thus, an improved connectivity can contribute directly to the realization of the United Nations 2030 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

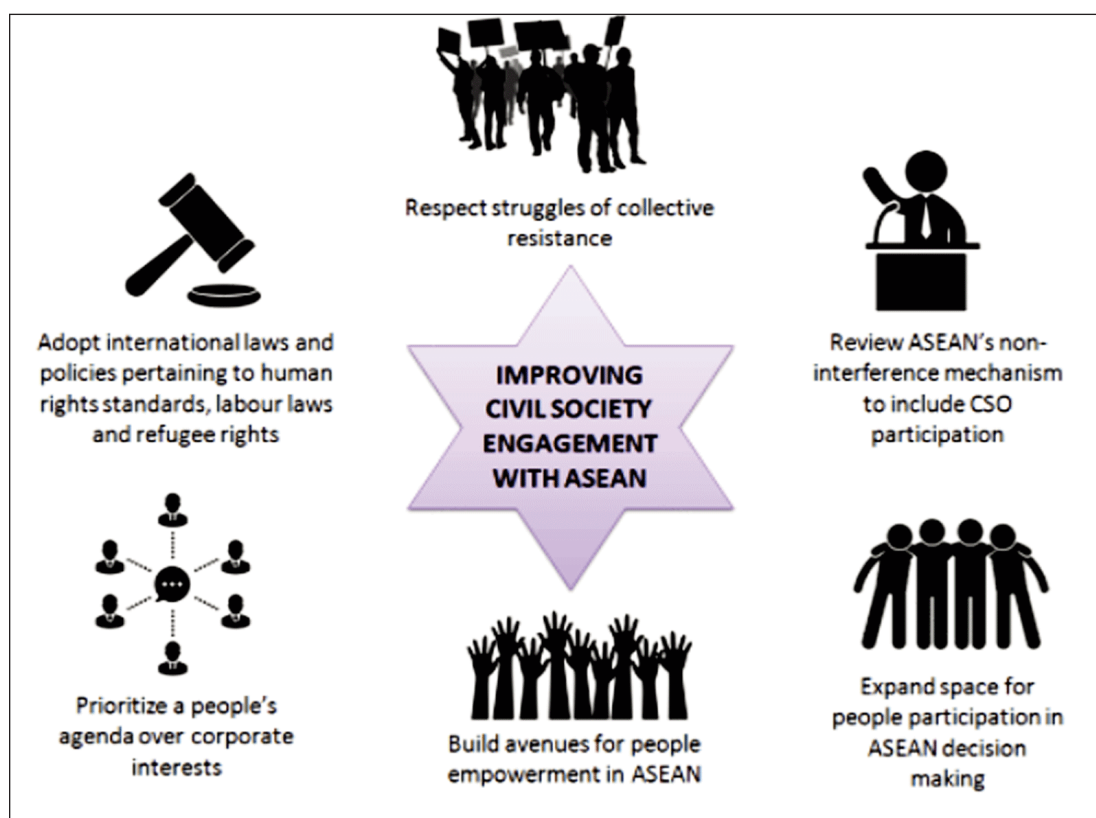
Governmental officials in charge of implementing the SDGs in ten Member States; international organizations, development partners, non-governmental organizations/ civil society organizations and private sector are the actors considered to have the most significant role in translating and achieving specific goals at local level, particularly in the context of socially and economically diverse states due to their high outreach among people at grassroots.

The ASEAN Vision 2025 has its main goal the realization of a rules-based, people oriented and people centered ASEAN community where its people enjoy higher quality of life and benefits of community building. Further, the complementarities between ASEAN Vision 2025 and SDGs will unlock the potentials of ASEAN in achieving sustainable developmental agenda and contribute to ASEAN regional integration and development.

Civil Society Engagement

Due to disconnect with the Government, Civil Society have been struggling from a very long time as they are not an integral part whether it is decision making on policy level or recognition of their work and contribution to the development sector. The situation of CSOs is not just in India but ASEAN members too. The same issue was highlighted at the ASEAN's People Forum (APF) which took place in November 2017 in the Philippines. Further, CSOs have taken their own time in developing their discourse and processes with ASEAN: the ASEAN-ISIS network's ASEAN People's Assembly (APA), the ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC), and the ASEAN People's Forum (APF), now merged into ACSC/APF.

There is a need for a social presence that can ensure that the voices of people are heard when the next roadmap of ASEAN will be drawn. CSOs are important for the development of society and play a vital role in making important link between the government and people as the outreach and people connectivity of CSOs is way more than any other sector. A new strategy is required for people to people regional integration to achieve a genuine connection and beyond state agendas and to develop a new narrative and guide to action in the fight for social and ecological justice. While the review of CSO engagement done by APF, inferred that the level of commitment of ASEAN is perceive to be only on the level of rhetoric and not as intentional, owing to the fact that enabling environment are not present to facilitate people participation.



Source: THE ASEAN POST (<https://theaseanpost.com/article/empowering-civil-society-asean>)

There have been few new strategies developed by the APF with regard to issues faced by CSOs, to make ASEAN more inclusive as a regional grouping. The preference to be given to a more people-centric agenda providing an increased space for public participation in decision making of ASEAN as well as adopting international standards in labor, human rights and refugee laws.

Despite the overwhelming challenges, CSOs, academic institutions and think tanks should not push back the importance of a more proactive participation and continue to work at the national as well as at the regional level to ensure civil society becomes an integral part of the future of ASEAN.

Instead of ambitious proposals at summit level, ASEAN requires a more effective method which can be the engagement with CSO at the functional and sectoral level. ASEAN bodies and relevant CSOs have taken concrete steps to help provide an enabling environment for significant and productive engagement to promote human development and their security in the region. They both have taken up initiatives in the field which ranges from disaster relief to education, human rights to social welfare. This approach may not be eye-catching but has proven to be more rewarding on the ground, in addition to building trust and raising comfort levels between both sides.

The challenge against which ASEAN is standing is to change the prevailing mindsets on both sides, member states and CSOs, to build positive and productive partnerships towards a people-centered and people-oriented regional organization. There are differences between governments and civil society that's why therein lies the rationale for political spaces like the interface. At present, a sense of openness and willingness to understand and respect each other's roles, importance and constraints is needed. Another challenge is ASEAN's institutional constraints in producing a timely action oriented response for the critical problems among countries like US has become a source of disappointment. ASEAN's challenge is how to respond to US concerns without affecting the China. Further, ASEAN is majorly dependent on the regional dynamics i.e. the degree of friendliness (or lack) between the great powers, which are China-US, China-Japan and China-India, the three main bilateral relations in Asia. If the relations among these powers deteriorate then ASEAN would be in a very uncomfortable position and might even have to choose one over another.

Moreover, the Inter-state disputes and tensions within ASEAN have not disappeared. The sources of internal conflicts in ASEAN include the lack of fit between the territorial boundaries of the modern "nation-states" and the ethnic composition of the populations; struggle for regime survival and demands for political change against authoritarian regimes. For instance: the land boundary dispute between Thailand and Cambodia has produced military clashes and seriously challenges ASEAN's claim to be a security community.

ASEAN should look at such challenges in order to grow and grab the opportunities the cooperation will provide. For example: it has been observed that civil society organizations have been asked to mobilize the resources for the issues of ASEAN and have been doing through existing processes such as APF and ASCS, thus opportunity for expansion of existing processes. Instead of having a whole new process developed to improve the engagement of civil society among ASEAN, the process could be expanded and strengthened which involves interaction with ASEAN officials during the ASEAN meeting. This process can be leveraged to create a better platform for CSO-ASEAN dialogue to occur.

Another example is strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat, CSOs are enthusiastic and ready to participate in community building but however, there are organizational issues such as high staff turnover and language barriers in ASEAN Secretariat which needs to be looked. The ASEC has no guidelines for communications, involvement mechanisms, no structured process for consultation with regard to civil society organizations. However, there have been improvements in the communication between CSOs and the ASEAN Secretariat but CSOs as a recognized entity within ASEAN processes should be put in place. Further, there are many issues that hinder the CSOs starting from coordinating problems among themselves regionally or the limitedness of institutional capacities. Thus, there is a need for improving CSO's co-ordination, capacity through the opportunity of partnership with other actors, external relations as well each other through sharing of experiences and learning at a platform provided by such cooperation for CSOs.

While there seemed to be poor involvement of national CSOs in ASEAN or on related issues. Civil society organizations are growing at national and regional level but few challenges that hinder that growth at country's level. Further, observing the ASEAN's member countries, CSOs in many countries worked in difficult conditions such as a new administration in the Philippines that has been accused of numerous human rights violations, the paralyzing loss of the world's longest reigning monarch in Thailand, increased religious fundamentalism in Indonesia and oppression of human rights defenders in Cambodia. However, CSOs have never failed to make vital contributions to national development.

Thus, analyzing the position of CSOs of member countries is equally important to understand the overall picture not only at global ASEAN level but at individual country level as well. The CSOs of ASEAN member countries keep evolving but developments over the year show these member countries on different trajectories due to different geography, socio-political scenario, economy of the country and so on.

The presence of civil society organizations is necessary for implementing policy programmes not only for development but also to help government in their initiative. Thus, following are the numbers of CSOs present in the respective member countries of ASEAN, whether local/ governmental/ international or community based. Firstly, in **Brunei Darussalam** there are fewer CSOs compared to the rest of ASEAN, the total number of organizations listed under the Societies Act was 727 but they do network and collaborate in the regional and international arena. While in **Cambodia** a survey in 2006 indicated significant growth of the NGO sector with 1495 registered NANGOs and 337 INGOs (at the end of 2005). Also Cambodian NGOs are the employer of about 24,000 Cambodian staff and 1,200 international staff. However, the survey also suggested that many registered LNGOs were not significantly active, i.e. only 45 per cent of NANGOs and 93 per cent of registered INGOs were active.

If we look at **Indonesia**, the exact number of CSOs currently in operation is unknown because of the speedy growth of CSOs in the country. Although CSOs are obliged by a regulation to register with the Ministry of Home Affairs and for the record, the total number of CSOs registered with the Ministry in 2010 was around 9,000. While if we look at Laos the presence and social base for civil society organizations began to develop in late 1990s. International organizations and NPAs are most numerous and most relevant. More than 100 INGOs are active in Laos as well as up to 250

local and national NGOs (only very few of which are registered).

Malaysian civil society has emerged as vibrant in spite of restrictive conditions and helped to advance democratic governance and practices in the country. In 2007, the number of registered societies increased from 31,985 in 1980 to 58,738. Yet the large number of registered societies is misleading because many of them may be inactive and have to officially dissolve. In Myanmar, civil society



Source: *Civils Daily*

organizations have been persistent since British colonial period. The size of CSOs varies in **Myanmar** depending on their annual budget. Respondents' estimates of the total number of NANGOs in Myanmar ranged from 300 to 2000 and CBOs were estimated at about 214,000 in 2004.

In **Philippines**, civil society is described as one of the most developed in the region and the number of CSOs, registered and non-registered, is between 249,000 to 497,000. These CSOs were classified as non-stock corporations, people's organizations or CBOs, co-operatives and NGOs. Philippines CSOs have established pioneering and trail-blazing models in policy advocacy, government monitoring, development projects etc and self-regulatory mechanism for NGO accountability. In **Singapore**, much of the civil society landscape hinges on its relationship with the government. It would be in the long term interests of Singapore for the government to partner and allow civil society to grow in the changing global environment. If we look at the data, there were 7,111 societies listed under the Register of Societies in April 2010.

In **Thailand**, civil society organizations are considered part of organizational life. By networking and co-operating with local communities and people's organizations, CSOs have filled a vacuum created by the inability of government and social movements. The strengthening of Thai civil society is crucial for the fulfillment of democracy. According to NESAC, there were about 13,179 CSOs in 2011, both legally registered and non-registered. On the other hand, **Vietnam** is characterized by a low but increasing tolerance for autonomous civil activity with associations, although the emergence of civil society remains a politically sensitive issue in the country. There are no official statistics on the number of existing CBOs in Vietnam. Thousands of CBOs, including microfinance groups, credit co-operatives, credit and saving groups, etc are most concentrated in rural areas. At the local level,

these associations are registered under the local government and operate only in certain fields. It is estimated that there were 4157 associations operating at a local level in 2006.

On the legal front CSOs have been regulated and in some countries are controlled by laws and regulations. Starting with **Brunei Darussalam**, it is mandatory for every society and association to be registered. The registration can be refused by Registrar of Society or Commissioner of Police, even government can suspend the activities of a registered NGO if seems to be against public interest. Adoption of good governance by Brunei is an attempt to bring in stakeholders, beneficiaries and CSOs partners in development with mutual accountability, full commitment and respect. On the other hand, **Cambodia** reported deterioration in CSOs sustainability due to increase in restrictions on the sector. The government began to enforce the laws which restrict NGOs at national and regional level, such as legislations, directives, guidelines of obligations by local authority etc. Further in 2016 the working of NGOs particularly engaged in advocacy became more difficult as government strengthened its effort on scrutiny on CSOs, arresting activists, charging development workers and preventing demonstrations of the groups that condemned the government. In 2016, the Cambodian government began enforcing mandatory registration for the organizations.

While **Indonesian** CSOs have enjoyed increased civil liberties since 1998 yet they have faced various difficulties in registration process which is an expensive process that can take up to a year. The NGOs are generally weak in areas of accountability and transparency and rely majorly on foreign funds. Thus, diversification of resources and the enhancement of accountability and transparency are two main challenges. Further the mutual suspicion remains between the government and CSOs and the bargaining position in decision making of CSOs is still weak. The situation of CSOs (NPAs in **Laos**), to carry out the agenda most NPAs have to rely on foreign assistance for resources and capacities. While political change is not imminent in Laos, the emergence of a civil society is an important component of the contemporary transformation of the country. Civil society has plenty of challenges such as the registration procedure remains lengthy and arbitrary due to the nature of the Lao administration; there are no clear decision-making structures in the administration and the political bureau may alter the administrative guidelines any time, which implies that CSO that is legal today may be illegal tomorrow.

In **Malaysia**, civil society has surfaced despite of the legal and regulatory restrictions are imposed not only on constitutional framework but also through general legislations. CSOs face difficulty in getting legal registration under the Societies Act thus due to less stringent requirements they get registered as a business under the Companies Act 1965. Though Malaysian Constitution grants all citizens the political rights but these rights are not absolute as Article 10(2) also stipulates that the Parliament can impose restrictions on the freedom of speech, assembly and association as it deems necessary in the interest of national security thus limiting citizens' political rights. However, Malaysian state has not completely disregarded the contributions of CSOs and has brought about some positive changes in democratic participation in the society. But due to restrictive laws the currently more open democratic space is dependent on the authoritarian state rather than guaranteed by the actualization of substantive political rights.

In **Myanmar**, to support civil society it is important to strengthen trust between CSOs and various stakeholders, including government and donors. Promoting and bringing the simplified registration procedures for CSOs could be a useful first step in this direction, while it is also important to ensure

and protect the current independence of the organizations. Further, it is hoped that the role of civil society will be institutionalized and that ASEAN will be able to contribute positively to such participation.

In **Philippines**, there is concern of sustainability of organizations both in terms of human and financial resources. The problem of raising resources for CSOs has led to the decrease in the number of registered and operating CSOs over the past decade. Further, CSOs must register at multiple levels and moreover the organizations in Philippines are hampered by the absence of registration offices outside of major cities. Government and other stakeholders demand greater accountability from CSOs thus a need to address governance issues. Further, the legal environment in the Philippines further deteriorated as the new administration publicly attacked those critical of its methods; there have been instances that made CSOs concerned that government seeks to silence the oppose and might threaten civic space; for instance: the administration in the Philippines publicly denounced critics of its killings of the illegal drug users and dealers.

Singaporean CSOs operations are regulated by various legislations. In Article 14, the Constitution provides for the freedom of speech, assembly and association. However, in the very same article, there are restrictions to these freedoms, which provide a preview of the flavor of the legislation that governs the various spheres of civil society. Only non-specified societies i.e. those that vouch that their objectives bear no relation to political activity - enjoy automatic registration. Otherwise The Registrar of Societies retains the discretion to refuse registration to groups outside of that category. Further, there is a need to continue to build the capacity of CSOs in human resource management and training programmes to bring about a greater sense of professionalism for the non-profit sector.

Thai civil society is one of the most important agents of change, not only in the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy, but also in the consolidation of democracy. Also there were some improvements noted as well in registration. CSOs in Thailand reported that registration was easier and quicker than previous year. Thailand CSOs continues to have the weakest level of sustainability as Thailand remains under the rule of a military government that suppresses dissent, in 2016 the government appeared to exercise restraints on the freedoms of peaceful assembly and expression and to allow the media to cover sensitive issues more freely. Whether Thai CSOs can help in the achievement of a wider and deeper democratization of Thai society remains to be seen.

In **Vietnam**, civil society is still weak and limitations placed on CSOs, the state should endeavor to create favorable condition for CSOs in monitoring, critiquing and supporting the state institutions and representatives that are participating in the development process. Under the current legal framework, associations wishing to establish themselves and operate in Vietnam encounter many obstacles. Firstly, legal documents are poorly designed and do not meet the requirements of the organization, operation and management associations. Secondly, policies are poorly designed that are meant to encourage the participation of social work associations and inclusive of resolving complaints, and conflicts. Thirdly, regulations have not yet created favorable condition for citizens and organizations in forming and joining associations. Fourthly, the current legal framework does not adequately define the responsibilities and state agencies and ministries continue to struggle to manage associations and to facilitate their activities.

Concluding ASEAN is a platform for not only governments but civil society to share their thoughts and challenge the other which claims to represents the interest of public. Through the engagement

of civil society in ASEAN, not only at national or global level but at regional as well, ASEAN can expand its reach and cover majority of the themes through civil society. This can prompt a change in habits and outdated practices of civil society and can witness changes in the ASEAN community-building process.

ASEAN-Indian CSO Dialogue Engagement

The ASEAN's engagement with Civil Society Organizations has been vital to an enhanced Development Cooperation. Civil society's engagement at multilaterals has been important in bringing sustained change, transformative action and achieving inclusive development. Further, multilaterals such as United Nations, World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) have also played their part in providing an enabling environment for civil society participation on policy dialogue, critical assessment and evaluation that have provided evidence and inputs for facilitating transformative action.

The ASEAN's focus on sustainable development provides India's civil society to actively engage with the Government of India in contributing towards critical assessment of policies, projects and investments envisaged under the multilaterals. India's Civil Society Organization (CSOs) has the accessibility to the grassroots and claims effective data on social index that can amplify social impact of development cooperation initiatives. Over the years, CSOs have been engaged in India's development cooperation and participating in mechanisms that solicit experiences, inputs and data.

The India-ASEAN partnership require critical analysis by virtue of their development oriented approach with the need to cultivate awareness on the intent and objective analysis on the modalities of these initiatives.

- **Civil Society's role:** Indian CSOs are increasingly active and also have a great potential to enhance development cooperation of India. The civil societies have been raising and working towards domestic, political, social and economic issues. Furthermore, India has handled Development Cooperation through Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) which is relatively closed body to which NGOs have little access.

The role of civil society is a worldwide phenomenon to involve in dialogue with different stakeholders. There is a higher need to find a balance between environment and social issues and opening up of diverse window for regional development. The civil society perceptions are reflected in various thematic consultations of ASEAN and India.

- **Strategic Partnership:** The focus of India-ASEAN strategic partnership have been on evolving solutions towards sustainable development provides Civil Society's participation important especially since both envisions to build Asian solidarity and realizing South-South Cooperation. The India-ASEAN strategic partnership had opened up space for south-south cooperation to engage local staff and building capacity of experts in India which have promoted civil society activities and evidences for policy makers.

In regional security, the strategic role of India is still limited besides participating in the dialogue in the ASEAN forum and a few anti-piracy activities in the Malacca Straits, India is not considered a prominent player in the regional security architecture. The ASEAN-India partnership is very

complex as many member states have been disappointed that India continues to deliver below its potential in the region, especially compared to its dialogue partners.

- **Global Platform:** The global shift in thinking on development from growth led to sustainable process and talked about the formulations of different forum for associations. Multilateral formations are becoming order of the day. The summit oriented approach among the civil society is not very much sensitized as very few CSOs are aware about the multinationals and the need to engage with it. A small group of civil society organizations are engaged with multilaterals which provided peripheral and transient entry to the processes. The civil society events are too close to the main submits to influence the agenda for resolutions.
- **Policy & Advocacy:** By including a framework for engagements for monitoring implementation and impact on people of the different policies, system of engagement in each selected villages and feedback on implementations and inputs for new policy formulations. Further focusing on national level advocacies which will lead to collective interventions by the multilateral.
- **Brand Image:** The main concern of civil society organizations is to work on the branding of it from critical adversaries to creative partners. Developing a support structure by making permanent country-wise secretariats, multilateral hub and inclusion in national processes and multilateral platforms.
- **Ineffective Administrative Process:** Too much focus on its domestic politics at the cost of foreign politics and ineffective administrative processes. Although Indian leaders issue an open policy, yet ASEAN still feels that Indian bureaucratic system has not carried out this policy wholeheartedly. When Indian negotiators pay attention to a business transaction, they also put conditions for the implementation of the policy, including a long term modification for India. ASEAN is also puzzled at India's federal political system in which central and state governments often acted differently with regards to free trade agreements.
- **Economic Structure:** Economic structure at different level of openness in the economies of India and ASEAN. ASEAN's economies are often more open, more dependent on the import of raw materials and capital as commodity inputs, while Indian economy is mainly dependent on domestic resources. During negotiations of the India – ASEAN free trade area, rule of origin and import control list became a hindrance in the process. India is strict about product origin, requiring at least 40% of local products for export. While ASEAN just want to have about 40 products in the initial import control list of India, this list in fact contains up to 1414 sensitive products.
- **FDI Role's:** the role of foreign direct investment in India's economic development should have been more prominent. Indian Government's policies to attract foreign direct investment is rather limited and investors tend to focus on services and IT sectors which require less capital as compared to other production sectors.

Thus, there is a need to craft the new world for sustainable and peaceful working. Thus, ASEAN should promote constructive engagement with the government of different nations and should include local civil society organizations, which can be a common platform for knowledge and information sharing through packaging of issues. ASEAN should also focus on regional integration through the engagement of civil society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, India's partnership with ASEAN is not only an opportunity to create new networks and building relations with neighboring countries but also for greater economic integration. This partnership will also balance the power rivalries that are emerging and a way for peace, stability and prosperity in Asia-Pacific region.

As India and ASEAN embark on the next phase of their strategic partnership, various areas hold the promise of impact. First is to align existing and ambitious infrastructure goals as for India and ASEAN to realize the full potential of these infrastructure investments and trade agreements, addressing to reduce the non-tariff barriers will be crucial. Creating physical regional connectivity has been of specific interest to India and ASEAN countries. However, the lack of progress on infrastructure despite the government's fresh impetus, projects have created negative perception about India's ability to undertake and deliver on large projects.

Secondly, India and ASEAN stand to benefit substantially from the blue economy as a source of growth and employment. India and ASEAN should complement security initiatives in the Indian Ocean Region with collaborative efforts for ocean centered economic development. The idea of an open and free Indo-pacific has been articulated by India several times. The participation in the ASEAN-India and East India Summits symbolizes India's continued commitment to strengthen its engagement with ASEAN members and with the wider Indo-Pacific region. Thus, this would impart fresh momentum to New Delhi's growing partnership with ASEAN and East Asia Summit nations.

Thirdly, in the context of rapid technological change and digitalization, India and ASEAN must leverage existing institutional mechanisms to enhance inclusive growth and cyber security otherwise it may greatly increase the inequalities in incomes, digital access and opportunities. India and ASEAN should facilitate greater knowledge sharing and best practices in fostering inclusive growth. This should include ICT consultations between the private sector and government with a focus on broadband connectivity.

Fourth, Bilateral and multilateral approaches need to be enhanced to increase the mobility of workers. ASEAN and India stand to benefit significantly from increased migration. Policies must aim to fill skills-gaps and address skills mismatches, address employment gaps and over-supply, and ensure the well-being and safety of workers while abroad. The influence of commerce and connectivity remains vital to enhance bilateral ties. Greater flow of goods, services, skilled workers and investments are expected to only strengthen this relationship.

Finally, Apart from the above challenges of infrastructure, economic, technological, digital divide etc; there are other issues that ASEAN and India has to cater: starting with disconnect between CSOs and Government; increasingly uncertain geopolitical and security architecture in the region; developing institutional framework; to keep up with regional contemporary challenges etc. But these challenges have to provide immense opportunities for collaboration and India and ASEAN have proven to be fitting partners for addressing these pressing challenges through: including local

civil society organization, collaborative research, capacity building and training programmes in the areas of poverty eradication and fostering gender equalities, climate change and other social issues; inclusive growth; Make in India; infrastructure development; innovation and skill set enhancement.

There is a need to include civil society in ASEAN as the cooperation will benefit both ASEAN and civil society. The issues of civil society regarding policy, framework, civil space etc can be addressed and learning can be done through sharing at such platform and ASEAN on the other hand should not only look at CSOs at national level but also at regional level which will strengthen its regional ties and penetrate more through the engagement with regional civil society. Further, India has also started exploring various facets of development cooperation through FIDC which also bridged the gap between civil society and government.

Digital connectivity is another important area of cooperation and can shape people to people connection for future. India's Aadhar system creates many new opportunities to harmonize India-ASEAN Fintech program or connect e-payment systems. ASEAN also looks forward to boost our physical connectivity including the ASEAN-India Air Transport Agreement. This will enhance the people to people flows across the regions and help India & ASEAN to tap on the new and emerging markets especially business, investment and tourism. Also our people will greatly benefit from greater land, air and maritime connectivity through India's effort to improve physical connectivity and to promote infrastructure connectivity with ASEAN.

Further, it has been found that such endeavors unleash a dynamic process that creates positive developmental pressures on forging better linkages between India and ASEAN. Other areas of collaboration between India and ASEAN include improving connectivity network, cooperation in SME sector in CLMV region, cooperation in ITES and developing stronger linkages with investment promotion agencies in the region.

The next phase of collaboration is a chance to chart new paths for the region and assert the potential of India-ASEAN's influential partnership. It is in context of a rapidly changing world and with ASEAN integration, we need to look closer at our respective foreign policies and to develop an intra-ASEAN debate as to where ASEAN is going to go in future.

References

1. Asian Development Bank (2017), *Asian Development Outlook 2017 Update: Sustaining Development through Public-Private Partnership*.
2. ASEAN, *ASEAN Economic Integration Brief, 2017*.
3. Research and Information System for Developing Countries (2012), *ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership: Perspectives from the ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks*.
4. Kumari. I, (2016), *Effect of ASEAN on SAARC: The Perspective of Trade*.
5. Ministry of External Affairs (2017), *ASEAN-India Relations, Foreign Relations, MEA*.
6. *Memorandum of Understanding*, The ASEAN Secretariat and Asian Development Bank.
7. Asian Development Bank (2016), *ASEAN-ADB Cooperation toward the ASEAN Community: Advancing Integration and Sustainable Development in Southeast Asia*.
8. ASEAN (2018), *A Resilient and Innovative ASEAN Community: Annual Report 2017-18*.
9. ASEAN (2008), *The ASEAN Charter*.
10. Sen, R, (May, 2004), *ASEAN India Economic Relation: Current Status and Future Prospect*, Economic and Political Weekly.
11. ASEAN, (2017), *Overview of ASEAN-SAARC Cooperation*. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/DONEOverview-ASEAN-SAARC-as-of-Oct-2017-fn.pdf>
12. *An overview of ASEAN-UN Cooperation*, ASEAN Secretariat Information Paper, August 2017.
13. *SME Policy Index: ASEAN2018 Boosting Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264305328-en>
14. De. P;Ghatak. S &Kumarasamy. D, (2018), *Assessing Economic Impacts of Connectivity Corridors: An Empirical Investigation*, Research and Information System for Developing Countries and ASEAN-India Centre at RIS.
15. Kaur. S, *India-ASEAN @ 25*, NITI Aayog. https://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/document_publication/Blog_IndiaASEAN%4025.pdf
16. *Delhi Declaration of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit to Mark the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations, 2018*.
17. *ASEAN-India Economic Relations: Opportunities and Challenges (Proceedings of Third Roundtable on ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks (AINTT))*, Research and Information System for Developing Countries and ASEAN-India Centre at RIS , August 2014.
18. *Complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: A Framework for Action*, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), 2017.
19. Karmakar, S. (2005), *India-ASEAN Cooperation in Services: An Overview*, Working Paper, No. 176, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), New Delhi.
20. Olsen. S, *ASEAN Community and the Sustainable Development Goals: Positioning Sustainability at the Heart of Regional Integration*, July 2015.
21. Chapman. T, *ASEAN and India: Five for the Next Five*, ORF Special Report, January 2018.
22. *Overview ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations*, July 2018.
23. *Strengthening ASEAN-India Partnership: Trends and Future Prospects*, Export-Import Bank of India, January 2018.

24. Tadem. E, *New Perspectives on Civil Society Engagement with ASEAN*, Heinrich Boll Stiftung, The Green Political Foundation, August 2017.
25. Gnanasagarran. A, *Empowering Civil Society in ASEAN*, The ASEAN Post, 20 May 2018.
26. *To Solve Regional Problems ASEAN Should Include Communities*, The Conversation, 15 September 2017.
27. *ASEAN Work To Counter Social, Cultural Challenges at Root*, The Voice of Vietnam (VOV), 24 May 2018.
28. Rajagopalan. R, *ASEAN-India Convergence: The Geostrategic Realities*, Observer Research Foundation, 6 February 2018.
29. Tandon. H, *Brief on ASEAN-India Relations*, Indian Mission to ASEAN Jakarta,.
30. Mohan. A, *India and the ASEAN: A Pivotal Relationship*, E-books, Ministry of External Affairs (Government of India), 8 October 2018.
31. *India-ASEAN Strategic Partnership*, Articles in Indian Media, Ministry of External Affairs (Government of India), 15th March 2005.
32. Noor. A, *A Greater Role for India in ASEAN*, Articles in Foreign Media, Ministry of External Affairs (Government of India), 29 April 2013.
33. *India-ASEAN Relations*, Ministry of External Affairs (Government of India), August 2018.
34. Khan. F & Sciortina. R, *ASEAN Governance: Is There A Role for Civil Society*, Heinrich Boll Stiftung, Southeast Asia, 20 October 2016.
35. ASEAN, *ASEAN Engagement with Entities*, Jakarta, The ASEAN Secretariat, September 2016.
36. Thi Ha. H, *The Case of the Missing Civil Society Organizations CSO at the ASEAN Summit, a Commentary by Hoang Thi Ha*, ISEAS, 7 September 2016.
37. Abad. M.C., *Constructing the Social ASEAN by M. C. Abad Jr.*, ASEAN, June 2007.
38. Gnanasagaran. A, *ASEAN and India, a future rooted in the past*, The ASEAN Post, 13 January 2018.
39. Brende. B & Wood. J, *Can ASEAN Turn Disruption Into Opportunity*, The ASEAN Post, 6 September 2018.
40. Sinha. A, *What Is The Relationship between ASEAN and SAARC and their Impact on the Regional Power Balance*, Quora, 9 February 2016.
41. Peters. T, *Four Ways Regional Bodies Can Help Deliver Justice Commitments Made Through the SDGs*, The World Bank, 16 June 2016.
42. *PM's Statement at the UN Summit for the Adoption of Post-2015 Development Agenda*, NITI Aayog.
43. Voluntary National Review Report, *On the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals*, United Nations High Level Political Forum, Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform (UN), 2017.
44. "ASEAN-India poised for new synergy of robust cooperation and promising future": Lee HseinLoong; PM hails article by ASEAN Chair Singapore's PM, Mr. Lee HsienLoong, PIB, 25 January 2018.
45. *India Steps Up Climate Change Efforts*, World Watch Institute: Vision for a Sustainable World.
46. *OECD (2013), Southeast Asian Economic Outlook 2013: With Perspective on China and India*, OECD Publishing.
47. Government of India, National Action Plan on Climate Change, Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change.
48. ASEAN Secretariat, *Bridging the Developmental Gap among Members of ASEAN*, ASEAN, 2012.
49. *PM Modi Participates in ASEAN-India Breakfast Summit in Singapore*, The Hindu, 15 November 2018.
50. *"An ASEAN Community For All: Exploring the Scope of Civil Society Engagement"*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, November 2011.
51. *"2016 CSO Sustainability Index for Asia"*. United States Agency for International Development. 2016

LIST OF VANI PUBLICATIONS

- Sustainability in the Context of Indian Civil Society Organisations (English & Hindi)
- Financing Sustainable Development on Civil Perspective on AIIB (English)
- Study on Capacity Building and Need Assessment of Voluntary Organisations (English)
- Civic Charter in Indian Context (English & Hindi)
- Food Security and Agriculture (English & Hindi)
- India's Grants and Investment in Africa (English & Hindi)
- Poverty and Inequality on BRICS Nations (English & Hindi)
- Development and Approach of BRICS New Development Bank (English & Hindi)
- Towards Enabling Environment for the Voluntary Sector in India - A Study Report (English, Hindi & Assamee)
- Study on Implementation and Impact of Istanbul Principles in India (English)
- Financial Sector Reforms in India (English & Hindi)
- Self-Certification A Study Report (English)
- A Study Report on Three New Formations BIMSTEC, BBIN and Blue Economy (English & Hindi)
- Declaration for Responsible Governance & Management of VOs (Hindi & Hindi)
- Model Policy on Foreign Funding for Voluntary Organizations in India (English)
- Model Policy on Registration - A Study Report (English)
- Income Tax Act for The Voluntary Sector - A Study Report (English)
- India-Africa Partnership: A Civil Society Perspective (English)
- Development Finance and Cooperation in SSC with Special focus on India (English & Hindi)
- Status of Voluntary Organizations in Disturbed States - A Study Report (English & Hindi)
- Critical Review of Financial Inclusion - In G20 Countries with Focus on India (English & Hindi)
- Bringing People in from the Cold - Ensuring Inclusive Growth in India (English & Hindi)
- Corruption and Governance in India - Current Status and Way Forward (English & Hindi)
- Sustainable Development in India - Review and Way Forward (English & Hindi)
- Policy Brief of Revisiting the National Policy on Voluntary Sector and Need for A National Policy on Volunteering (English & Hindi)
- Enabling Environment of the Voluntary Sector in India A Study Report (English & Hindi)
- Status of the Voluntary Sector in India A Report (English)
- Civil Society Engagement in Aid Effectiveness Discourse (English)
- Changing Dynamics Between VOs and Private Sector (English)
- Involving Voluntary Organizations in Governments Plans and Projects (English)
- India's Global Footprints (English)
- India's Development Assistance: Trends, Challenges and Implications for CSOs
- India's Role in the G20: A Civil Society Approach (English)
- Model Policies for Internal Good Governance in Voluntary Organizations (English & Hindi)
- The Hand Book in Good Governance for the Voluntary Sector (English)
- Contribution and Challenges of Voluntary Organizations Working on Religious Minority A Primer of the Study Report (English & Hindi)
- Contribution and Challenges of Voluntary Organisations Working with Women A Primer of the Study Report (English & Hindi)
- Role and Contribution of Voluntary Organisations in Health & Nutrition A Primer of the Study Report (English & Hindi)
- Challenges of the Grassroots Voluntary Organisations A Primer of the Study Report (English & Hindi)
- Role and Contribution of Voluntary Organisations on Water & Sanitation A Primer of the Study Report (English & Hindi)
- Contribution and Challenges of Voluntary Organizations Working with Dalits A Primer of the Study Report (English & Hindi)
- Contribution of CSR on Thematic Issues of Education, Health and Nutrition, and Water and Sanitation A Primer of the Study Report (English & Hindi)
- Revisiting the National Policy on Voluntary Sector and Need for a National Policy on Volunteering (English & Hindi)
- Civil Society Accountability Principles and Practice (India Toolkit) (English)

About Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)

VANI is a national network of Indian Voluntary Development Organizations (VDOs). Currently VANI has 540 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.



VANI
Celebrating 30 years
VOICE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)

VANI HOUSE, 7, PSP Pocket,

Sector-8, Dwarka, New Delhi - 110 077

Phone: 011-49148610, 40391661, 40391663

Email: info@vaniindia.org Website: www.vaniindia.org