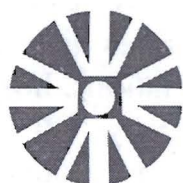


# STRATEGIC PLAN OF VANI

**2019-2022**



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](mailto:info@vaniindia.org)

Website: [www.vaniindia.org](http://www.vaniindia.org)

## STRENGTHENING VANI – THE VOICE OF INDIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

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. The gap between the demand for and supply of resources (both skilled human and financial) is widening. The negative image portrayal in the media is further adding to the woes. Thus, there is tremendous pressure on CSOs to 'do more with less'. Voluntary Organisations are expected to have higher order of internal accountability and offer enhanced impact and Value for Money, in a transparent and efficient manner. But, investments available for their internal capacity building and skill enhancement are negligible! Even the exact number of voluntary organisations is not known till date. A mapping exercise undertaken by Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in 2015, reported presence of around 3.1 million registered Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). However, the number has been questioned by the sector on grounds of being 'substantially over-estimated' (being based on archaic and ambiguous law that includes entities like religious institutions, educational institutions, resident welfare associations, hospitals and the like under the ambit of NGOs). Darpan, website set up by Niti Aayog enlists 77,077 NGOs while FCRA and Income Tax websites enlist around 24,384 and 214,149 respectively.

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.

### 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.

The organisation's **mission** is threefold:

As a platform promote voluntarism to create space for Voluntary Action

As a network bring convergence on common sectoral issues and build a national agenda of voluntary action; facilitate linkages for multiplier effect

Over the years through the following **services**, VANI has been the promoter, protector and collective voice for the voluntary sector:

- Influencing policies with Government, Donors, CSR, Media;
- Advisory on legal and regulatory requirements and internal management (FCRA, GST, Registration Laws, Governance);
- Capacity Building on institutional strengthening (governance, legal matters, compliances, fundraising, resilience building and so on) ;
- Research Studies (enabling environment, regulatory regime and implications, development assistance, governance, management etc.);
- Information dissemination (to CSOs, government, media, donors etc.);
- Fostering inter and intra sectoral linkages;

## **KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF VANI**

The Voluntary Development Organisations (VDOs) concentrate their efforts and time on serving the communities in their respective areas of operation, their own interests and needs therefore tend to get neglected. Thus, over the years, VANI has taken up the task of advocating for enabling environment thereby safeguarding interest and strengthening the capacity and standing of Indian Civil Society.

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.

On behalf of the sector VANI demanded major changes in FCRA Rules and relaxation in practices resulting in reduction in reporting requirement from bi-annual to once a year format.

For the very first time in the history of Indian Constitution, the Indian Voluntary Sector, through VANI, proposed the historic Alternative National Budget which was an unfathomed move amidst TINA (There is no alternative) campaign of the government. The Alternative National Budget was later acknowledged by the

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then Prime Minister of India Mr. P V Narisimha Rao in the parliament house of India.

VANI was closely associated with Planning Commission (an institution within the Government of India which formulated five-year plans to shape the economic development of the nation) to develop and disseminate the National Policy for the Voluntary Sector. With the help advocacy tools like face to face interactions, appeals, representations, memorandums to Prime Minister, Union Ministers, Member of Parliament, Leaders of Opposition Parties, Senior Level Bureaucrats,

VANI has been pursuing for sector friendly policies and interventions around the Income Tax Act, Finance Bill, Direct Tax Code Bill, Lokpal Bill and so on. VANI's successful advocacy initiative under Lokpal Bill resulted in relaxation in government's ask for personal information disclosure of governing board members and their family members is another landmark accomplishment.

In the area of internal system strengthening, VANI has been playing a critical role in building the internal capacities of the Indian VDOs.

VANI drafted its first Code of Conduct three decades back, when the Planning Commission expressed the need for drafting guidelines for regulating the Indian Voluntary sector. The organisation has thereafter been encouraging the voluntary sector to showcase the sectors strength by complying with law of the land. At the behest of the sector as well as the changing socio-political and economic landscape, VANI updated its Code on Conduct titled, 'Declaration of Responsible Governance and Management of Voluntary Organisations', in 2017. The updation was undertaken in a participatory manner and in line with Global Standard for CSO Accountability (an accountability initiative of which VANI has been a part along with eight other networks from across the Globe).

In the wake of changing regulatory requirements, VANI has been supporting its members and non-members through Workshops, Trainings, Consultations and so on. In 2015, the FCRA Act was amended with stricter requirements (penalty clauses in instance of non-compliance) and digitised. In order to prepare the sector for the changed rules, 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. Since India is a signatory to United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), VANI has been creating awareness among the Indian Civil Society (which are primarily issue focussed) to involve seriously in the monitoring of implementation of SDGs.

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

Networks like Forus (formerly known as International Forum for National Platforms (IFP), CIVICUS, Affiliation Group of National Associations (AGNA), Asia Development Alliance (ADA), Asia Democratic Network. It has partnered with International Civil Society Centre, Accountable Now and few other global networks to draft Global Standard for CSO Accountability.

VANI is the founding member of Forum for Indian Development Co-operation (FIDC) for exploring the various facets 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, Blue Economy.

## **STRATEGIC REVIEW PROCESS**

As the organization completed 30 years in 2018, a series of engagements with key stakeholders pointed towards a need to reflect on the way forward in the challenging times. Thus a focused brainstorming Consultation ‘Manthan: A dialogue towards Resilient and Vibrant Civil Society’ was organised, in May 2018, with select sector leaders and experts to introspect and chart out innovative, adaptive and trans-formative pathway, to ensure longevity, sustainability and resilience of the sector in general and VANI in particular. The participants, during the discussion, stressed on an urgent need to build a Collective Voice of the sector to fight the ‘fear’ and urged VANI to play the role of a leader and amplify that Voice. They welcomed the idea of formulating a revised strategy woven around the already existing four underpinned **core values of VANI – Justice, Equality, Dignity and Solidarity.**

Subsequently, a Task Force comprising select members of VANI’s Board, who are also Senior Sector leaders, was formed in May, 2018. The Task force held its first meeting in July and directed the secretariat to converse with various key stakeholders (including Activists, Traditional CSOs, Corporate, Media House and Social Movements) to understand the needs of the different stakeholders. Majority of the respondents contacted, vouched for VANI’s role as the voice for the sector. In addition, they envisioned VANI to play the critical role of Convener, Congregator and Aggregator.

They urged VANI to embrace a leadership style on the premise of relationship building characterised by openness, enhanced transparency, decentralized decision-making, active participation and collective action-oriented approach. In order to achieve maximum impact, they suggested VANI to operate with awareness, listen and cultivate its network. They recommended the network

model of finding where the conversations are happening and taking part rather than a broadcast approach.

Revised strategic document was shared and approved at VANI's National Convention and Annual General Body Meeting in September 2018.

## **REVISED MISSION**

In line with the changing times, after observing the feedback received during Manthan and the subsequent Governing Board Meeting, the Task force urged VANI to redefine its Mission statement to the following:

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

## **EMERGING ROLE OF VANI**

VANI aims to be the leader of the Indian Civil Society. The feedback received by VANI from its different stakeholders' points towards VANI performing the following role:

1. Voice / Amplifier to the voice of sector
2. Congregator for Collectivising the sector
3. Convenor
4. Aggregator

## **ROLE #1: VOICE/AMPLIFIER TO THE VOICE OF THE SECTOR**

India claims to be the largest democracy in the world. Government in an ideal democratic set-up is expected to allow, listen and respect alternate views. However, over the past few years, in India, like across the globe, instances of convenient side-lining and disregard for differing views have come to the fore. Thus, there is an urgent need for the sector to get together and put forth an amplified collective voice concerning the issues around organisational civil rights including that of forming association, assembly and freedom of expression. Thus VANI, being an apex body of Voluntary Organizations aims to become the Voice of the Indian Civil Society when it is threatened and work and win recognition.

In addition, on the demand of the sector, advocacy around Harmonization of Law is another issue that VANI aspires to undertake in the coming years. The legal framework which is applicable on CSOs is akin to the timeless adage of the elephant and blind men. We have many laws affecting us. While some of them have changed and others are still old and have outlived their lives. Most of these laws are scattered across various departments and states, and everyone looks at

them from their own vantage point. Eventually, this makes compliance complicated, confusing for CSOs. For example, Indian Societies Registration Act (1860), which is prime law under which majority of CSOs are registered, has variations across different states. Similarly, activities under the flagship projects of Indian Government are considered taxable under Income Tax or GST. Needless to say, the situation created by CSR and FCRA is complicated and geared differently in its application for local and foreign grants. During numerous consultations with experts, Chartered Accountants and CFOs, a need is expressed to seek a ground for harmony within the overall regulatory framework and bring these legislations under one rubric. VANI intends to undertake an in-depth analysis and recommend relevant changes to the concerned line departments and ministries. It is intended that we would like to form a taskforce to guide this comprehensive examination and subsequent processes within the scope of this endeavour. Therefore, the objective of this Roundtable is to identify key issues and form task force that will undertake a systematic analysis on the challenges and opportunities in Harmonizing the Sector's Regulatory Regime.

Since its inception, VANI has been advocating about the voluntary sector building its own credibility by showcasing compliance to the regulatory requirements and adopting accountable and transparent practices. VANI believes that trustworthiness built through self-regulation will address the overly excessive demand for monitoring of different stakeholders and give CSOs the space to demonstrate competence.

Building a positive public narrative of the voluntary sectors another major area which VANI aims to undertake. VANI shall create a repository of success stories best practices from within India and outside, to showcase contribution of the sector to different stakeholders. This shall ensure CSOs are seen as legitimate and credible actors in the public sphere and shall allow them to play a key role in supporting healthy democracy.

## **ROLE # 2: CONGREGATOR FOR COLLECTIVISING THE SECTOR**

One of the biggest weaknesses with the Indian Civil Society is superficial solidarity that it unites during times of adversity but falls apart as soon as there is a temporary win. This dilutes or at times even nullifies the long term positive impact, the collectiveness/movement could possibly create. Through certain changes in VANI's operational structure, which are explained later in the document, VANI intends to collectivize the sector at two levels – regional and national. It aims to promote leadership, bring together different organisations and bodies including CSOs, Activists, Thematic Groups, thought and sector leaders, thematic experts, social movements and groups, corporate foundations,

2

institutions. This shall strengthen the power of people to organise, mobilise and take collective action.

In order to collectivise the sector, at national level, VANI has set up specialised Forums like the CEO or Leader Forum, CFO Forum and Women Leadership Forum at both National and Regional levels, to bring people together on a common platform.

### **CEO/Leadership Forum**

It is an umbrella body for the Chief Executives and senior sector leaders of the Indian Civil Society. The key purpose of the Forum is to facilitate interaction and cooperation across the full range issues around regulation, governance, sustainability, way forward and so on. The objective of the CEO/Leadership Forum is:

- Encouraging, facilitating and promoting good practice with respect to the management and service delivery;
- Providing for the ongoing association of the Chief Executive Officers CSOs;
- Advise to VANI on various issues;
- Being constituted as an interagency forum within which Chief Executive Officers, other key officials and decision-makers can explore, develop and support new ideas and effective programme delivery;
- Facilitating and providing for the discussion of public policy issues and encouraging fresh thinking and innovation;
- Commissioning research into and study of matters relating to governance, funding, organization, management, operation;
- Encouraging, facilitating and supporting effective communication, collaboration and joint working between different entities to improve and develop mechanisms;
- Encouraging, promoting, supporting and otherwise provide for the development of those in senior executive and non-executive positions who lead and direct work;
- Bringing together and co-ordinating the efforts of groups, organizations, companies and individuals concerned or interested in the attainment of the Chief Executives' Forum.

### **CFO Forum**

The CFO Forum is a high-level discussion group formed and attended by the Chief Financial Officers of Indian Civil Society with the aim to influence development of financial reporting, value based reporting, dialogues & technical support on drafting government petitions and related regulatory developments for Indian CSOs. The Forum provides a platform and opportunity for CFOs and



controllers to exchange ideas freely, dissect problems and discuss important issues with peers.

In February, 2018 VANI along with HelpAge India hosted a conversation on building sectoral resilience through internal system strengthening. The conversation was weaved around analysing the current fiscal realities facing the sector in the wake of systematic attempts to squeeze the sector financially. The dialogue aimed to examine Strategic Financial Management as a transformational process, to improve long term financial resilience and enable choices for an enhanced impact within organizations. It was well appreciated by the participants. VANI aims to solicit your views further on taking this extremely critical issue forward towards a vibrant, resilient and healthy civil society.

### **Women Leadership Forum**

The Women's Leadership Initiative (WLI) was ideated in 2017 to address the issue of lack of presence of women at leadership positions (as CEOs and Members of Governing Board) in the Indian Civil Society. The Initiative offers female senior managers working in Civil Society Organisations a unique opportunity to develop their leadership potential and improve crucial networking skills. Programme is designed to address three main objectives: 1. To provide opportunities for senior women to develop themselves as leaders, to enhance their visibility and to enable them to network and influence the wider external environment. 2. To increase the number of women progressing to higher level management positions. 3. To increase the representation of women in senior positions, particularly at chief executive level and in boards.

### **Collective Communication Campaign (CCC) Forum**

VANI has recently set up a Collective Communication Campaign (CCC) Forum of Communication experts from the sector. The objective of the forum is to prepare strong case studies which shall be collated in a repository set up by VANI.

### **ROLE # 3: CONVENOR**

VANI firmly believes in healthy society, where people have multiple opportunities to come together, participate, deliberate and act for common good. VANI has been and shall continue to provide multi sectoral platform for dialogue to key stakeholders by way of holding, facilitating and organising Consultations, Conclaves, Workshops, Trainings, formal and informal Discussions. These shall range on themes on which VANI already has an established expertise like governance, compliances, accountability, transparency, and fundraising. Under the new strategy, VANI shall complement range of partnerships at global,

national or local levels with CSOs, government, corporate donors and institutions to co-convene and facilitate thematic/general consultations.

VANI shall undertake research on different issues, analyse and convene to generate and share knowledge and take action to strengthen the civil society.

#### **ROLE # 4 : AGGREGATOR**

VANI is a representative body of the voluntary sector, which is big and has diverse information needs. There is thus a need to provision voluntary organisation's with time saving solutions to meet their everyday operational needs and enhance their efficiencies and effectiveness. These information needs could be basic and simple like provision of name/s of credible voluntary organisation working on a particular thematic area or in a specific geography, reliable accreditation agency, monitoring and evaluation expert/s, academic and research organisations, media experts, thematic experts or credible agency providing services of professionals like Chartered Accountants, Legal or financial experts. The information could also be on theme-based studies. VANI therefore envisions to perform the role of an aggregator with the help of establishing a robust Information Hub to cater to the information needs of its multiple stakeholders and general public at large.

#### **SCOPE OF WORK**

The following three key areas have been identified by different stakeholders around which they would like VANI to work in future:

- A. ***Strengthening External Enabling Environment:*** This shall include promoting participation and collaboration between Government, Corporate and Voluntary Sector which shall bring in synergy in the work. It shall encourage knowledge sharing between diverse stakeholders. Analysis of social, economic and fiscal environment and regulatory policies concerning voluntary sector shall play a critical role in fulfilling the aim of achieving an enabling environment for the sector.
- B. ***Bolstering Voluntary Sector from Within:*** Activities under this area would include promoting Accountability, Transparency, Self-Regulation, Governance, Management within the sector. Strengthening internal policy framework, leadership and specialised skills to ensure resilience building and longevity of the voluntary organisations.
- C. ***Advancing Voluntary Sector through Public Engagement:*** This shall aim to build a positive narrative of the sector through effective documentation

8.

and dissemination of effective case studies showcasing the sector's contribution to social transformation. Through this area VANI wishes to address the information gap within and across sector by creation of a knowledge hub. VANI further wishes to promote collective and ethical use of traditional media to enhance visibility of the sector on national and international horizons.

## **PROPOSED FUTURE INTERVENTIONS**

This section will provide an outlay of proposed intervention under each of the three work areas enlisted above.

### **1. Strengthening External Enabling Environment of Voluntary Development Organization:**

- a) ***Harmonizing Regulatory Framework:*** To bring in the desired coherence amongst the different laws affecting the sector and enhanced compliance, VANI, as a Sub-Group Member, has been constantly holding debates for the need for synchronization of Law for 'Ease of doing Development Work' especially with Government of India's Think Tank i.e. Niti Aayog. The organisation shall create National Level Platform of experts and organisations take forward the deliberation, based on collected evidence to influence policy. Studies shall be undertaken on relevant '*contemporary hot topics*'. VANI shall develop a position papers to articulate all the gaps and dichotomies existing between rules, laws and suggest ways to draw a convergence.
- b) ***Promoting inter-sectoral linkages:*** VANI shall promote participation and collaboration between multiple stakeholders including Government, Corporate and VDOs. VANI shall foster linkages to bring in synergy, learning and sharing between diverse stakeholders. Joint Forums, bringing together CSOs-Corporate and Government will be created to create a collective force to attain social transformation. VANI has put in forth efforts to bring convergence in efforts through a common thread – Agenda 2030 (Sustainable Development Goals). It came out with a comprehensive report on SDG17 as a vehicle for promoting partnerships at the local and national level. VANI shall take forward this agenda of bringing together the three pillars in the coming years more strongly (given the fact that India presents its Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report at United Nations in 2020).
- c) ***Promoting Global Development:*** Premised on an effective and inclusive South-South Cooperation principles, VANI has

contextualized Civil Society inclusion in India's Development Cooperation, based on its seminal research- 'India's Global Footprints'. India's bilateral partnership in the South-Asian neighbourhood has been studied through a 'development lens'. VANI is a founder member of FIDC (a Ministry of External Affairs led forum) where it represents CSO aspirations. For meaningful representation of its members, VANI actively participates in global civil society alliances such as FORUS (global network of national platforms), CIVICUS (global network of CSOs) and Asia Development Alliance (network of Asian national platforms) and is part of European Commission's Policy Forum on Development and Partnership Forum. Bridging the gap in policy coherence between global regimes and Civil Society, VANI will work towards furthering Civil Society connect with G20, BRICS, Asian Infrastructure Bank and New Development Bank, to catalyze CSOs to become conscious actors to leverage their field experiences, community driven data, intimacy with ground-level challenges for supplementing efforts and narrowing development gaps.

## 2. Bolstering Voluntary Sector from within

- a) *Promoting accountability and transparency*: Recently VANI revised its 'Code of Conduct', that is based on indicators and accepted as first effort towards self-certification. Unfortunately, there is no agency recognized by private donors or government for this purpose. VANI will work with the Government to encourage development of a formal comprehensive self-certification mechanism. On a parallel front, VANI will digitise its membership portfolio with the help of a customised application. This shall enable prospective members to apply for membership online. They shall be able to sign the Code of Conduct document and assess their compliance to mandatory and desired indicators. This shall enable voluntary organisations to identify the areas of need and VANI to prepare capacity building interventions addressing those needs. The names of credible organisations shall be displayed on VANI's website, in order to connect them with prospective Corporate, individual and other donors. VANI is also a project partner in a Global Initiative which drafted Global Standard for CSO Accountability, which is based on the Dynamic Accountability approach. It encourages organisations to seek feedback from all its different stakeholders, work on it and go back to the stakeholders with the status update. This improves the efficiencies of organisations and helps build credibility. VANI has started and

shall continue building the capacities of Indian Civil Society on the need for adopting and internalising such practices.

- b) **Promoting compliance:** We live in challenging times when laws are becoming complicated and single act of non-compliance can attract heavy penal action. VANI will develop tools complemented with on-ground training to handhold organizations to be on the right side of law. VANI will also develop data base of trusted and competent experts at state and regional level who can provide on-site support to organizations.
- c) **Promoting resilience:** Most of the organizations are facing resource crunch due to frequent change in fiscal and regulatory policies. On one hand many large organizations have tuned their financial and management systems but numerous smaller organizations are facing the threat to their existence. VANI will create peer-learning opportunities by creating knowledge sharing platforms (webinars, face to face interactions) between large organizations and experts to build the capacities of small and grass-root level organizations and prevent the latter from trading-off their mission and objective for existence. E-Handbook on compliance shall also be developed to serve as a ready reckoner for organisations to refer to at their convenience.
- d) **Collectivization:** VANI shall take forward collectivisation of sector through regular meetings of the different specialised forums like CEO, CFO and Women Leaders. It shall strengthen its pre-existing state level independent networks in Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and North-East and encourage setting up of new state level networks in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh. For this VANI will identify committed leaders of the organizations to become state champions. Specific Terms of Reference entailing the desired role play by the state champions will be drafted. The role of state champions will be to disseminate information in their state and inform VANI secretariat in case of restrictive law or practice. The national office of VANI will arrange and facilitate technical support and documentation to run awareness generation campaigns in different states.
- e) **Dissemination and demystification of Information:** VANI strives to become the information resource center for the voluntary development sector. During next phase VANI will use digital and online methods to collect and disseminate information.

VANI will redesign its E-Newsletter, to include material and information which make it more useful for leaders, activists and people interested in the VDOs. VANI will also redesign its website to make it more informative and source of good VDOs.

- f) ***Taking forward the agenda of the Women Leaders Forum:*** The Women Leaders have met thrice since the forum was set up in February 2018. They have identified an action plan including mapping of women's presence (comprehensive qualitative as well as quantitative study) at all levels amongst the sector; encouraging adoption and implementation of Women Centric Policies and Mentoring of Second line of Leadership. Since the issue of women leadership has generated a lot of interest not only amongst the women leaders but even male led organisations, VANI intends to create regional level women forums to take up issues relating to women leadership at regional levels.

### 3. Advancing Voluntary Sector through Public Engagement

- a) ***Collective Communication Campaign:*** Through the recently set up Collective Communication Campaign (CCC) Forum, members shall be encouraged to prepare strong case studies (in the form of videos, print, blogs) which shall be collated into a repository set up by VANI. Digital and online methods will be used to collect and disseminate sector related information. VANI will redesign its E-Newsletter and website to make them an effective tool of communication.
- b) ***Positioning Narrative of the sector:*** It has been observed that the narrative of Voluntary Development sector amongst its stakeholders is influenced by the negative image portrayed by media. Stories of Struggle/Success do not reach the stakeholders either due to documentation amiss and/or its availability in a non-comprehensible language. A systematic campaign with legislatures, government, media and general public will be undertaken by the CCC Forum to make them aware about the sector. VANI shall launch a YouTube channel. Multiple toolkits will be developed to support organisations develop skills on use of traditional and contemporary media.
- c) ***Web-based information hub, Social Media and Traditional Media:*** VANI will create a comprehensive knowledge pool to be made available to VOs and external agencies to facilitate quick and effective flow of information. A forum of CSO and Journalists will

be created. Social and traditional media will be used to publicize this facility and to add to the knowledge pool.

## TOWARDS STRONG AND VIBRANT MEMBERSHIP

The current policy allows membership of VANI under three broad categories namely i) Organisations ii) Individuals iii) Associates. The services extended to all the members remains equal, with the only difference being the first two categories having voting rights to elect Governing Body which is not available to the members falling under the associate category.

Given the rapidly changing landscape of the sector, and emergence of new players like Social Movements, Community Based Organisations, Social Enterprises, CSR Foundations, liaison offices of international organisations into the foray, VANI has been advised by its different stakeholders to revise the membership policy to make it more inclusive.

The ideated new membership strategy rejigs the Members and Associates categories into the following sub-categories:

1. **Members:** The members shall reserve the right to participate in the governance of VANI by electing the governing board members, as per set procedures stated in VANI's Memorandum of Association, during the annually organised General Body Meeting. These shall include:

a) **Indian Voluntary Development Organisations (Indian VDOs):** These shall be Voluntary Development Organisations with an institutional base registered in India. Indian VDOs shall be further sub-classified in the following manner basis their annual turnover in the previous financial year:

Category	Turn Over (INR) in Previous Financial Year
Category 1	Less than 1 Crore
Category 2	01 Crore – 05 Crore
Category 3	05 Crore – 20 Crore
Category 4	Over 20 Crore

b) **Association:** This may be an alliance, coalition, consortium, confederation, co-operative, registered in India and shares the concerns and works with Indian Voluntary Organisations.

c) **Network:** This shall include registered network\* or group of voluntary development organisations working for social cause or theme at state/regional level within India.

d) **Individual:** These shall be individuals with record of voluntary action but not attached to any organisation at the time of registration.

\*VANI shall support strengthening of existing State Level Networks like Mahavan (Maharashtra), UPVAN (Uttar Pradesh), Chagvan (Chattisgarh), Jharvan (Jharkhand), Madhyavan (Madhya Pradesh) and the regional level network being formed in North East. Formation of such-like state networks shall be promoted in the other states for focussed state level initiatives and handholding for a stronger voluntary sector in the coming times.

2. **Associates:** These members shall have access to similar set of services provided to the members. However, associates shall NOT be entitled to participate in governance activities of VANI. They shall NOT be entitled to vote to elect the governing board of VANI, during the Annual General Meeting. The category shall include:
  1. **Liaison Offices:** These shall include branch offices of any foreign NGO/donor/grant making/ funding agency set up in India.
  2. **CSR Units:** These shall include Corporate Social Responsibility Departments or are a part of for-profit Companies or entities set up under the Indian Companies Act, 1956.
  3. **International NGOs (INGOs):** These are not-for-profit voluntary associations operating at international, transnational, or global level, with members or participants from many countries.
  4. **Multilateral Organisations:** These shall include organisations that obtain funds from different governments and spend it in development/social projects in different countries. These include organisations like European Union, UNDP and so on.
  5. **Academic, Research and Policy Analysis Institutions:** These shall include institutions like Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Ashoka University and so on, associated with voluntary organisations and engaged in academic



and social research and policy analysis on social transformation projects and regulatory framework.

6. ***Social Movements/Thematic Groups:*** These shall include like-minded non-registered social movements, thematic groups, coalitions, campaigns working on social causes.

## **FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

The current revenue model of VANI is primarily foreign funding dependent (with 97 percent of funds being project based raised from international donors). This constrains VANI from taking up independent initiatives expected by majority of its stakeholders, thereby creating feeling of disillusionment amongst them.

VANI was set up as a membership-based organisation. It was envisaged to be performing its activities towards ensuring an enabling environment of the voluntary sector with the fee remitted to it by its members. At time of its set up, the fee was fixed at INR 500 and INR 100 per annum respectively for the organisation and individual members respectively. The fee structure was revised in 2011 basis the restructuring of its membership categories and addition of "Associate" as a new category. The fee was revised to INR 1,500 (for small and medium organisations) and INR 2,500 (for large organisations) per annum and INR 1,000 and INR 500 per annum, for individuals and associates respectively.

Despite approximately 7.61 percent long term inflation rate, the fee structure of VANI has remained un-revised for the last eight years! Regardless of stagnant fee structure, over these years, VANI continued to upscale its services to its members with the funds the organisation managed to generate through various international and national level projects. However, the needs of the sector and their expectations from VANI have been growing continuously.

With increasing challenges in raising foreign funds due to stringent regulatory framework, extremely low revenue from domestic sources and constant increase in demand from members and voluntary organisations for enhanced services (both in terms of quantity and quality), advise and capacity building, there is an urgent need to VANI to review its funding strategy and focus on domestic sources (unrestricted funds) in order to enable VANI to provision services desired by the sector.

VANI's Byelaws (Rule III C (Subscription)) mentions, the members shall contribute a certain amount of fee to VANI either a) on an annual basis or b) on a long term basis, as decided by the Working Committee from time to time. Basis the discussion with the Working Committee, new strategy proposes to revise the financial support through the following four main sources:

## 1. Fee (Members and Associates)

The Members (with voting rights) shall be contributing an annual membership fee to VANI.

The proposed revised fee structure\* is as under:

### A. Members

Indian VDOs	Turn-Over Last Financial Year	Fee (INR)
Category 1	Less than 1 Cr.	3,000
Category 2	1 – 05 Cr.	5,000
Category 3	05-10 Cr.	7,000
Category 4	Over 20 Cr.	10,000
Associations, Networks, Foundations		5,000
Individuals		3,000

### B. Associates

Associates, who shall enjoy access to all VANI services provided to members but will not be eligible to participate in VANI's governance, shall contribute by way of annual Solidarity Fee.

Indian VDOs	Fee (INR)
Unregistered Entities/ Social Movements/Thematic Groups/ Coalitions	2,000
Liaison Office/CSR Units/ INGOs/ Multilateral Organisations/Academic, Research and Policy Analysis Institutions	10,000

Note: \*A nearest to 15% Annual Membership & Solidarity fee hike is suggested, for all above categories, to cover inflation costs and meet organisation's core expenses

## 2. Donations

Philanthropic Organisations, Institutional Donors, High Net-worth Individuals, Corporate with similar values and interests will be identified and approached, for exploring the possibility of support on a yearly (annual) basis. Appeal for donation shall be raised through various mediums including VANI's Publications, Website, crowd funding platforms and so on.

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### 3. Paid Services and Events

A separate entity entitled VANI Support/ VANI Service will be created to offer customised support to members (at subsidised rates) and non-members. The services offered under the package will be on a chargeable basis and shall include advisory services, proposal writing support, documentation related support and/or inter and intra sector linkages to various services. The aim of the entity will be to increase outreach as well as raise resources. Sponsored events (Theme based/non-theme based/felicitation ceremonies) shall be organised. In addition, participation fee-based capacity building educational (solo or joint) events shall be organised.

### 4. Projects Funding

As mentioned above, projects play a very important role in shaping VANI's activities as they are the primary source of funding for organisation's existence. Currently, they sustain the advocacy and governance related activities of VANI including funding support in VANI's Annual General Meeting, National Convention, research and other capacity building initiatives that VANI undertakes from time to time.

### CONCLUSION

The new strategy is aimed to make VANI more relevant to the sector and become self-reliant over a period. With the revised strategy, VANI is shall take up the role of steering the development path for the sector, as a leader. VANI shall address the issues of the sector in a free manner without the fear of feeling constrained due to donor defined interventions. It shall help build unified social sector as a brand and create strong inter-sectoral linkages with the government, corporate and civil society organisations.

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21. 2. 2020

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