

Study Report on Status of Civil Society Organisations in Himachal Pradesh



VANI
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VOICE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR



INDIVIDUALL MÄNNISKOHJÄLP
SWEDISH DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

Study Report on Status of Civil Society Organisations in Himachal Pradesh

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Preface

The number of CSOs, registered under the Societies Registration Act and Trusts Act in India, is overwhelming. On top of these, there are a large number of institutions at the grassroots level that are working without being lawfully registered under any of these acts. Such duplication of the voluntary sector has been recognized since a very long time in the country's history.

The role of this sector has even been recognized by the government at the policy level and the National Policy for Voluntary Sector, 2007 emphasizes on its legality as well. However, a CSO can be registered under any of the variety of acts available in our country, based on the scope of its activities. Despite the fact that several other legal provisions have been implemented in our country, regulating the civil society sector, including the right to income tax exemption, oblivious to the fact that which Act is the organisation registered under, still this sector remains ignored.

The plight of the CSOs in HP is no different than the rest of India's civil society sector. The countless efforts that have been made by the voluntary sector to ensure growth in the state's economy and development in the lives of the inhabitants of HP, have always been sidelined. The partnership between the government and the CSOs had also been dichotomous, just like the whole of India. This study focused on identifying challenges that were specific to the state, apart from the usual obstacles prevalent in the whole civil society sector.

VANI, being the voice of the civil society sector, has been working towards amplifying the needs of the sector since its initiation. As a part of the same initiative, VANI carried out this study, to explore the status of the CSOs in UK, vis a vis their relationship with the government, the corporate sector, fundraising and their understanding of Sustainable Development Goals. The issues raised through a number of in-depth interviews with CSOs in UK, helped understand the way forward for these organisations.

In the end, I would like to acknowledge and extend my gratitude to IM Swedish Development Partner for supporting this project. I would also like to thank my research team, Dr. Pallavi Rekhi, Programme Officer and Ms. Nivedita Datta, Programme Manager for compiling and editing the document, and for concluding the study.

Best Regards,

Harsh Jaitli

Chief Executive Officer

Abbreviations

HP	-	Himachal Pradesh
CSO	-	Civil Society Organisation
IM	-	Individuall Människohjälps Swedish Development Partner
MoHFW	-	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
HMIS	-	Health Management Information Systems
MoSPI	-	Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation
CMIE	-	Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
EoDB	-	Ease of Doing Business
CHAI	-	Catholic Health Association of India
MAMTA	-	Health Institute for Mother and Child
HPCC	-	Himachal Pradesh Congress Committee
VANI	-	Voluntary Action Network India
SDG	-	Sustainable Development Goal
SRS	-	Sample Registration Survey
FCRA	-	The Foreign Contribution Regulations Act
CSR	-	Corporate Social Responsibility

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Introduction

Himachal Pradesh is one of India's most picturesque states, known for its natural beauty consisting of valleys, snow-laden mountains, waterfalls, salt mountains, tea gardens and many famous religious places. The geography of HP is such, that it consists more of hilly regions than plains. This makes the daily lives of the inhabitants quite difficult. The total population of HP is 68.65 lakhs, out of which 61.76



lakhs constitute the rural population of the state ⁽¹⁾. With a total index score of 62.41, HP grabbed the sixth rank in health indicators, according to 'Health Index Report', 2017-18, published by MoHFW, Niti Aayog and The World Bank. In comparison with the other states of India, HP has been a 'front runner' in the overall progress in the health status. However, the incremental performance of HP itself, from 2015-16 to 2017-18 was only by 1.21. A decline was observed vis a vis most of the health indicators considered. ⁽²⁾

Indicator (Source of Data)	Overall Indicator Performance (2017-18)	Incremental Indicator Performance (From 2015-16 to 2017-18)
Neonatal Mortality Rate (SRS)	16	-3
Under- five Mortality Rate (SRS)	27	-6
Sex Ratio at Birth (SRS)	917	-7
Full Immunization Coverage (HMIS)	79.37	-15.85

As far as education is concerned, HP has shown considerable growth over the years. As per Niti Aayog's "School Education Quality Index", HP has managed an increase of 6.3% in the overall progress in education indicators, between 2015-16 to 2016-17 ⁽³⁾.

The data published by Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MoSPI), showcased an overall increase by 29.57% between 1991 and 2011, in literacy rates. It also highlights significant decline in the percentage of gap between female and male literacy rates over the last three decades, that can be observed in the tables below ⁽⁴⁾:

Literacy Rate in Last Three Decades									
State	1991			2001			2011		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
HP	52.1	75.4	63.9	67.4	85.4	76.5	75.9	89.5	82.8

Gap in the Literacy rates of Males and Females over decades					
State	Gender Gap			% Decline in Gap	
	1991	2001	2011	1991-2001	2001-2011
HP	23.2	17.9	13.6	22.8	24.1

As per the data released by Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), HP stands on the fifth highest position amongst other states in India, with an unemployment rate of 15.8% ⁽⁵⁾. The statistics of jobs created in private and public sectors remain below the national average. As per the 'Annual Area Employment Market Report- 2016-17', published by Government of HP, an increase of 5.3% was observed in the employment rate in the private sector between 2008-2017. While, in the employment rate in the government sector, a marginal increase of 0.76% was observed ⁽⁶⁾.

However, for majority of the employed individuals, agriculture still remains the main source of income and employment in the state. Over 71% of the population in HP is directly employed in agriculture. As agriculture accounts for less than 20% of the GDP, therefore, there is a pressing need to create alternative jobs opportunities in HP. ⁽⁷⁾

A large number of CSOs in HP, are playing a major role in overall development of the state. Therefore, these agencies must be capacitated and strengthened, both internally and externally. These organisations are the most important instrument for creating mass awareness, carrying out development activities in the most marginalized areas and advocating the needs of the community in front of the government. This makes it imperative to study the status of these organisations in general, and with respect to external factors, at the state level, and the relationship that they share with the other sectors. This would help in rapid and impactful growth of these organisations. This research study focuses on the current status of CSOs in HP, vis a vis its relationship with the government, CSR, local resource generation and SDGs.

Objectives

- To understand the status of CSOs of HP.
- To identify the various challenges faced by the CSOs of HP.
- To prepare a comprehensive document which could aid CSOs in states to undertake advocacy with different stakeholders.
- To understand the difference in perspectives of the donor organisations and CSOs.

Sampling

Randomized sampling- Data from a number of organisations was collected through in-depth interviews and an online questionnaire. The data from both the sources was analysed and reviewed to document the status of CSOs in HP. The data was collected from various organisations working on diverse themes, such as education, disaster management, livelihood, healthcare, environment, among others.

Methodology

For developing this study, VANI collected data mainly through desk research, using extensive secondary data by thorough reading and compilation from different sources (articles, reports, documents, websites). We also used primary data collected by VANI. The data received was cleaned, analysed and the interpretations were drawn. The study does not differentiate between CSOs on the basis of their size, thematic area of work and geographical location in HP.

Context

CSOs are organisations that are responsible for carrying out a wide range of activities for the benefit of the society and its people at large. The CSOs work towards ending the issues of the society and addressing the needs of its people. These organisations have always been a crucial support for the underprivileged, and a major catalyst for elevating the overall socio-economic status of the country.

HP has made significant progress in some spheres in the last decade. The state has been one of the top performers with respect to SDG 4, SDG 5 and SDG 11 (Quality Education, Gender Equality and Sustainable Cities and Communities)⁽⁸⁾. Apart from these, poverty has reduced, life expectancy has risen, literacy rate has increased, and marginalized communities have better access to drinking water and sanitation⁽⁹⁾. However, keeping in mind the vast demographic area of the state, and its cultural diversity, a large portion of its citizens are still deprived of the basic essentials for living. A large proportion of the people living in HP, still struggle to earn the basic requirements for living, including food and shelter⁽¹⁰⁾. Despite positive job growth, there are not enough jobs for the size of the working age population in HP⁽¹¹⁾. These figures are disturbing and highlight the wide gaps between intersectoral linkages and the absence of significant impact in

HP. The improvements made in the socio- economic status of the state, by the efforts of the government, have not been uniform across its demography. These gaps require to be filled, by improving the lives of the ones who need it the most. This is where the CSOs come into picture.

There are 595 CSOs in HP, registered on Niti Aayog's web portal 'Darpan' ⁽¹²⁾ and only a 119 CSOs in HP are registered under FCRA ⁽¹³⁾. The immense role of these organisations in the development of HP cannot be undermined. However, it is well known that the government's approach towards them has not been very positive. The civil society space has been shrinking due to the harsh amendments imposed by the government with respect to FCRA, income tax, and other laws. Nevertheless, in times of Covid- 19, it has been reassuring to see the CSOs and the government institutions work together to fight the pandemic. Post the lockdown, the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi, reached out to the lakhs of CSOs in the country through a video message, to join hands with the government in these tough times, to provide basic necessities to the marginalized, distributing medical and protective gears to the underprivileged, and creating mass awareness vis a vis the pandemic and social distancing. This was an excellent example of a good collaboration between the two sectors.

In HP, any CSO needs to be registered with the government under one of the following four Acts as per the Indian law:

Societies Registration Act, 1860

An Act for the registration of literary, scientific and charitable societies

Whereas it is expedient the provision should be made for improving the legal condition or societies established for the promotion of literature, science, or the fine arts, or for the diffusion of useful knowledge, I [the diffusion of political education], or for charitable purposes;

Comment: *Charitable purposes which came within the language and spirit of the statute of Elizabeth could be grouped into four heads, (i) relief of poverty, (ii) education, (iii) advancement of religion and (iv) other purposes beneficial to the community not coming under any of the preceding heads. The words in Act 21/1860 are, therefore, to be understood as including religious purposes also.*

It is enacted as follows:-

Societies formed by memorandum of association and registration

Any seven or more persons associated for any literary, scientific, or charitable purpose, or for any such purpose as is described in section 20 of this Act, may, by subscribing their names to a memorandum of association, and filing the same with Registrar of Joint-stock Companies form themselves into a society under this Act. (14)

Indian Trusts Act, 1882

An Act to define and amend the law relating to Private Trusts and Trustees.

Lawful purpose- A trust may be created for any lawful purpose. The purpose of a trust is lawful unless it is (a) forbidden by law, or (b) is of such a nature that, if permitted, it would defeat the

provisions of any law, or (c) is fraudulent, or (d) involves or implies injury to the person or property of another, or (e) the Court regards it as immoral or opposed to public policy. Every trust of which the purpose is unlawful is void. And where a trust is created for two purposes, of which one is lawful and the other unlawful, and the two purposes cannot be separated, the whole trust is void.⁽¹⁵⁾

Companies Act, 2013

Formation of company - (1) A company may be formed for any lawful purpose by - (a) seven or more persons, where the company to be formed is to be a public company; (b) two or more persons, where the company to be formed is to be a private company; or (c) one person, where the company to be formed is to be One Person Company that is to say, a private company, by subscribing their names or his name to a memorandum and complying with the requirements of this Act in respect of registration:

Provided that the memorandum of One Person Company shall indicate the name of the other person, with his prior written consent in the prescribed form, who shall, in the event of the subscriber's death or his incapacity to contract become the member of the company and the written consent of such person shall also be filed with the Registrar at the time of incorporation of the One Person Company along with its memorandum and articles:

Provided further that such other person may withdraw his consent in such manner as may be prescribed:

Provided also that the member of One Person Company may at any time change the name of such other person by giving notice in such manner as may be prescribed:

Provided also that it shall be the duty of the member of One Person Company to intimate the company the change, if any, in the name of the other person nominated by him by indicating in the memorandum or otherwise within such time and in such manner as may be prescribed, and the company shall intimate the Registrar any such change within such time and in such manner as may be prescribed:

Provided also that any such change in the name of the person shall not be deemed to be an alteration of the memorandum. (2) A company formed under sub-section (1) may be either— (a) a company limited by shares; or (b) a company limited by guarantee; or (c) an unlimited company.⁽¹⁶⁾

The HP Societies Registration Act, 2006

(AS ASSENTED TO BY THE GOVERNOR ON 20th OCTOBER 2006)

An Act to re-enact the law to provide for the registration and working of literary, scientific, educational, religious, charitable or other Societies in the State of HP and to repeal the Societies Registration Act, 1860 (XXI of 1860) in so far as it is applicable to the State of HP.

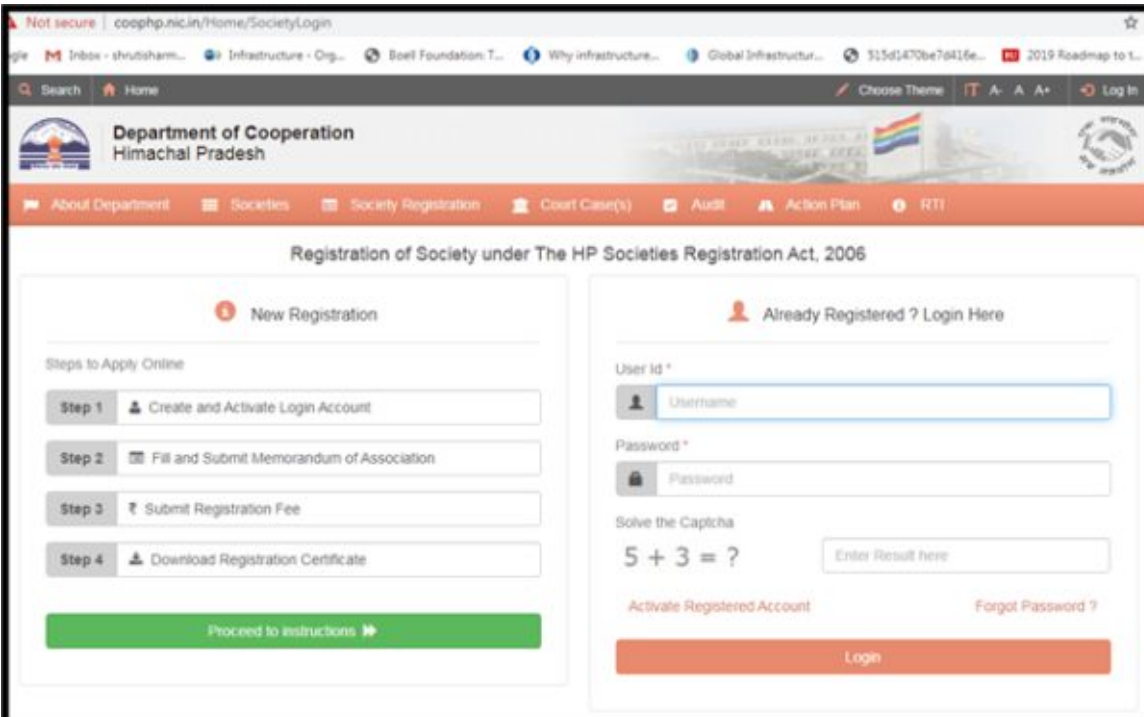
BE it enacted by the Legislative Assembly of HP Legislature in the Fifty seventh Year of the Republic of India, as follows:-

https://coophp.nic.in/Content/Act_2006.pdf

In 2019, the registration procedure for a CSO became digitized. To overcome challenges such as corruption, rigging and ambiguity, and to encourage transparency between the sectors, the process was made online. Every detail, such as data of previous meetings, financial aid taken from the government, number of board members and number of employees, became compulsory to be fed into the online system, to enable easy access and clarity.⁽¹⁷⁾

The website for the registration procedure is <https://coophp.nic.in/>. The following steps need to be followed for registration:

- A CSO needs to get registered within 21 days of commencement of activities. A new account must be created on the above mentioned website, in order to begin the process of registration. The registration form needs to be filled and submitted for the application to be reviewed. The registration form has been given below for your reference.⁽¹⁸⁾



On the designated website, a complete user manual for first time users has been uploaded and is easily accessible⁽¹⁹⁾. In addition, an elaborated document has been given to become familiar with the procedure and complete checklist for societies to get registered under the H.P. Societies Registration Act, 2006.

The procedure and checklist has been given below for your reference.⁽²⁰⁾

**PROCEDURE AND CHECKLIST FOR REGISTRATION OF SOCIETIES
UNDER H.P SOCIETIES REGISTRATION ACT, 2006**

PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION

- **Step-1:** Visit the official website of Department of Cooperation by clicking on below mentioned link
<http://admis.hp.nic.in/hpcoop/>
- **Step-2:** Now, navigate to "Society Registration" tab for applying online for society's registration under H.P Societies Registration Act, 2006.
- **Step-3:** Now, the applicant will create account for Charitable/NGO society by filling the mandatory details. Once the applicant is registered then can proceed further.
- **Step-4:** After successful creation of online account, applicant will be asked to submit the mandatory details (explained step by step in attached User Manual Guide) and uploading required scanned documents enlisted in checklist.
- **Step-5:** After submitting all required details, applicant can submit the application to the department. Once the application got approval from the department, applicant can further proceed to payment process for registration.
- Please find below the link illustrating step by step procedure from registration to submission of application to department. (**Help guideline for User**)

["Click to view User Manual"](#)

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PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION APPROVAL (DEPARTMENTAL)

- **Step-1:** Online Application will be received by **Registering Authority** (Cooperative Department Himachal Pradesh).
- **Step-2:** After scrutiny, the proposal file will be submitted to the Branch officer by the DA concerned.
- **Step-3:** After satisfaction of the Branch Officer, file will be submitted to the Registrar Cooperative Societies for accord of prior/ formal approval of registration.
- **Step-4:** File will be routed back to DA through the Branch Officer concerned with the remarks of Approved /Rejected.
- **Step-5:** Applicant will get an acknowledgment status on their registered email-id and mobile number.

In the event of approval, the society shall require to deposit the prescribed registration fee of Rs. 500/- in the Government treasury through e-challan, otherwise applicant will be asked to send response on the query raised by department. The challan in original will be submitted to the registering authority concerned for the purpose of reconciliation and audit by the Accountant General, H.P.
- **Step-6:** Applicant can finally download the approval certificate from the online portal.

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**CHECK-LIST FOR REGISTRATION OF SOCIETIES UNDER HIMACHAL
PRADESH SOCIETIES REGISTRATION ACT, 2006.**

The association of seven or more persons being members of different families intending to work for literary, scientific, educational, religious, charitable or other purposes eligible to contract under section 11 of the Indian contract Act, 1872 and desirous to be registered under the provisions of Himachal Pradesh, 2006 (Act No. 25 of 2006) and Rules made there-under shall require to submit memorandum of association alongwith following documents:-

1. Proposed name of the Society;
2. Objectives of the society as per section-1(3) of the Act;
3. Location & Head Office of the Society duly supported by some documentary proof such as electricity/water bill and declaration that the premises shown in the memorandum of association will be validly used by the society to operate its activities ;
4. Area of operation with full justification;
5. Name, age, addresses & occupation of the office bearers as well as subscribers to the memorandum of association as per format -I prescribed in the H.P. Societies Registration Rules, 2006 in duplicate as well as duly certified two copies of regulations of the proposed society necessarily narrating therein the following points :-

- Pre-requisites for admission as members ;
- the liability of members to fines and certain circumstances of forfeiture;
- the consequences of non-payment of any subscription or fine, the resignation and expulsion of members;
- the appointment and removal of staff and officers and their powers;
- the manner of electing and removing the governing body and the powers of such body;
- the time and place of annual general meeting and, its powers , special general meeting and other meetings of the society;
- the manner in which notice of such meetings may be given;
- the quorum necessary for the transaction of business at meetings of the society;

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- the manner of making altering and rescinding regulations of the society;
- the investments of funds, keeping of accounts and for an annual or periodical audit of accounts
- the manner of dissolving society
- the condition that the society will have neither profit motive nor its profit shall be distributed among members;
- Dissolution as per section-44;
- The determination after dissolution that property shall be utilized by the Government in the event of cancellation to the extent of grant might have received from the Government.
- supply of copy of bye-laws to all the members;
- legal proceedings;
- property of the society how vested
- authorization for joint banking operations;
- custodian of records;
- Such other matters as may be considered expedient having regard to the nature and objects of the society.

6. Resolution regarding adoption of Rule-Regulations/Bye-laws duly signed by all the promoter members;

7. Joint declaration of promoter members to the effect that the society shall perform only charitable & welfare activities and the members shall be liable/responsible for all the consequences concerning society etc;

8. Two Copies of memorandum of association in original signed by three authorized signatories, containing identity proof of all the promoter members such as Adhar card driving license, voter identity card, a copy of the proceedings of the first meeting. The signatures of the subscribers to the memorandum of association on format-I shall require to be witnessed by some person with his some documentary evidence;

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Although, the initial registration process for a new organisation might have become convenient, simple and more transparent, since it has become digital, but to get a renewal every five years is an added burden for the CSOs in HP. The participants complained how time consuming the process would be, and that their routine activities would suffer amidst the countless, unnecessary visits to the authority and fulfilling the added requirements .



Chapter I: CSOs in HP and the Government

The relationship between the CSOs and the government of India has been under the radar. On one hand, the relationship seems to be quite complicated, while on the other hand, the government has been immensely supportive and encouraging of the work that the CSOs have been doing, especially during the COVID- 19 crisis. If we look at the other side of the coin, the CSOs in HP raised concerns alleging the Government to be bureaucratic.

However, the civil society sector's relationship with the government has been dual in nature since a long time. Although, many of the CSOs work in collaboration with the government, on government led projects and programmes, but simultaneously, they are not in favour of certain government policies. Also, while they raise concerns regarding the government's terms and conditions, on the other hand, they are partially dependent on the government for financial support in the form of grants, among others. Even the policies adopted by the CSOs are taken from the government policies.

The same is true for the relationship between the CSOs in HP and the government. The following table depicts the year- wise percentage expenditure by the HP Government on providing grants-in-aid to the CSOs:⁽²¹⁾

Percentage Expenditure by HP Govt Towards Grants-in-aid and Contributions	
2009-2010	0.04%
2010-2011	0%
2011-2012	0%
2012-2013	6%
2013-2014	6%
2014-2015	7%
2015-2016	8%
2016-2017	9%
2017-2018	0.03%

The table above depicts a remarkable increase of 8.96% between 2009-10 to 2016-17, in the percentage expenditure made by the HP Government towards grants-in-aid and contributions towards social welfare. However, this percentage declined sharply between 2016-17 to 2017-18 by 8.97%. This depicts the unstable relationship between the government and the civil society

sector. The reason, however, is unknown. As a result, the CSOs in HP have been dealing with a lack of funds in the recent past and have been forced to explore other options for fund raising.

A few reasons for their rocky relationship might be the miscommunication and the trust deficit between them. However, the remarkable work done by the CSOs is acknowledged especially during the Covid-19 crisis and the government has also taken some steps that are in favour of the CSOs.

For instance, the HP government amended the quarantine norms in favour of the CSO workers, and others such as industrialists, factory owners and traders. The revised guidelines in the SOP stated that the management, in charge or head of any NGO or any charitable organisation, which has branches in the state, travels to HP in connection with its affairs or for an official meeting, for a short duration not exceeding 48 hours will be exempted from quarantine.⁽²²⁾

Certain steps taken by the government in the recent past to improve the welfare of people in HP are:

- An online monitoring system **"Him Pragti"** has been started for the monitoring of the welfare schemes, employment generation and Jan-Manch.
- **Mobile app facility** launched for anganwari centres.
- **"E-P.D.S." H.P. Mobile App** has been launched in the State to provide easily subsidised ration, monitor and ensure its quality to more than 70 lakh consumer of the State.
- **'Shakti Button App'** and **'Gudia helpline'** has been launched by Government of Himachal for the protection of women.
- To deal strongly with the forest, mining and drug mafia, **'Hoshiar Singh helpline'** 1090 has been started.
- **Him Care scheme** has been introduced in the state for those families which are not covered under Aayushman Bharat Yojna or any other health compensatory scheme. Under this scheme any family member admitted as an indoor patient in hospital, will get free treatment up to ` 5 lakh.
- **Nursery and KG classes** have been started in selected 3,391 schools of the State, in which 23,800 children have been enrolled, under this pre-primary programme.⁽²³⁾



Although a number of positive efforts have been observed from the government's side, towards building a healthy relationship with the CSOs, despite which according to the statistics given on the FCRA website, post the amendments made in the FCRA Act in 2014, the government's restraint on foreign funding of non-profit organisations has resulted in cancellation of registration of 97 CSOs in HP.⁽²⁴⁾

During the discussions with the CSOs in HP, regarding their sweet and sour relationship with the

government, the following observations were made:

- Inclusiveness was found to be one of the major challenges that the CSOs complained of, with respect to the government. They felt that the government does not think highly of the civil society sector and does not include the CSOs in HP in decision making processes. The government does not include the CSOs in the strategies and schemes being adopted in the state for its development. However, building a joint partnership and executing the plans will be beneficial for the government, in terms of increased manpower, and for the CSOs, in terms of opportunity to gain recognition.
- Effective communication with the government also emerged as one of the major lacunae in building a strong relationship between the two sectors. Due to the inferior networking skills of CSO workers in HP, they are unable to reach out to potential government funders and seek collaboration. They struggle continuously to increase their visibility in front of the government and in society. This might be due to the absence of a qualified communications or marketing team, to take such initiatives forward. This is where they lose out on opportunities to work with the government.
- Corruption in the system at every level, was another issue that the CSOs in HP highlighted. It affects these organisations at every step, for example, while getting the registration done. These extra and non-justifiable expenses lead to major disbalance in financial management.
- The CSOs in HP, specially the grass roots ones, expressed their concern regarding the different laws relevant to the voluntary sector. The constant amendments and stricter regulations have left them in a dilemma, as to what exactly needs to be done. Moreover, most of them have to seek help from experts, within or outside the sector, to understand the requirements to be fulfilled. This acts as an added burden to their existing challenges, already being dealt with.
- Decreasing support from the government in terms of the availability of funds, in the form of grants, emerged as another major concern of the CSOs. The shrinking workspace of the civil society sector has coerced the CSOs to explore newer options for raising funds, as the government seems to be holding back their support towards the social sector. In addition, as a result of the PM Care Fund, now in the picture, all the possible funding is going there, leaving the CSOs empty handed.



Despite the adoption of such varied efforts by the government in the direction of development and growth, the implementation and execution remain poor. According to the interviewees, the inadequate monitoring system, steps resulting in shrinking civil society space and the lack of a strong partnership with the CSOs that represent the people of the state, are the reasons for the below par outcomes of the efforts made. Therefore, the need for strengthening the partnership between these two sectors is of extreme importance.



Chapter II: CSOs in HP and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

HP provides specific policies for separate sectors like, The HP Industrial Investment Policy, 2019⁽²⁵⁾, Biotechnology Policy of HP⁽²⁶⁾, and others. These policies are adopted in order to effective instrument to enhance the interest of investors and induce industrial development. In addition to these, HP government has also adopted certain reforms in the recent past, in order to boost the flow of investments in the state. For instance, The Government has introduced “Self-Certification Scheme” under various Labour Laws, to liberalize the enforcement of Labour Laws under the concept of Self-Regulatory Mechanism without compromising the safety, health, social security and welfare of the workers. It also gives some exemption to 'New Start-Ups'. Apart from this, the Government has permitted employment of women workers in factories in 3 shifts including night shifts subject to certain conditions⁽²⁷⁾. The government has undertaken more such reforms to facilitate EoDB⁽²⁸⁾.

HP is well connected with its neighbouring States. The total length of national highways in HP is approximately 2,600 kms. These serve as the backbone of the economy of the state.⁽²⁹⁾ The large number of mountains and rivers flowing in HP, contribute to its huge reserve of water, making it a pioneer state for hydroelectricity generation⁽³⁰⁾. The pristine beauty of HP serves as a favourable investment opportunity for tourism. The fact that India is pre- dominantly an agrarian country, where 58% of the population depends on agriculture as their primary source of livelihood, HP contributes as one of the largest producer of fruits in the country. This makes it an appropriate site for the food industry as well⁽³¹⁾.

Talking about the amount of CSR funds invested in HP on various districts, following is a table depicting the yearly expenditure.

Year-wise CSR Expenditure in HP ⁽³²⁾	
FY 2014-2015	10.94 CR
FY 2015-2016	52.28 CR
FY 2016-2017	24.03 CR
FY 2017-2018	60.52 CR
FY 2018-2019	79.97 CR

The table suggests a considerable jump in the average CSR expenditure in HP on a yearly basis. Despite these numbers, the grass roots CSOs of HP shared their disappointment regarding the disinterest shown by the corporates in funding them. According to the interviewees, the companies invest in either the CSOs with a wider reach, or foundations started under their own

banner. Through this study, we aimed at identifying the challenges faced by CSOs with respect to CSR in HP.

The following table shows the number of companies that invested in HP and the number of districts that were covered:

Companies investing in different districts of HP per year⁽³³⁾		
Financial Year	No. of Companies	No. of Districts Covered (Out of 12)
FY 2014-2015	52	8
FY 2015-2016	96	9
FY 2016-2017	103	10
FY 2017-2018	95	6
FY 2018-2019	109	9

- Though there has been a considerable increase over the years in the CSR expenditure on the districts of HP, not all the districts have been able to get the benefits till date.
- Out of the districts covered over the years under CSR for overall development of these districts, Solan had been the hub for investment from 2014-15 to 2017-18. However, in 2018-19, Kinnaur grabbed the maximum CSR investments.
- Majority of the resources were invested in Education, Healthcare, Rural Development, Environmental Sustainability, and Sanitation sectors.
- The corporates that emerged as prominent funding agencies in these five financial years were Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd., Fresenius Kabi Oncology Limited, SJVN Limited, Eicher Motors Limited, Relax Pharmaceuticals Private Limited, Delhi International Airport Limited, JSW Energy Limited, Container Corporation Of India Limited, USY Private Limited, Amway India Enterprises Private Limited, Emerald Haven Realty Limited, Ajanta Pharma Limited, Innovsource Private Limited, and Mediforce Healthcare Private Limited. (34)

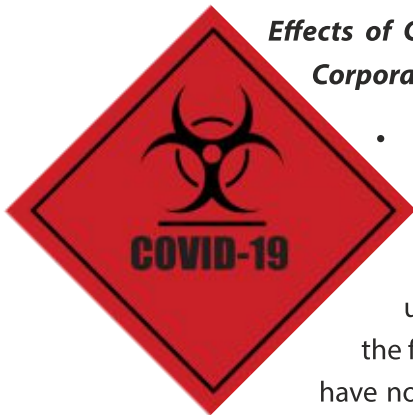
The above mentioned figures suggest major investments and developments in HP. However, the CSOs in HP indicated lack of interest in grass roots organisations and trust deficit. This exploratory study was an effort towards understanding the disconnect between the two and aimed at identifying the gap areas and further document them to be effectively used for advocacy with the government.

The in-depth interviews conducted by VANI indicated the following:

- A major trust deficit was observed as one of the major reasons for disinterest from the corporates towards grass roots CSOs in the state. The data suggested that preference is given

to the either the CSOs that have a wider presence, or the CSR money is invested in registered foundations under their own banner. The smaller organisations hold a negligible chance to be funded by CSR groups in HP.

- Poor communication skills act as another reason for the weak partnership that the voluntary sector and the corporate sector have. The CSOs in HP are not capacitated with respect to efficient use of media, building networks and alliances and communicating effectively. As a result, they often miss out on opportunities of collaborating with potential CSR donors.



Effects of COVID- 19 on the Relationship Between CSOs in HP and Corporate Funders

- Management of existing financial resources was made difficult as a result of the pandemic. One of the respondents from a donor organisation mentioned that diversion of the CSR funding towards Covid- 19 has definitely affected their usual activities to a great extent. The CSOs in HP complain that the funds allocated for performing activities under their mandate, have now been asked to be used towards providing Covid-19 relief.

The CSOs were left with no other choice but to comply with the instructions given by the funding agencies.

In a state like HP, that offers a wide range of investment opportunities for the corporates to expand their business, and a large number of CSOs to invest in manpower and community engagement, a void in the partnership between the two sectors was observed. Post Covid- 19, the narrative around the voluntary sector has experienced a positive growth. This might serve as an advantage for the CSOs in HP to build healthy collaborations with corporates in the future.



Chapter III: CSOs in HP and Local Resource Generation

This chapter talks about the literature reviewed on the types of funding available to the CSOs in HP to run their organisations, and the challenges faced by them in mobilizing these funds and therefore, aims to answer two research problems listed below:

1. To identify the key funding sources for CSOs in HP,
2. To identify the challenges faced by them in acquiring necessary funds.

Key Funding Resources:

1. *Corporate Funding (CSR)*

As discussed in Chapter II of this report, HP is seen as a hub for industrial growth, food industry, hydroelectricity production and much more. Its abundant natural resources make it a supreme choice for CSR investors to invest in the state. Some of the largest investors in HP over the years have been, Fresenius Kabi Oncology Limited and SJVN Limited.

However, the on ground reality expressed by the CSOs working in the grass roots, suggests hardly any CSR funding available to support them.

2. *Government Grants*

The second type of funding available to CSOs is from the government. As per the guidelines, all CSOs looking for funding by the government of India, are required to register their organisations on an online government portal named NGO Darpan. After registering on this portal, CSOs would receive a unique ID. Details such as income tax records, themes being worked on, specialization areas, ongoing programmes, audit reports, must be submitted on the portal in order to complete registration and apply for government grants.

3. *Philanthropic Funding*

According to a media report, private philanthropy is growing at a pace of 15 per cent every year since 2014, compared to the government's 10 per cent, as quoted in Bain & Company's India Philanthropy Report 2019. Philanthropic funding remains the brightest spot for CSOs all over India including HP, as currently they contribute about 60 per cent of the total private funding, estimated at Rs. 43,000 crore, as per the report.⁽³⁵⁾

An example of philanthropic funding in HP was Medtronic Philanthropy investing in Catholic Health Association of India (CHAI) and the Health Institute for Mother and Child (MAMTA) to implement 'HealthRise India' demonstration projects in Shimla, HP.⁽³⁶⁾

4. Individual Funding

Individual funding or crowdfunding is a recent concept that has been duplicated from the international CSOs. Currently, it has become one of the most common platforms for digital fundraising all over India. It requires the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and a few other websites committed to crowdfunding only. There are ample number of online portals such as GiveIndia and ImpactGuru, facilitating CSOs to explore crowdfunding.

However, for any organisation to effectively utilise such platforms, certain skills are required. Social media skills, representation and amiability are the three key skills that are imperative to master fundraising, especially online fundraising.

While, the larger CSOs in HP might have a qualified team with the required skillset, the grass roots organisations in HP struggle significantly. This is the reason why most of the small organisations in HP lose out on funding opportunities.

According to the participants, there is lack of good connectivity and dearth of vital skills required for using online platforms amongst CSO employees in HP. Therefore, the need for strengthening the capacities of CSOs vis a vis digital media, has become urgent.

The above stated facts indicate a large amount of funding sources available for CSOs in HP. However, the reason why these CSOs are unable to secure funds from these sources, is the trust deficit towards the civil society sector and the absence of credibility.



Chapter IV: CSOs in SDG Implementation and Aspirational Districts

Status of SDGs Amongst CSOs in India and HP

The SDGs, also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. (37)

Although, according to the SDG Index and Dashboard 2019-20, HP was one of the top performers with reference to SDG 4, SDG 5 and SDG 11 (Quality Education, Gender Equality and Sustainable Cities and Communities). Even in the overall ranking, HP stood ninth amongst other states, with a score of 69.

However, the data collected by VANI pointed out insufficient knowledge regarding SDGs amongst CSOs in HP. The interviews implied an acute requirement for building capacities and awareness amongst the grass roots organisations in HP. They are completely unaware of the developments being made vis a vis the SDGs in HP and lack an understanding of the future strategies to achieve these goals.

Apart from this, there were certain concerns that the CSOs shared with us regarding SDGs:

- As portrayed by the data given above, there have been hardly any developments in the Aspirational Chamba district in the last two years. The HPCC, as well as the interviewees of this study, stated that the government has failed to take an initiative with respect to SDGs in Chamba. Serious efforts from the government's side needs to be invested to the cause and urgent actions need to be planned and executed to raise awareness on SDGs and collaborate with the civil society, provide them with the necessary funding to take things forward.
- Another important drawback is the poor efforts from the government to build inter-sectoral partnerships in HP. While the government's role is imperative to initiate processes and take a lead, it is also needed of the government to support and get involved with the multiple stakeholders that are working towards achieving these goals. The other sectors have an equally vital role in the successful implementation and accomplishment of the SDG agenda. In addition, the government must build a robust monitoring and evaluation system to gauge the effectiveness, practicality and reasonability of the policies applied to the field.
- As per the "Localising SDGs Report" of 2019, HP has shortlisted 138 key indicators for monitoring progress on SDGs. The State planned to develop a dashboard for monitoring progress on the indicators. Apart from this, HP has aligned budgets to SDGs since 2016-17. The State has undertaken detailed fund gap analysis for achieving SDGs. Thirty new schemes have

been initiated in 2018-19 as a result of this analysis. Rationalization and restructuring of ongoing schemes has also been done. In addition, the HP government has taken several initiatives for generating awareness on SDGs. Several folk media groups (kala jathas) have been engaged to spread awareness on SDGs in each of the 78 development blocks of the state. Video messages from the Chief Minister have been telecast on TV and disseminated in the print media. Also, HP has conducted several training and capacity-building programmes with the State Training Institutes on SDGs. A pool of 40 trainers has been developed in the State⁽³⁸⁾.

However, the participant CSOs raised concerns regarding the efforts to build awareness vis a vis SDGs, amongst the civil society sector, being negligible. When asked about the developments in context with SDGs in HP, the CSOs hardly knew anything. They mentioned that there is a need to conduct workshops for the employees and leaders of smaller CSOs on these goals, for better execution of the action plan.

- One of the biggest drawbacks of the whole SDG programme is the large number of goals that are identified. The CSOs complained that although, they are aware of what the SDGs are, it is quite difficult for them to remember all of them on their tips and therefore, much more challenging for them to incorporate them into their regular activities. Apart from this, despite the excellent breakup of targets under the broader SDGs in terms of accuracy and simplicity of understanding, they are considered too complicated to be remembered and put to use on a daily basis.

According to the above stated facts and figures, limited growth has been seen in HP in the recent past vis a vis the SDGs. To catalyze the process of achieving the 2030 SDG goals, the government and the civil society sector need to bridge their gaps and work together rather than against each other. The CSOs in HP will facilitate monitoring and evaluation at ground level and also serve as a watchdog to ensure accountability. They will also help in administering the right amount of pressure to bring about change where efforts are not being made.

Aspirational Districts Programme in HP

Under the '**Transformation of Aspirational Districts**' initiative, launched in January 2018, a total of **117 Aspirational districts** were identified by NITI Aayog based upon composite indicators from **Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources, Financial Inclusion and Skill Development and Basic Infrastructure** which have an impact on Human Development Index.⁽³⁹⁾

According to Niti Aayog's 'List of Aspirational Districts', there is only one identified district marked as aspirational district in HP:⁽⁴⁰⁾

- Chamba

The Aspirational Chamba District was conferred the overall 18th rank with a composite score of 42.2 in Delta Ranking of 115 Aspirational Districts of India.⁽⁴¹⁾

According to a media report published in March 2020, the central and state governments could not launch any new project for the development of Chamba district. The HP Congress Committee (HPCC) held the government responsible for overlooking the development of Chamba district and disapproved its claims about the development during the last two years.⁽⁴²⁾

In addition, the CSOs in HP confirmed this by stating that no significant developments have taken place in Chamba. They also complained regarding the lack of support from the government towards CSOs working in the Chamba district.

This lack of support indicates a breach in the partnership of the CSOs in HP and the government. Therefore, in order to bridge this gap, efforts must be made to improve the conditions between both the sectors, to achieve development in Chamba and the complete state. This will present more opportunities in front of the CSOs to collaborate with the government



Chapter V: Recommendations & Way Forward...

Apart from the usual challenges that the CSOs all over India face, this study was able to pinpoint a few challenges that are peculiar in HP. Lack of skills, financial insecurity, trust deficit, lack of opportunity, were a few common handicaps in the growth of the CSOs in HP. Few of the challenge that was specific to HP or any other hilly area, was unfavourable climatic conditions and poor connectivity. Based on the diagnosed impediments, we were able to list down a few probable recommendations that might be helpful in further advocacy with the government.

Inter-sectoral linkages

Civil society sector and the government will gain from practicing cooperation and communicating transparently with one another. The state, using its power and resources can contribute in creating an enabling environment for the CSOs to work in. On the other hand, the CSOs can serve as watchdogs that can monitor on ground activities. Such an effort will enable a healthy relationship and greater results.

Good governance practices

Policies and regulations must be built to enable development of the civil sector, rather than the current legislatures, that hinder their growth. The government must enforce laws that encourage the CSOs to work towards achieving targets. To boost the confidence of the CSOs, incentives can be provided for activities that are outperformed.

Capacity building & training

Lack of capacity and sufficient skills remains a common problem among the grassroots CSOs of HP. This is may be due to lack of funds, absence of necessary trainings and unwillingness to compete with the more established CSOs. Hence, the need for skill building and introduction to newer technology and advanced techniques arises. This will lead to increased efficiency and improved results, also expanding their visibility amongst all the sectors.

Leadership development

Good leadership is the key for effective management required to maximize efficiency and to achieve organizational goals as a team. A good leader is necessary in the CSOs of HP to initiate action, motivate employees, provide guidance, create confidence, build team spirit, maintains a congenial work environment and coordinates effectively. Only with such a leader, will these organisations flourish and be able to make their mark in all the sectors, thereby acquiring the much needed recognition.

Preparedness

In a place like HP, where landslides and floods are a part and parcel of lives of people living there, CSOs must be prepared to handle any uncertainty that might occur. Keeping in mind the unfavourable climatic conditions of HP, the CSOs must train their employees in disaster management and relief services.

Apart from this, the CSOs must also keep a check on their resources, as there might be chances of unwanted expenditure during times in calamity.

Infrastructural Development

The study highlighted that the CSOs in HP had a lack of an institutional setup for carrying out activities towards development. The CSOs have been facing a dearth of infrastructural facilities due to the absence of sufficient funding. Therefore, there is an urgent need for the funders to invest in improving the infrastructure, thereby improving efficiency of the CSOs.

New coping mechanisms

Any changes in the external ecosystem of a CSO will coerce even the largest of organisations to bring about reforms in their strategies in order to survive. These changes could be political, environmental, economic or social. The civil society sector in HP will have to adopt newer coping mechanisms and newer skill sets to retain their nature and function. For instance, the changing policies vis a vis the voluntary sector or the very recent Covid- 19 crisis.

The need of the hour is for the CSOs to communicate freely, advocate their needs to the funders, understand the depth of the developmental gaps and devise strategies to overcome them collectively, both inter and intra- sectoral. Unless the complexity of the situation is recognized, and the need for collectivization is acknowledged, the sluggish pace of development and the paucity of sincere efforts from all the sectors together, might lead to fading of the civil society sector.

List of Participants

	Name of Participant	Organisation
1)	Dr. Arun Chandan	Society for Environmental and Rural Awakening
2)	Virender Vashisht	Church's Auxiliary for Social Action
3)	Kanchan Chandel	Association for Social Research and Action
4)	R R Premi	Arushi Gramin Sansthan
5)	Pradeep Sharma	Society for Environmental and Rural Awakening

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- Financing Sustainable Development on Civil Perspective on AIIB (English & Hindi)
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- 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.



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