

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24



**Voluntary Health
Association of India**



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Voluntary Health Association of India

Making health and development a reality for people of India

Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI) is a non-profit, registered society formed in the year 1970. We are one of the largest health and development networks in the world. VHAI advocates people-centered policies for dynamic health planning and programme management in India. We initiate and support innovative health and development programmes at the grassroots with the active participation of the people. VHAI strives to build a strong health movement in the country for a cost-effective, preventive, promotive and rehabilitative health care system. We work towards a responsive public health sector and responsible private sector with accountability and quality service.

**VHAI is recognised by the Government of India
as an organisation of national importance**

About VHAI

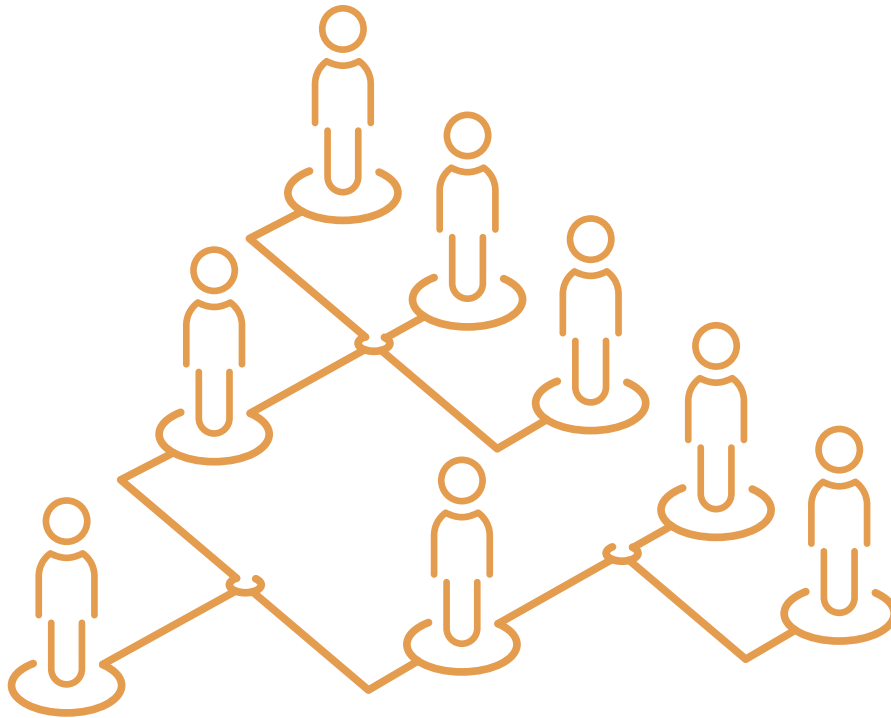


Our Vision

To make health and development a reality for people of India

Our Mission

- To promote social justice, equity and human rights in the provision and distribution of health services for all, with emphasis on the less privileged sections.
- To promote and strengthen a medically rational, culturally acceptable and economically sustainable healthcare system in the country.
- To develop sustainable and innovative strategies to ensure health and overall community development in remote, vulnerable and poorest areas through several interventions, community action and participation.
- To provide relief and rehabilitation in areas affected by disasters & calamities and help the affected rebuild a better life for themselves.



Organisational Structure

VHAI is governed by an Executive Board that includes 9 members. These distinguished members are elected by the General Body through board elections conducted every alternate year. The Chief Executive heads a decentralized management system. The Chief Executive is supported by a highly skilled & proficient technical and administrative staff in Delhi and the regional offices. The planning, execution and performance of various projects is monitored regularly through staff meetings and on ground visits. VHAI invests in regular capacity building of staff by conducting need analysis and frequent in-house trainings. The staff is encouraged to attend conferences, workshop and seminars organized by prestigious organizations in India and internationally.





HEALTH POLICY KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIP

Voluntary Health Association of India has successfully broadened the horizons of public health at the Grassroots, National and International level. VHAI actively partners with renowned national and international agencies.

VHAI's significant presence in the Advisory committees of Government Bodies & International organizations

- National AIDS Control Board
- Task Force on Tobacco Control
- Task Force on Nasha Mukti Abhiyan
- National Disaster Management Authority
- National Nutrition Mission
- Governing Body of National Institute of Health and Family Welfare
- Technical Experts Committee for National Programme on Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases & Stroke (NPCDCS)
- Common Review Mission of NRHM
- Technical Review Committee of School Health under AYUSHMAN Bharat
- Committee to Review COTPA and suggest appropriate amendments
- Expert Committee for Development of New Specified Health Warnings
- Technical Advisory and Monitoring Committee for the Global Adult Tobacco Survey-3 (GATS-3), India
- National Steering Committee for National Tobacco Control Programme
- Expert Committee for Online Violations of COTPA, 2003 and Prohibition of E-cigarette Act, 2019
- Task Force on Public Private Partnership
- Advisory Group on Community Action under NRHM
- National Mentoring Group for ASHA
- Geoscience for Sustainable Development of Central Geological Programme Board
- Advisory Committee – National Policy for Children
- Technical Advisory Committee on Vector Borne Diseases
- Institute Ethical Committee, NICD
- Rajasthan Population Council
- Bihar State Institute of Health and Family Welfare
- Madhya Pradesh State Population and Development Council
- State Health Society, Madhya Pradesh
- Delhi State Health Mission
- Governing Board of IUHPE
- Governing Board of SRHR Alliance

International & National Collaborations

- WHO
- World Bank
- International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE)
- Global Fund
- Public Health England
- European Union
- Bloomberg Philanthropy
- Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids
- Simavi
- UNICEF
- Civic Engagement Alliance
- ICMR
- FSSAI
- Constellation
- SRHR Alliance
- MTBA Alliance
- Girls Not Bride Alliance

KEY MEETINGS HELD DURING THE YEAR 2023-24

Advisory Group on Community Action (AGCA)

The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, had constituted the Advisory Group on Community Action (AGCA) to provide valuable guidance on community action initiatives under the National Health Mission at the national level. Comprising eminent public health professionals associated with major NGOs, this group advises the Ministry on fostering community partnerships and ownership for the mission. They provide essential feedback based on ground realities, develop new models of community action, and recommend their adoption or extension to the Central and State Governments.

As a distinguished member of AGCA, Mr. Alok Mukhopadhyay, Chairman (Advisory Committee), VHAI actively participated in the meeting last year. During this meeting, Mr. Mukhopadhyay provided invaluable insights regarding the significance of community participation and involvement to ensure the effective implementation of State Programme Implementation Plans (PIPs).

The meeting facilitated the sharing of observations from the field, including the functioning of Health and Wellness Centers (HWCs) and the rollout of Jan Arogya Samitis (JASs). Furthermore, the findings from a study assessing the functioning of Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees (VHNSCs) were also shared. By sharing valuable insights and field experiences, VHAI contributes to the development of effective community action strategies, with an ultimate goal of improving health outcomes for all.

Meeting with DGHS, MbHFW, Government of India

Ms. Bhavna Mukhopadhyay, Chief Executive had a meeting with Dr. Atul Goel, DGHS & Director (MCDC) MbHFW on January 15, 2024 to discuss on the issues of public health.

Key matters like the need to strengthen primary healthcare infrastructure, strategies for effective disease prevention and control, particularly in rural and underserved areas and the need for continuous capacity building for healthcare professionals to ensure high-quality care were discussed in the meeting. The DGHS emphasized the Ministry's commitment to improving health outcomes through enhanced primary healthcare, digital innovations, and robust disease prevention measure

Meeting with Honourable Minister of Women & Child Development, Government of India

Ms. Bhavna Mukhopadhyay, Chief Executive had a meeting with Hon'ble Minister of Women and Child Development Smt. Smriti Irani on August 16, 2023

The agenda of the meeting was to discuss and lay emphasis on the importance of holistic development for women and children, strategies for improving the effectiveness of existing programs and importance of multi-sectoral collaboration to achieve goals. The meeting was productive, with constructive dialogue on enhancing the health of women and children in India. The Minister expressed strong support for collaborative efforts and committed to continued engagement with all stakeholders to drive positive change

Meeting held with Dr. Rajendra P. Joshi, Deputy Director General, Central TB Division, MbHFW

Ms. Bhavna Mukhopadhyay, Chief Executive, VHAI attended a meeting with Dr. Rajendra P. Joshi, Deputy Director General, Central TB Division, MbHFW, Government of India on on January 31, 2024.

With a decade long experience in TB awareness, diagnostic and treatment services in vulnerable areas of India through Project Axshya, VHAI has worked in 48 districts in 8 states and has reached over 5 million people. VHAI strives to make a significant contribution in making India TB-free and continue the work in close collaboration with the Government. The agenda of the meeting was to discuss how to strengthen the hands of the Central TB Division in particularly reaching the last mile and making Prime Minister's vision of TB Mukh Bharat by 2025 a reality.

International training program on Health Promotion Perspectives and Approaches Related to Climate Change

In January 2024, VHAI supported the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) in organizing an international training program on Health Promotion Perspectives and Approaches Related to Climate Change. This program was conducted in collaboration with the School of Public Health at the Université de Montréal (ESPUM), Canada.

The primary objective was to enhance the understanding of health promotion practitioners regarding the impact of climate change on health promotion. The training also aimed to explore innovative responses and perspectives, emphasizing transformative action.

VHAI facilitated the Policy Change for Sustainability module and engaged climate change expert Shri Deepak Gupta as the resource person. Shri Deepak Gupta has held several key positions in the government, including serving as Secretary to the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, Government of India. Post-retirement, he has consulted for organizations such as the World Bank and UNIDO and is an active speaker and writer on governance, energy, and climate change issues. He also serves as the Honorary Director General of the National Solar Energy Federation of India. The training program saw active participation from over 40 health professionals from around the world, who benefited greatly from the comprehensive sessions and expert insights.



International Convention on Millets

The VHAI team participated in the International Convention on Millets, organized by the Odisha Millet Mission, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment, Government of Odisha, in collaboration with Niti Aayog, IIMR, FICCI, and Mission Shakti Department, held at Janta Maidan, Bhubaneswar, on November 9-10, 2023. VHAI shared its initiatives in millet promotion with key stakeholders. The convention included delegates from Africa, the Middle East, Asia, UN agencies, researchers, agriculture consultants, government officials from various states, and women SHG members involved in millet promotion.

The convention aimed to bring together experts, policymakers, international delegates, researchers, and agriculture industry stakeholders to discuss the significance of millets in promoting sustainable agriculture, nutrition, and food security. The Odisha Millets Mission showcased its innovative initiatives and research findings, contributing to the global understanding of millet-based agriculture and food systems. The event featured discussions, expert presentations, panel sessions, release of an international publication on millets, live demonstrations, and networking opportunities, providing a platform to exchange knowledge and best practices for harnessing the potential of millets for a sustainable future.



Expert Committee for Online Violations of COTPA, 2003 and prohibition of E-cigarette Act, 2019

The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, had constituted an expert committee for Online Violations of COTPA, 2003 and prohibition of E-cigarette Act, 2019. The committee was formed to take appropriate action for issuance of takedown notices to intermediaries for compliance of Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003 and The Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes (Production, Manufacture, Import, Export, Transport, Sale, Distribution, Storage and Advertisement) Act, 2019.

Ms. Bhavna Mukhopadhyay, Chief Executive, VHAI attended the meeting held on May 17, 2023, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Pulkesh Kumar, Deputy Secretary, MoHFW. The second meeting of this committee was held on July 6, 2023 and the third meeting of this committee was held on March 19, 2024.

The committee has been constituted to develop SOPs /guidelines for the purpose of issuing take-down/ removal notices to the concerned intermediary platform, hosting or controlling the said unlawful information. And, also to review the complaints being received on monthly basis for ensuring effective implementation, accountability & Compliance monitoring.

Meeting of the Technical Advisory and Monitoring Committee for the Global Adult Tobacco Survey-3

Ms. Bhavna Mukhopadhyay, Chief Executive attended the meeting of the Technical Advisory and Monitoring Committee for the Global Adult Tobacco Survey-3 constitute by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

The committee was constituted to provide expert advice on the implementation of the survey, ensuring methodological rigor and adherence to global standards. It monitors the progress of the survey, reviews data quality, and helps in the interpretation and dissemination of the findings.

Ms. Bhavna Mukhopadhyay, Chief Executive, VHAI attended the committee meeting held on July 5, 2023, under the Chairmanship of Shri Sukh Ram Meena, Director General (Statistics), MoHFW. The second meeting of this committee was held on November 14, 2023. A third meeting of this committee was also held on March 12 2024.

A roundtable discussion on “Need for a systematic approach to the Public Health Challenges caused by Climate Change”

On August 3, 2023, a roundtable discussion on the “Need for a Systematic Approach to the Public Health Challenges Caused by Climate Change” was held under the chairmanship of the Director General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), India. The event aimed to address the urgent need for a structured response to public health issues arising from climate change. The discussion involved key stakeholders, including representatives from the MoHFW, public health experts, environmental scientists, and members of various health organisations.

The agenda focused on identifying climate-sensitive health risks, enhancing the resilience of health systems, and implementing strategies for effective climate change adaptation in the health sector.

Meeting held with Dr. G. Arivoli, Director – School Education, Dept. of School Education, Govt. of Tamil Nadu

Ms. Bhavna Mukhopadhyay, Chief Executive, VHAI attended a meeting with Dr. G. Arivoli, Director – School Education, Dept. of School Education, Govt. of Tamil Nadu on September 28, 2023.

VHAI, with support from ICMR and WHO India, is implementing Project InfoSuraksha which focusses on promoting social media literacy among youth to help them navigate and critically assess the information they encounter. The programs includes comprehensive training packages with modules, videos, posters, bookmarks, and interactive games, all tailored to the local context. The agenda of the meeting was to showcase these materials and explore collaboration opportunities to further the project's reach and impact in Tamil Nadu.

Meeting held with State Education Commissioner, Government of Andhra Pradesh

On 21st September 2023, a meeting was held with the State Education Department of Andhra Pradesh in Vijayawada included key participants such as Mr. Suresh Kumar (IAS), Commissioner of School Education; Ms. P Parvathi, Director of Coordination; Mr. Shreedeeep, Digital Consultant; Mr. John Nelson, Consultant; Dr. Tran Minh Nhu Nguyen and Ms. Sophia Lonappans from WHO Country Office India; and representatives from APVHA (Mr. Shaik Ismaeol and R Manmohan). Ms. Bhavna Mukhopadhyay and the VHAI team were also present. Dr. Tran emphasized the need for social media literacy among students and teachers, highlighting incidents in Manipur caused by fake videos. Findings from various states underscored the urgency of this initiative. An English training package for students and teachers was presented to the Commissioner, who praised its thoroughness. He noted the relevance of social media literacy to digital education efforts, including tablet distribution and interactive panels in classrooms, and acknowledged threats like cybersecurity and addiction. The Telugu version of the training package was officially released, with a request for a thorough review and integration into the education system. Key recommendations included training District Education Officers and nodal teachers for seamless curriculum integration and establishing a state-level technical core team with WHO and VHAI representation.



THE IUHPE EXECUTIVE BOARD 2022-2025



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IUHPE Governing Board Meeting: Strategic Planning and Priorities

As a member of the governing board of the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE), Ms Bhavna Mukhopadhyay actively participated in the board meetings held on 18th May 2024 and 27th September 2023. The meeting focused on a comprehensive review of IUHPE's Strategic Plan (2021-2026), encompassing ongoing progress and the establishment of strategic priorities.

Independent Commission on Development and Health in India

VHAI was instrumental in setting up the Independent Commission on Health and Development in India (ICDHI) in 1995. ICDHI was set up to assess the current health and development status as well as facilitate the process of need based and people-centric sustainable health and development plans.

Distinguished individuals from the health and development sector were a part of this commission. The first comprehensive report of the commission was presented to the then Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1998. The Honorable Prime Minister ensured that the major recommendations of the report were incorporated in various programmes, leading to many significant policy changes. This resulted in the formation of the National Rural Health Mission to overhaul the rural health services. Since 1998, the commission has released a significant number of reports on specific health problems faced by the country.

State Health Policy

Health systems and policies have a critical role in determining the manner in which health services are delivered, utilized and affect health outcomes. Health is a state subject as per the Constitution of India. The primary responsibility to provide quality health care services to the people including in rural, tribal and hilly areas lies with State/UT Governments.

A relevant State Health Policy under the overall framework of National Health Policy can go a long way in improving systems and services of the State. Health is a state subject and to provide quality universal health care services to the people is the responsibility of the State and Union Government. Recent COVID-19 pandemic has clearly exposed the underbelly of our health systems highlighting the importance of re-organizing, strengthening and prioritizing our health services and the available infrastructure.

Health is a vital human good and the public health system needs to play a key role in promoting it. Totally commercializing health care for the sake of choice and efficiency run a potent risk of submitting to the vagaries of market forces. Therefore, it is important that Public Health Systems under States remain the principal provider of health care for the citizens. This was clearly evident during the successful management of health challenges during COVID-19 pandemic.

Keeping the above evidence in mind, every State of India need to have relevant, robust and sustainable Health Policy, which reaches out to the people effectively, meeting the continuous and emerging health challenges. Under the overarching National Health Policy 2017, every State need to formulate an appropriate Health Policy for the State, keeping in mind specific epidemiological challenges as well as various strengths and weaknesses that clearly emerged during the management of COVID-19.

The Commission's research team has conducted extensive secondary research to assess the "Status of State Health Policy" in different states across the country. Last year, they prepared a detailed paper based on their findings, which was shared with the Commission Members for their input and feedback. Taking into account the valuable suggestions received, the paper has been revised accordingly.

Moving forward, the Commission intends to provide technical assistance to state governments that are interested in formulating new policies or updating existing ones based on the National Health Policy 2017 and the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. This support will be extended during the upcoming financial year, with the aim of ensuring that states have robust and responsive health policies that align with the national framework and incorporate the insights gained from the recent healthcare challenges.

The Health Status of Aspirant States in India:

The Commission has compiled a comprehensive review of the health status of Rajasthan. This research aims to gain a deeper understanding of the health indicators of the state that are lagging behind and identify the underlying reasons for their performance, while also comparing them with states that are performing better in terms of health outcomes.



After a thorough review and analysis of the health situation of Rajasthan, the report was compiled and shared with the Government of Rajasthan.

Meeting with Additional Chief Secretary, Medical Health & Family Welfare Department, Government of Rajasthan: Mr. Alok Mukhopadhyay, Convener of ICDHI, and Dr. P.C. Bhatnagar, Senior Technical Consultant, had an in-depth discussion with Smt. Shubhra Singh, Additional Chief Secretary of the Medical Health & Family Welfare Department, Government of Rajasthan. During the meeting, the findings of a report on the health status of Rajasthan were presented, and a clear roadmap for improving health outcomes was discussed.

Roundtable Discussion with Health Experts in Jaipur, Rajasthan: In collaboration with Rajasthan VHA, a roundtable discussion was organized on 7th February 2024, bringing together health professionals and domain experts to provide insights on improving the state's health indicators.





Health Wellbeing and Equity



In response to the escalating global burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and respiratory illnesses, alongside emerging new health challenges, health promotion has emerged as a pivotal strategy in the pursuit of improved health outcomes and disease prevention. By leveraging lessons learned from both the persistent challenge of NCDs and the unprecedented health crisis of COVID-19, VHAI endeavors to foster resilience, educate and empower individuals and communities, and advocate for equitable policies and interventions that promote health and well-being across diverse populations.

Empowering Communities For Healthier & Equitable Societies



At VHAI, we focus on a paradigm shift towards proactive, preventive measures to address the root causes of disease, including lifestyle factors, environmental determinants, and socio-economic disparities. This approach to public health is emerging as a critical domain within the realm of disease prevention globally, signalling a departure from the traditional curative model of healthcare towards a participatory model of health promotion. Over the last three decades, VHAI, along with its member institutions, has been implementing various innovative programs that emphasise the practice of healthy lifestyles and the creation of healthy communities.

We are determined to adapt, innovate, and continue our efforts to improve the well-being of vulnerable populations. By embracing change and building on the best practices of our health promotion efforts across the country, as well as the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are confident in our ability to make a significant impact on the health and development landscape of the country, particularly through our recent holistic program on Health, Wellbeing, and Equity.

A. Health, Wellbeing and Equity Concept

VHAI has launched a comprehensive concept that focuses on Health, Wellbeing, and Equity, built upon three fundamental pillars:

- **Health Promotion:** VHAI emphasises the proactive promotion of health, aiming to prevent illnesses and enhance overall well-being through various initiatives and interventions.
- **Self-Care for Health and Common Ailments:** Recognizing the importance of empowering individuals to take charge of their own health, VHAI advocates for self-care practices that enable people to manage common ailments and promote a healthier lifestyle.
- **Social Determinants for Health:** VHAI acknowledges the impact of social and economic factors on health outcomes, particularly for marginalized and disadvantaged communities. Their approach encompasses addressing the specific needs of these communities to ensure equitable access to healthcare.

B. Module Development

Last year, VHAI's team developed the following comprehensive modules:

1. Equity for Health: Bridging the Wellbeing Divide
2. Climate Change: How It Is Affecting Health
3. Prioritising Mental Health Through Self-Care Initiatives and Practices

These modules have been shared with state partners for their feedback, and training sessions are planned for this year (2024) on these specific topics for State Voluntary Health Association and member institutions.





C. STATE LEVEL WORKSHOP ON HEALTH, WELLBEING AND EQUITY FOR MADHYA PRADESH

A state-level workshop was conducted online on September 5th and 6th, 2023, for the state of Madhya Pradesh in close collaboration with the Madhya Pradesh State Voluntary Health Association (MPVHA). The workshop saw diverse participation, including MPVHA staff, member institutions, other like-minded organisations, and health professionals.

The training workshop focused on various aspects of health, wellbeing, and equity. The main objective was to explore how these principles could be integrated into existing public health programs on the ground with minimal cost. The workshop featured enriching sessions by Dr. PC Bhatnagar, Senior Technical Consultant at VHAI, and Mr. Mukesh Kumar Sinha, Executive Director of MPVHA, alongside other experts. It provided a platform for health professionals and ground-level workers to share their experiences and challenges faced in implementing programs on the ground. With active engagement from over 100 participants, the workshop offered valuable insights into the agenda of Health, Wellbeing, and Equity. All training resource materials were shared with the participants for easy reference and continued learning.

D. Promoting Access to Social and Economic Welfare Schemes: Ensuring Equity, Social Justice, and Inclusion among Vulnerable Populations

Central and State Government social welfare services are designed to meet the needs of individuals who, due to social, economic, and physical factors, are unable to access essential amenities and services. These marginalized sections encompass women, children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Primitive Tribal Groups, and other vulnerable populations.

Despite the implementation of various schemes and programs, a significant portion of the population, particularly those residing in remote and hard-to-reach areas and tribal communities, still face barriers in accessing these initiatives. This lack of awareness, especially among socially and economically marginalized individuals living in remote areas far from administrative centers, remains a challenge. This exclusion is often exacerbated among the most vulnerable, such as the elderly or widowed women living alone.

VHAI has adopted a multi-pronged approach to promote access to social security and welfare schemes and programs among vulnerable communities in remote and hard-to-reach areas of Odisha.



KEY ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED DURING THE YEAR 2023-24

BASELINE ASSESSMENT

Assessing the knowledge, perception, and accessibility of tribal and vulnerable communities regarding government schemes and programs, as well as evaluating the implementation status of various social welfare and social protection schemes.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Engaging with relevant stakeholders at the village, Gram Panchayat (GP), block, and district levels to discuss and address concerns related to linking eligible beneficiaries with government social protection and welfare schemes

HOUSEHOLD ASSESSMENTS

Trained young enabler (volunteers) conduct assessments at the household level to map eligible beneficiaries and identify issues they face in availing social protection schemes and programs.

ENGAGEMENT WITH OFFICIALS

Meetings with GP and block-level officials, frontline health workers, and Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) members to propose effective modalities for linking eligible beneficiaries with government social protection and welfare schemes.

COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL SENSITIZATION

Raising awareness among mapped beneficiaries about government social welfare and social protection schemes through community and school sensitization activities

FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS

Regularly engaging with officials at the block and district levels to ensure the enrollment of eligible beneficiaries in pension, housing, public distribution system & other social protection schemes.

AWARENESS SESSIONS

Conducting sessions for women's group members, Village Health, Sanitation, and Nutrition Committees (VHSNC) members, adolescent groups, PRI members, and community leaders to sensitize them about existing central and state government social welfare and social protection schemes.

COLLABORATIVE CAMPS

Organizing camps in collaboration with relevant government departments, PRI members, and local NGOs to assist eligible beneficiaries with Aadhaar card preparation and correction, online application assistance for job cards, ration cards, E-Shram cards, pensions, housing, and other schemes such as ASHIRBAD and SAFAL (Scheme for agro-based assistance for small farmers).

Through these concerted efforts, VHAI aims to empower marginalized communities by facilitating their access to government social welfare and social protection schemes. By addressing barriers and providing assistance, VHAI strives to ensure that these vulnerable populations receive the support and benefits they are entitled to.

Notable Achievements in Promoting Access to Social Welfare Schemes

Our dedicated efforts in promoting access to social welfare schemes for vulnerable populations have yielded significant milestones. (VHAI has played a crucial role in mobilizing rural communities, enhancing local capacities to navigate access procedures, and facilitating coordination with local governments to strengthen access, thereby reducing the number of marginalized families left without support. During the reporting period, VHAI collaborated with more than 40 Gram Panchayats (GPs) across two blocks and districts in Odisha, reaching nearly 9000 households. In total, we successfully linked 8383 eligible beneficiaries, with 28 percent benefiting from the Public Distribution System, 27 percent from social security pensions, 18 percent from housing schemes, 16 percent from Aadhaar card preparation and correction, and 11 percent from health insurance schemes. Through extensive on-the-ground campaigns, we reached out to over 25,000 vulnerable individuals. Awareness sessions were conducted for various groups, including women's groups, farmer clubs, adolescent groups, school students, Parent-Teacher Association members, Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) members, community leaders, Village Health, Sanitation, and Nutrition Committee (VHSNC) members, as well as male group members.

25,000 + Vulnerable population

were reached through extensive community mobilisation activities and awareness sessions

9000 household (Below poverty line families)

were mapped for linkage with the Government's social and welfare schemes & entitlements

8383 eligible beneficiaries

were successfully linked with the social and welfare programs & entitlements of the Government





D. Community Health Promotion

VHAI's community health promotion and disease prevention program empowers individuals and local communities to make healthier choices and reduce their risk of disease and disability. At the population level, we raise awareness about diseases and their risk factors, encourage the adoption of healthy lifestyles, and improve quality of life through early detection and treatment. Additionally, we collaborate with local health facilities to enhance the availability of healthcare and related services.

Sensitization programmes was organized in remote villages for VHSNC members on prevention and management of NCDs, preparation of action plan was done to create mass awareness on prevention of NCDs and its risk factors

Demonstration sessions were organized at the village level covering lactating and pregnant mothers, adolescent girls on Eat Right practice, hand washing, hygiene & sanitation during VHND in collaboration with front line health workers, Peer Educators & Volunteers.

Screening cum awareness sessions on prevention and management of non-communicable diseases were organized in remote and hard to reach villages in collaboration with local PHC. Health checkups were provided to high risk population and positive cases were referred to the public health facilities.

Sensitization programmes were organized in Gram Panchayats for women SHG federation leaders on Hygiene promotion, Food & Nutrition and COVID-19 appropriate behaviour during their monthly meetings. These leaders are further sensitizing SHG members in their respective group during their monthly meeting with support from AWW and trained Peer Educators.

Orientation sessions were organized in remote and distant villages for lactating and pregnant mothers on ANC/NC/PNC, child feeding, diarrhoeal disease management at Anganwadi Centre with support from concerned AWWs and Peer Educators.



NCDs Awareness and Screening Camps

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) awareness and screening camps are organized across various regions of the country, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. These camps aim to educate and empower local communities through awareness sessions on NCDs, their risk factors, and the adoption of a healthy lifestyle. The program also focuses on early diagnosis and treatment through community-based screening for high-risk cases of NCDs, such as diabetes and hypertension, and includes referrals to local health facilities for diagnosis and treatment, follow-up, and patient counselling.





E. Cancer Prevention and Early Detection

VHAI organised cancer prevention and awareness activities across various parts of our country, with a special focus during World Cancer Week in February, 2024. The awareness initiatives covered various aspects, including risk factors, signs, symptoms, and prevention strategies for cancer. Activities included:

- Raising awareness about breast and cervical cancer among young girls and women, conducted in collaboration with local Community Health Center (CHC) staff, including gynecologists.
- Educating local communities about the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle as a crucial step in cancer prevention.
- Conducting a signature campaign and oath-taking by young peer educators to further promote awareness within their communities.

ଘରଘୋରରେ ବିଶ୍ୱ କର୍କଟ ରୋଗର ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ସଚ୍ଚରଣ କରାଯାଇଛି । ଏହି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମରେ ଯୁଗ୍ମମାନଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ପ୍ରତି ମାତ୍ର ଅଂଶ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବାକୁ ପ୍ରୋତ୍ସାହିତ କରାଯାଇଛି । କେଶପୁର ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ମନ୍ତ୍ରଣାଳୟରେ କର୍କଟ ରୋଗର ଗୁଣା ଓ ନିରାକରଣ ଉପରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ଉପସ୍ଥାପନା ବିଦ୍ୟାପୀଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ, ସମାଜସେବା ତଥା ଶିକ୍ଷାଦାନ ଓ କେଶପୁର ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀର ଅଧ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ସୁମିତ୍ରା ଦେବୀଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତିରୋଧ, କର୍କଟ ରୋଗ ବିଷୟରେ ସଚ୍ଚରଣ ପରିଚାଳନା ଅଧିକାରୀ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ସୁମିତ୍ରା ଦେବୀଙ୍କ ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ ଉପରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରାଯାଇଥିଲା ।




VOLUNTARY HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF INDIA
Making Health and Development a Reality for the people of India

କର୍କଟ ରୋଗର ରୋକିବା ପାଇଁ 6 ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟବର୍ଦ୍ଧକ ଆଦର୍ଶ

- 01 ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଆହାର ଲେଁ**
ଜୀବନ ଅନୁଭବ, ପାଚନ ଓ ଉପକରଣ ଉପରେ ଆଧାର କରି ପିତ୍ତ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ପଦାର୍ଥର ଉପଯୋଗ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁନ୍ତୁ ।
- 02 ତନାବ କିମ୍ବା ନିର୍ବିଶ୍ରାନ୍ତ ହେବା ଲାଜିବେ**
ତନାବ କିମ୍ବା ନିର୍ବିଶ୍ରାନ୍ତ ହେବାକୁ ରୋକିବା ପାଇଁ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ସଚ୍ଚରଣ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରନ୍ତୁ ।
- 03 ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ କରନ୍ତୁ**
ଫିଜିକାଲ୍ ଆକ୍ଟିଭିଟିର ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଉପରେ ଆଧାର କରି ଉପଯୋଗ କରନ୍ତୁ ।
- 04 ଡାକ୍ତରଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସମୟରେ ଯିବା**
ଡାକ୍ତରଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସମୟରେ ଯିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁନ୍ତୁ ।
- 05 ଡାକ୍ତରଙ୍କ ସମ୍ମତ ପରେ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରନ୍ତୁ**
ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ସଚ୍ଚରଣ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରନ୍ତୁ ।
- 06 ନିୟମିତ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଯାଞ୍ଚ**
ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ସଚ୍ଚରଣ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରନ୍ତୁ ।


ବିଶ୍ୱ କର୍କଟ ଦିବସ





F. Promotion of Kitchen Garden

Kitchen gardens are a micro-solution and an affordable way of ensuring healthy food and balanced nutrition within a family. They can play an important role in enhancing national food security and dietary diversity to combat malnutrition. Kitchen gardens are known to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables, bring health and nutrition behaviour change, and have a positive effect on the health of the family especially among children and adolescents.

VHAI in collaboration with Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM) endeavored the following activities to promote kitchen garden among rural households:

- Organized sensitization meetings in Khallikote, Ganjam and in Jashipur, Mayurbhanj in collaboration with panchayat level personnel from OLM and sensitized women SHG members and girls group members on the importance of kitchen gardens.
- Women SHG members and adolescent group members were sensitized on the importance of kitchen gardens in improving health and nutrition status of the community especially within children and adolescents.
- Supported 1223 households with seeds, fertilizers to develop kitchen garden.



G. SCHOOL HEALTH PROMOTION

The concept of Health Promoting Schools has gained recognition as an effective strategy for fostering positive development and encouraging healthy behaviors among children. Our approach encompasses various aspects such as promoting physical activity, enhancing physical fitness, encouraging recreational activities and play, advocating for balanced nutrition and preventing tobacco use. Our strategy's ultimate objective is to empower school communities to make well-informed decisions regarding their health and overall well-being.

To create a healthy environment in schools, VHAI has been implementing school health promotion for the last three decades in various setting of our country

Last year, over 15400 students along with 325 teachers were sensitised on various aspects of health promotion including nutrition, healthy lifestyle, mental health and physical activity. The following specific areas were covered during the health education session:

- Personal Hygiene & Sanitation
- Adverse effect of tobacco and alcohol
- Prevention of anaemia and malnutrition
- Nutrition & Eat Right Practice
- Environmental Sustainability
- Emotional Health
- Benefits of regular consumption of millets



Sowing the Seeds of Wellness Millet for Health and Sustainability



In an effort to promote the consumption and production of millets, the Indian government proposed to the United Nations to designate the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets (IYOM). This initiative garnered support from 72 countries, leading to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets on March 5th, 2021.

To support the Government of India's initiative and recognizing the nutritional benefits of millets, VHA I launched a program called "Sowing the Seeds of Wellness - Millets for Health and Sustainability" in February 2023. As part of this program, VHA I initiated a nationwide campaign titled "Millets Pe Charcha." The campaign aims to engage with experts through webinars at the National and State levels. At the grassroots level, VHA I has been conducting dialogues and discussions with local communities, including millet farmers, VHSNCs, CBOs, community influencers, AWWs, and ASHAs. This campaign perfectly aligns with our recently launched programme on Health, Wellbeing and Equity. Promoting millets will contribute to improve the well-being of individuals, communities, and the environment.

Collaboration has been established with FSSAI and Odisha Millet Mission at the National and State levels to promote millets. VHA I actively seeks collaboration and partnerships with State Government organizations and expert organizations like Indian Institute of Millets Research. To equip State VHAs and member institutions with the necessary knowledge and skills, VHA I is proposing to organize a webinar in the coming months.

At the grassroots level, VHA I has initiated millet promotion initiatives in technical collaboration with Odisha Millet Mission, Govt of Odisha in two districts of Odisha, one tribal and one non-tribal, to create awareness about the benefits of millet consumption, revive millet cultivation, promote climate-resilient farming, and address micronutrient deficiencies.

SOWING THE SEEDS OF WELLNESS

Millets for Health & Sustainability

Webinar

Hosted by:
Voluntary Health Association of India



20th June 2023



3:30PM - 5:30PM



Scan QR Code to Register



Voluntary Health Association of India



Mr. A.R Nanda
Former Secretary,
Ministry of Health and
Family Welfare,
Government of India



Ms Inoshi Sharma
Executive Director,
FSSAI, Govt of India



Dr. Raj Bhandari
Member, National Millet
Taskforce & National
Technical Board on
Nutrition, Govt. of India



Dr. Sujeet Ranjan,
Associate Director,
Nutrition, Tata Trusts



Mr. Sanjeeb Kumar Nayak
Regional Coordinator,
Odisha Millets Mission,
Govt of Odisha



Dr. Varsha Tanu
Associate Professor,
IIHMR, Jaipur



Dr. Kalai Selvi
Research Associate,
ICAR-Indian Institute of
Millets Research,
Hyderabad



MODERATOR

**Ms. Bhavna B
Mukhopadhyay**
Chief Executive, Voluntary
Health Association of India



CO-MODERATOR

Dr. P C Bhatnagar
Senior Technical Advisor,
Voluntary Health
Association of India



CO-MODERATOR

Dr. Nancepreet Kaur
Programme Manager,
Voluntary Health
Association of India

(VHAI Presentation)

National Webinar Sowing the Seeds of Wellness: Millets for Health and Sustainability

VHAI organised a webinar on “Sowing the Seeds of Wellness: Millets for Health and Sustainability” on 20th June, 2024 to deliberate discussion on millets to promote their consumption. The webinar featured a panel of experts from national and state Governments including FSSAI, ICAR-IIHR, Odisha Millets Mission and Tata Trusts etc.

It witnessed participation of a diverse group of over 120 people including public health experts, grassroots level community workers, national and state level NGOs, youth groups and community at large.

The webinar proved to be an excellent platform for meaningful discussions, valuable knowledge exchange, and an inspiration to promote wellness through consumption of millets as well as contribute to a sustainable future.



KEY ACTIVITIES AT THE GRASSROOTS

MASS AWARENESS

Organizing awareness campaigns and sessions to educate people about nutritional benefits of millets and their role in improving health. This includes conducting awareness events at the community level, schools, colleges, and universities in collaboration with the Government of India, Eat Right Campaign, FSSAI, State Governments, and local administrations. Engagement with women and pregnant and lactating mothers at Anganwadi Centers is also emphasized, along with promoting the inclusion of millets in mid-meals at the Anganwadi Centers and schools. Over 45,000 individuals have been reached through awareness activities.

PROMOTING MILLET-BASED RECIPES

Organizing demonstration sessions on local millet-based recipes for adolescent group members, mother committee members, Anganwadi Workers, and women SHG members during monthly meetings, VHND, and community events. These sessions aim to encourage the inclusion of millet in daily diets, especially for children, adolescents, and ANC/PNC mothers.

SUPPORT FOR MILLET FARMING

Providing assistance to local farmers in cultivating millets, including technical support and promoting the adoption of sustainable and profitable farming practices.

DOCUMENTATION

Documenting best practices, success stories, and experiences related to millet cultivation, recipes, and more for the purpose of replication and sustainability.



MILLET SAATHI

VHAI has trained and empowered 252 peer educators as "Millet Sathi" to promote millet cultivation and consumption within communities. These educators facilitated health education sessions for youth and adolescent group members, highlighting the importance of millet consumption and generating community awareness.

MILLET PROMOTION IN SCHOOLS

VHAI has conducted educational and demonstration sessions on the benefits and nutritional value of millet, including the preparation of local millet-based recipes, in 35 schools. These sessions reached over 45000 students and 200 teachers

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON MILLETS

VHAI's National and State Teams participated in the two-day International Convention on Millets, organized by the Odisha Millet Mission, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment, Government of Odisha, in collaboration with Niti Aayoga, IIMR, FICCI, Mission Shakti Department at Janta Maidan, Bhubaneswar, on November 9th and 10th, 2023. VHAI shared its initiatives in millet promotion with key stakeholders. The convention included delegates from Africa, the Middle East, Asia, UN agencies, researchers, agriculture consultants, government officials from various states, and women SHG members involved in millet promotion activities.



Tobacco Control



Tobacco use is responsible for 15 lakh cancers, 4.2 million heart diseases, 3.7 million lung diseases every year in India. India is the oral cancer capital of the world because of rampant habit of tobacco chewing. Over, 65% of cancer in India is contributed due to tobacco related, breast and cervical cancer. 30% of cancers arise in head and neck region are caused due to non-smoking tobacco used in India.

The Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2016-17 (GATS 2), Govt of India data indicates that a staggering 28.6% or roughly 26 crore Indians, above 15 years of age, were consuming tobacco in some form! Of these, 23 crores were daily users and 19 crores were in rural India. Smokeless tobacco or gutkha was the most consumed tobacco product. Tobacco kills over 13 lakh Indians each year. The recent Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS-2019), Govt of India shows that nearly one-fifth of the students aged 13-15 years are consuming tobacco in some form. Also, in India, on an average, children as young as 10 years start tobacco consumption.

In 2017, the health and economic burden of tobacco consumption was 1.77 lakh crore, amounting to 1.04% of GDP. Further, the Parliament Standing Committee on Health in its comprehensive 139th report on Cancer Care Plan and Management, submitted to Parliament in September 2022, noted that in India, the highest number of lives lost is due to oral cancer caused by tobacco, followed by cancer of the lungs, oesophagus and stomach. The Committee also noted that in India, tobacco use in different forms accounts for nearly 50% of all cancers that are preventable.

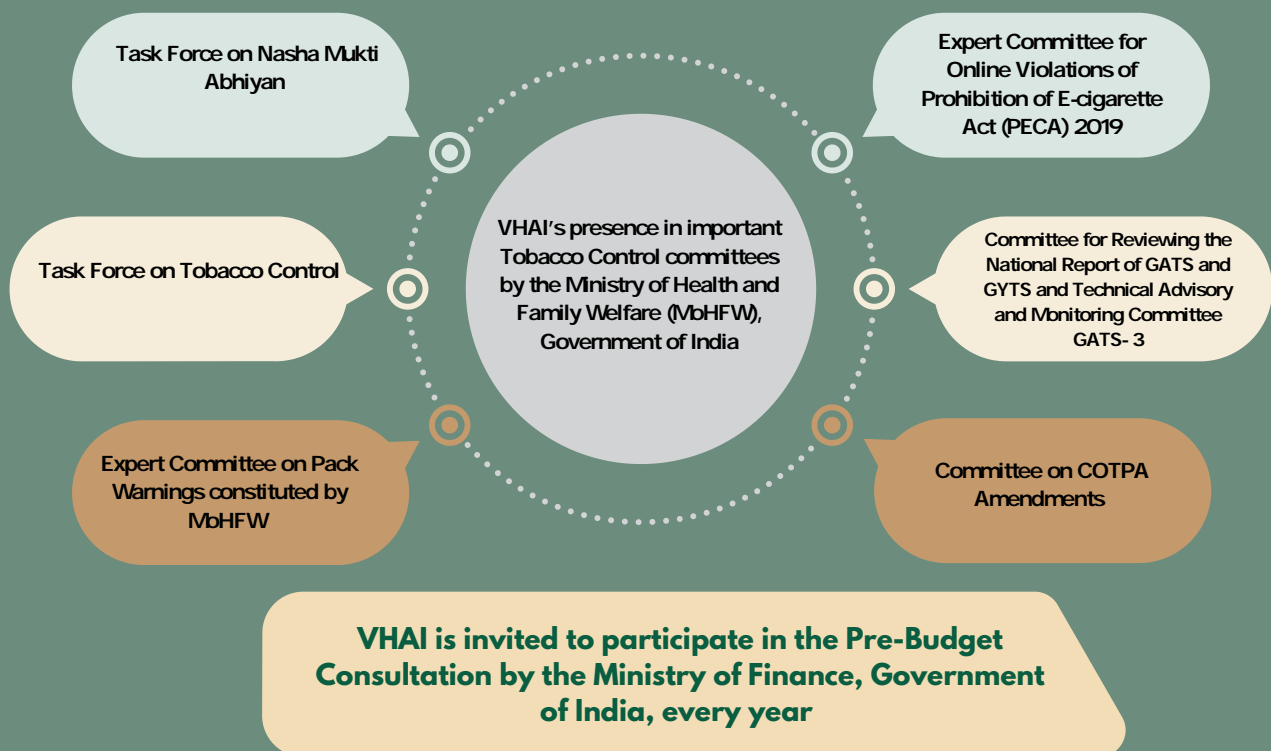
India has played key role in regulating tobacco use and its consumption. India enacted the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003 or COTPA to prohibit advertisement of, and to provide for the regulation of trade and commerce in, and production, supply Under COTPA, many states have taken effective steps for prohibition on smoking in public spaces, prohibition on all forms of direct/indirect advertisement, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products, prohibition on sale of tobacco products to minors within a radius of 100 yards of educational institutions, and mandatory depiction of specified health warnings on all tobacco products. However, COTPA is best implemented when there are coordinated efforts in the direction by effectively involving various stakeholders.

The National Tobacco Control Program (NTCP) launched by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India was to bring about greater awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco use and tobacco Control Laws as well as to facilitate effective implementation of the tobacco control laws.

India has reduced tobacco use among adults by 17 per cent since 2010. As a result, there are over 8 million fewer tobacco users today than there were just seven years ago despite the growth in the Indian population, according to new data released by the Indian government. The decline in tobacco use is highlighted in India's second Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) and confirms that India's package of public health laws is working to reduce tobacco use and save lives.

With a vision of making health and development a reality for the people of India, VHAI is providing technical support to Government of India on tobacco control initiatives. Our focus is to safe-guard the public from second hand smoke; children and young adults from initiating tobacco use and gaining access to tobacco products.

VHAI acted as a key support for State and District Tobacco Control Cells, linking them with the community, spreading outreach of activities, increased awareness on the law and assisted State Governments in enforcing legislative provisions. District level community-based organizations also came together as a stronger coalition to broad base the campaign across various states and districts. The organization's niche work in building partnerships has contributed to overall tobacco control measures in the last decade.



As a key member of the committees, VHAI actively participated in the meetings and provided the necessary technical inputs and support.

NATIONAL LEVEL

a. Strengthening COTPA

The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of advertisement & regulation of trade, commerce, production, supply and distribution) Act, 2003 is the main national legislation for tobacco control in India. While the Act has proved to be instrumental in India's fight against tobacco, it needs to be strengthened further to respond to the growing disease and economic burden of tobacco consumption.

In this regard, we had assisted the Health Ministry both at National & State level for the effective implementation & enforcement of tobacco control act COTPA in order to protect the health of the citizens from the menace of tobacco products especially the youth.

b. Meeting with Minister of Women & Child Development

Ms. Bhavna Mukhopadhyay, Chief Executive had a meeting with Minister of Women and Child Development Smt. Smriti Irani on August 16 at her office. Following key points were discussed:

- Emphasis on the importance of holistic development for women and children
- Strategies for improving the effectiveness of existing programs
- Importance of multi-sectoral collaboration to achieve goals
- Keeping the spirit of the Juvenile Justice Act, the need to protect the youth from tobacco and other drugs.

The meeting was productive, with constructive dialogue on enhancing the health of women and children in India. The Minister expressed strong support for collaborative efforts and committed to continued engagement with all stakeholders to drive positive change.

c. Technical support to MbHFW for OTT

With the increasing consumption of content on Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms in India, concerns have emerged regarding the portrayal of health-related issues, including the depiction of tobacco use. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare brought out a notification to regulate these platforms to ensure responsible content dissemination and protect public health. As requested by MbHFW, team documented the pictures and links of OTT platforms complying with the OTT regulations and were submitted with the Ministry.



Ms. Bhavna Mukhopadhyay, Chief Executive, VHAI participated as a resource person at a meeting organised by AIIMS, New Delhi



Meeting with Former Chief Minister, Uttarakhand, Shri Tirath Singh Rawat

d. International Youth Day with a focus on "Nasha Mukti" initiatives in India

International Youth Day, observed annually on August 12, is dedicated to highlighting issues affecting young people worldwide. This year, our team focussed on Government of India's programme "Nasha Mukti" initiatives, emphasizing the importance of a drug-free lifestyle and promoting awareness about the dangers of substance abuse and health harms of tobacco use among the youth. The following key activities were conducted:

1. Awareness Campaigns:

- Public Rallies: Youth organizations and volunteers participated in rallies, holding banners and placards creating awareness among the general public especially among the youth.
- Workshops and Seminars: Educational workshops and seminars were conducted in schools & colleges to discuss the health harms of tobacco use.

2. Cultural and Educational Activities:

- Street Plays and Performances: Street plays, skits, and musical performances were organized to depict the consequences of drug abuse and the importance of staying drug-free.



3. Collaboration with Organizations:

- NGO Partnerships: Collaboration with non-governmental organizations working in the field of drug rehabilitation and youth empowerment to extend the reach of the campaigns.
- Community Involvement: Active involvement of community leaders and local celebrities to engage and inspire the youth.



Impact and Outcomes:

- **Increased Awareness:** Significant increase in awareness about the dangers of drug abuse and tobacco use among the youth.
- **Engagement and Participation:** High levels of engagement from youth across different regions, reflecting their commitment to a drug-free lifestyle.

The International Youth Day activities focused on "Nasha Mukti" in India were successful in mobilizing the youth and raising awareness about the critical issue of substance abuse.

e. Meeting held with DGHS, MoHFW

Ms. Bhavna Mukhopadhyay, Chief Executive had a meeting with Dr. Arun Goel, DGHS, MoHFW to discuss on the issues of public health. Following key points were discussed:

- Emphasis on the need to strengthen primary healthcare infrastructure
- Strategies for effective disease prevention and control, particularly in rural and underserved areas
- Necessity of continuous capacity building for healthcare professionals to ensure high-quality care

The meeting with the Director General of Health Services was productive, fostering constructive dialogue on key health issues and collaborative strategies. The DGHS emphasized the Ministry's commitment to improving health outcomes through enhanced primary healthcare, digital innovations, and robust disease prevention measures.

f. Harnessing the power of youth to pave way for a Drug-Free-India for a Viksit Bharat

Youth have powerful voices which can challenge circumstances, bring creativity and mobilize their peers to take action. They are valuable partners because they reflect genuine concern for their generation and also project a powerful voice in advocating for community change. They can not only act as agents of change but can also engender change through strategic thinking. This allows them to help educate the community and increase healthier norms and behaviors. It is noteworthy, that youth are not only the beneficiaries of a programme are important stakeholders in policy development and change.

Several programmes run by the Government of India recognizes the relevance of accumulating the support of youth advocates but also including them as important stakeholders for policy development and implementation. The National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP), through its provisions lays emphasis on engaging youth as important associates in Tobacco Control. The School Health Programme under the NTCP acknowledges that schools can be important partners in accomplishing the goal of controlling the use of tobacco products by the school children and also empowering them as champions of tobacco control in the society. Schools have the potential to reach to large numbers of children repeatedly at an age which is the most exposed to experiment with tobacco. The guidelines under the Tobacco Free Educational Institutions, clearly state that the responsibility of monitoring may be given to a student representative, delegating responsibility to them in the initiative. Also, the Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyan lays emphasis on generating ill effects of substance abuse among the youth through schools, colleges and universities.

During the year 2023-24, VHAI conducted awareness session for over 15000 school/college students with an aim to educate the youth on harmful effects of tobacco and other drugs, Government of India's laws and legislations and what can be done to implement the law and strengthen it. The students were educated on rise in consumption of tobacco and other drugs among young people, health burden, particularly increase in cancer cases due to tobacco and the need to stay away from tobacco along with their role in making India Drug-Free in the future. We prepared the IEC materials and were printed & distributed to the students.

To carry forward Honourable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi ji's vision of a Tobacco-Free India, we aim to continue the momentum and engage with youth through schools, colleges and universities. With youth tobacco and drug abuse reaching epidemic proportions, we believe that that youth and young adults are made conscious of the public health threat that is tobacco and other drugs. This can be achieved if the youth are empowered and held responsible for creating a tobacco and drug-free culture which ultimately culminates towards a Drug-Free-India.

STATE LEVEL

Uttar Pradesh

a. Tobacco Vendor Licensing (TVL)

The team provided ground-level support to Lucknow Municipal Corporation for the implementation of Tobacco Vendor Licensing in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. The team sensitized the vendors and helped them in filling their registration forms and submitting the duly filled forms to the concerned department of Municipal Corporation. Also, the team coordinated with the TVL nodal officer and zonal officers for speeding up of TVL implementation in the city. With the team's efforts, around 600 TVLs have been issued in the financial year of 2023-24.

b. World No Tobacco Day

On May 31st, World No Tobacco Day, several activities were conducted in Uttar Pradesh:

1. Awareness Activity: VHAI organized awareness activities on May 30-31, 2023, with youth volunteers in Lucknow and Mohanlalganj, urging the youths to stay away from tobacco. We also distributed IEC materials among the youth.

2. Radio Programme: On May 29th, VHAI experts participated in All India Radio's 'Gyanvani' educational program, discussing the harmful effects of tobacco and its environmental impact. Numerous listeners called in with their queries which were addressed during the programme.

3. Awareness Programme: VHAI supported an awareness event by NYKS volunteers, motivating over 500 youths to pledge against tobacco use. VHAI also participated in a program at Balrampur Hospital, involving medical professionals and students in a signature campaign and oath-taking ceremony.



Ace badminton player, PV Sindhu's video message on World No Tobacco Day urging the youth to stay away from tobacco

c. Technical support to District Tobacco Control Cell (DTCC)

1. On 15th July 2023, team provided technical support to the District Tobacco Control Cell, Lucknow for one-day orientation of Medical Professionals of Health & Wellness Centres on 'Role of Health Professionals in Protecting Youth from Tobacco & Nicotine Use' at the CMO Office. About 65 Medical Professionals participated in the program.
2. On August 24th & 25th, VHAI supported the training of 155 ANMs on tobacco control at the CMO Office in Lucknow. VHAI discussed tobacco hazards and quitting benefits and presented on protecting youth from tobacco and nicotine. The interactive session received positive feedback.
3. On November 7th, VHAI supported a one-day training workshop on tobacco control at the Chief Development Officer's Office, Lucknow. VHAI presented on the role of Panchayat Raj Institutions in 'Advancing Tobacco Control Program in Lucknow District'. Approximately 84 officials participated, finding the session interactive and useful.
4. Team provided technical support to DTCC in sensitization of NCC cadets on tobacco control and attended as a resource person in the event organized at Panchsheel Balak Inter college, GBN. More than 400 NCC cadets and officers were present in the programme.

d. Technical support to State Government

Team provided technical support to the raiding squad for the enforcement of section 6b (selling tobacco within the periphery of 100 yards of the education institution) under COTPA, 2003 in Lucknow.

e. Observing Anniversary of Smoke-free rules

On the 15th Anniversary of Smoke-Free Rules, VHAI in collaboration with NYKS organized various activities in Lucknow to educate youths about the harmful effects of tobacco consumption. Over 300 youths and local leaders participated in 'Samvad' event, rallies, awareness sessions and signature campaign at Rumi Gate.

f. Empowering Youth: Raising Awareness on Tobacco and its Health Harms

A comprehensive awareness campaign between October 2023 and January 2024, was launched in Kaushambi, Uttar Pradesh, on the request of MP Vinod Sonkar, focusing on the dangers of tobacco and other drugs. The initiative successfully sensitized over 10,000 students and teachers from more than 40 schools about the severe health risks associated with these substances. Through a series of workshops, interactive sessions, and educational materials, the youth were empowered with knowledge and preventive measures. This concerted effort has significantly contributed to raising awareness and fostering a healthier, drug-free future for the young generation in the region.





Chhattisgarh

a. Youth awareness events

Throughout the year, the team organized various events in the state to spread awareness among the youths to protect them from the harmful effects of tobacco:

1. On 21st April 2023, youth awareness programme was organized in Balaji Vidya Mandir School, Raipur in which more than 100 students participated. Senior MLA, Shri Kuldeep Singh Juneja Ji was the chief guest of the event

2. On the eve of International Youth Day (August 11th, 2023), team successfully organized sensitization programs in Saraswati Sishu Mandir school, Raipur.

3. VHAI team, in collaboration with Indian Medical Association, organized an event to raise awareness on the occasion of World Heart Day on 29th September 2023. The event was organized in Gurukul Mahila Mahavidyalaya where more than 250 youth participants actively participated.

4. VHAI successfully organized National Youth Day event in collaboration with NYKS & NSS in Raipur on January 12th. The program has participation from NCC, Traffic Police, Central Para Military forces including ITBP, Raipur Police along with college and school students. More than 300 people including students participated in the event. Shri. Purinder Mishra, local MLA was the Chief Guest at the event and expressed his full support in the Tobacco Free Chhattisgarh movement



b. Coordination with Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS)

Taking forward our association with NYKS, VHAI took two sessions on 'The Role of Youth in Tobacco Control' in the Youth Leadership Development and Capacity Building Training Program of Nehru Yuva Kendra Sansthan (NYKS). 80 youths were sensitized during the event



c. World No Tobacco Day

To mark World No Tobacco Day in Chhattisgarh, several activities were conducted:

1. **Awareness Activity:** VHAI engaged NYKS youths to raise awareness on the health harms of tobacco. We also distributed IEC materials to educate the youths on the issue.
2. **Street Play and Rally:** Youth volunteers performed street plays and held a rally in Raipur with banners and placards.
3. **Tobacco Awareness Event:** In Kanker, VHAI and local CSOs organized an event with MLA Shishupal Shori to raise awareness on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day. Over 200 youths participated.

d. World Cancer Day

World Cancer Day, observed on February 4, aims to raise awareness about cancer, promote its prevention, detection, and treatment, and show support for those affected by the disease.

VHAI organised a sensitization programme on harmful deadly effects of tobacco and its relation with cancer with Sanjeevani Cancer Hospital on the eve of World Cancer Day, March 3rd, 2024 at the auditorium of Sanjeevani Cancer Hospital in Raipur.

Former Agriculture Minister Chandrashekhar Sahu participated as Chief Guest, Raipur IMA President Dr. Rakesh Gupta, Sanjeevani Cancer Hospital Director Dr. Yusuf Memon and Dr. PK Mukherjee, and other oncologists along with the cancer patients showed their active participation in the programme.

The sensitization programme not only highlighted the significance of cancer prevention and treatment but also reinforced the message of hope and support for cancer patients and survivors.

e. Survey to assess the compliance of COTPA law

In the reporting year, VHAI conducted surveys to assess the compliance status of various sections of the COTPA law in both the states of Uttar Pradesh & Chhattisgarh. The surveys conducted were entitled:

1. An observational analysis to assess the compliance of smoke-free rules in Uttar Pradesh & Chhattisgarh.
2. Tiny Targets Study

The findings from both the survey demonstrated the need of strict enforcement of tobacco control laws in both states under survey.

DEVELOPMENT OF IEC

ESCAPE THE VAPE

FACTS

- Nicotine is as addictive as Heroin and Cocaine.
- Use of E-cigarettes among youth increases the risk of mental health problems later in life.
- E-cigarettes in youth can hamper learning and retention.
- E-cigarettes may cause permanent damage to the lungs.

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#DonTB&AFootVapelsNotCool

PROTECT WOMEN FROM TOBACCO USE TO CREATE A HEALTHY WORLD

BACKGROUND

- Tobacco consumption is a growing concern around the globe for many decades and has been regarded as one of the most common causes of morbidity and mortality.
- Tobacco use plays a pivotal role in perpetuating health inequalities among different socio-economic groups between genders.
- Gender based psychological aspirations are blatantly exploited to promote tobacco. Almost all cigarette and chewing tobacco advertising imagery across the world includes women, taking advantage of the changing position of women in the society and their increasing socio-economic independence.

TOBACCO USE AMONG WOMEN - GLOBAL SCENARIO

- The prevalence of cigarette smoking among women has increased worldwide in recent years and is considered a public health concern. [1]
- Tobacco is used by around 32.7% of males and 6.6% of women aged 15 years or older worldwide. [2]
- The Southeast Asian Region (SEAR) recorded the highest tobacco usage prevalence globally in 2020, which was around 27.9%. The average prevalence was 46% among men and 8.7% among women. [3]
- Second-hand smoke causes the death of 600,000 women every year globally, and 64% of annual second-hand smoke related deaths are of women. [2]

TOBACCO USE AMONG WOMEN - INDIAN SCENARIO

- Tobacco use among women is prevalent in all regions of India and among all sections of the society.
- Data from nationally representative surveys in the country consistently documents the increasing trend of tobacco use among women, particularly smokeless tobacco (SLT). [3]
- As per Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2016-17, about 16.2% of women aged 15 years and older in India are using tobacco in some or other form.
- Tobacco consumption among women in rural India has increased from 8.1% in NFHS-4 to 10.5% NFHS-5.
- As per NFHS-5, the prevalence of tobacco use among women in north eastern states of India is quite high. It is highest in Mizoram at 61.6% followed by Manipur at 43.3% and Tripura at 50.4%. [4]
- As per Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS-4), the median age at initiation of cigarette, bidi and SLT is 15 years, 10.5 years and 9.9 years respectively. Girls initiated use of tobacco products earlier than boys. [5]
- The prevalence of current use of any tobacco product among girls aged 13-15 years has increased by 40% between 2003-2019. [5]

SECOND HAND SMOKE EXPOSURE AMONG WOMEN

- The consequences of tobacco use extend beyond the individual smoker and often adversely affects people around them.
- Second-hand smoke exposure among women has varied health consequences. Women exposed to second-hand smoke can have adverse reproductive health outcomes, such as pregnancy complications, fetal growth restriction, preterm delivery, stillbirths, and infant death. [6]
- As per GATS-2, over 33.7% of non-smokers, disproportionately women, were exposed to second-hand smoke at home, about 21% at work and 25.9% at any public place.

We developed several IEC materials on the health harms of tobacco and disseminated them at the grassroots level.

MEDIA

Through various platforms such as television, radio, print, and digital media, the team sensitized the media on public health and shared the information to educate audiences about the detrimental effects of tobacco consumption on health. By disseminating accurate information and fostering public discourse, media articles played a crucial role in sensitizing the population to the health harms associated with tobacco, ultimately contributing to efforts in supporting Govt's tobacco control programme.

Serving food in smoking zone

HEALTH HAZARD Officials say such places facilitate second-hand or passive smoking

Deevy Seigal

with non-smokers (to prevent second-hand smoking). In the name of hookah bars or other such names, restaurants earn by allowing people to smoke and eat simultaneously.

LUCKNOW: Now, restaurants, particularly hookah bars, lounges, will not serve food in the 'smoking area' as this will invite penal action from the district authorities.

As per the latest notification by the ministry of health and family welfare, the 'smoking zone' / area will be used only for smoking and not for having food or beverages. This move follows the amendment made in the Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places Rules 2008.

Satish Tripathi, state consultant for the national tobacco control programme, said, "The attempt is to stop restaurants from allowing smokers to mix

hookah lounge is an establishment where patrons share 'shisha' from a common hookah. Most of these hookahs provide flavoured hookah smoke. "So, what happens is that a family sits on a table, and while only one or two members smoke, all the others are exposed to passive smoking," said Tripathi.

According to estimates, between 2014 and 2016, the state government spent ₹7,355 crore on patients of tobacco related diseases. This amount is almost double the revenue generated from the trade during this period. In 2016-17, challan was slapped on 6,276 people for smoking in public places. A total of ₹1,20,58,746 was realised in fines.

PASSIVE SMOKING Restaurants name corners as 'hookah bar' or 'hookah lounge' and then facilitate smoking. A

40% of cancers, cardiovascular diseases directly linked to tobacco use: ICMR

Strengthen the tobacco control laws to reduce tobacco consumption and prevalence of cancer cases; doctors and health activists have urged the Government as they cited a Parliamentary panel report which flagged that while crores of funds is being spent on treatment on cancer, desired steps are not taken to curb consumption of the deadly items.

Dr Pankaj Chaturvedi, Professor & Surgeon, Department of Head & Neck Surgery, Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai said, "It is scientifically established that if a person is kept away from tobacco till the age of 21 years and above, there is a very high probability that s/he will remain tobacco free for rest of his life. "Several countries have now increased the minimum age of sale of tobacco products to 21 years.

Increasing minimum legal age for sale of tobacco products from 18 years to 21 years and banning smoking area/point of sale advertisements by amending COTPA 2003, is crucial to protect youth from tobacco." As per the Indian Council of Medical Research, the number of Indians suffering from cancer is likely to experience a rise of about 29.8 million in 2025 from 26.7 million in 2022.

Govt to make anti-smoking warning mandatory for OTTs

The health ministry has held several rounds of talks with the I&B ministry, and it has been decided that changes would be made in COTPA, said a senior official. Changes are expected within the next few months, said officials.

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA
MARCH 01, 2023 / 01:58 PM IST

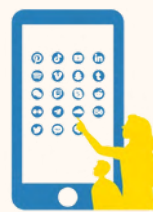




INFOSURAKSHA

PROMOTING SOCIAL MEDIA LITERACY AMONG THE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

The Internet has revolutionized everyday communication, becoming our preferred medium globally. With over 5 billion internet users worldwide, India, boasting 881.25 million users, witnessed a transformative shift during the COVID-19 pandemic, heavily relying on digital platforms for news, education, and entertainment. However, this increased reliance exposed society, particularly young minds, to health-related misinformation. The swift dissemination of both information and misinformation on social media platforms has severe consequences, impacting scientific understanding, opinions, and access to reliable health sources. These repercussions extend to public health, mental well-being, and trust in institutions, notably affecting the younger generation. Recognizing this, social media literacy emerges as a crucial solution, equipping individuals, especially schools, with the skills to critically assess digital content and navigate the online world responsibly.



InfoSuraksha
Learn.Verify.Share

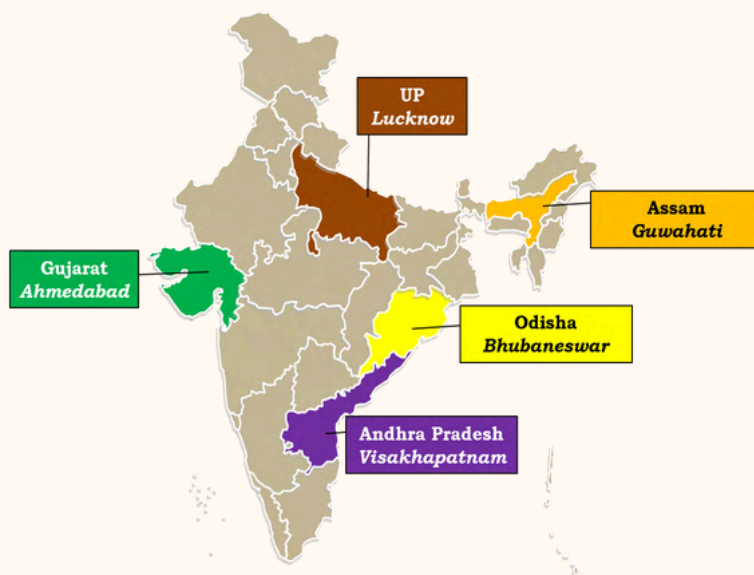
**Ensuring safe,
responsible and
ethical
use of
social media**

A unique collaborative initiative, the project "InfoSuraksha," in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) Country Office India, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), and State Governments was implemented in the year 2023. The program focused on empowering students and teachers to safely navigate online health information and distinguish between factual and fake news. The aim was to address challenges posed by health-related misinformation and infodemics while also providing clear evidence justifying the crucial need for social media literacy.

The primary objective of this initiative was to understand the existing knowledge of the students and identify gaps, develop modules, impart training to enhance the awareness, develop critical digital skills and online safety of school children and educators by strengthening their capacity in social media literacy and combating the dissemination of misinformation. The focus has been on fostering responsible and respectful use of social media, leading to the creation of a positive digital role model within school communities and beyond.

InfoSuraksha Vision

To build school community (Student & Teachers) as a Positive Digital Role Model that exerts a constructive influence on society



This programme was implemented in five states (five cities) in India: Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, Guwahati, Assam, and Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. The project reached out to 75 schools (15 schools per state), comprising government, private, and semi-aided institutions, with a focus on training students (grades 9 to 12) and teachers with social media literacy skills





KEY ACTIVITIES

A. Preparatory Phase

- Appointment and Training of Field team on the Social Media Literacy initiative.
- Stakeholder Mapping at the State and City level: This included meetings with the officials of State Education Department and District Education Officials and taking their written approvals for conducting the programme in the schools.
- Selection of the Schools in each city in close consultation with the local education authorities and meetings with the school authorities. 15 schools were identified in each state.

B. Need Assessment

A comprehensive need assessment was carried out in the selected schools to evaluate the knowledge gap and information needs within the school community, involving students, teachers, and identifying barriers to accessing reliable information on social media. This assessment also shed light on the diverse sources and mediums currently utilized for accessing and disseminating information, along with the strategies employed by target groups to combat fake news/misinformation.

C. Development of Training Package

The development of a comprehensive training package stemmed from insights gathered during a need assessment conducted across five states, coupled with the positive response received from various State and District Education Departments. This meticulously crafted training material encompasses modules for both teachers and students, posters, a pocket guide, videos, interactive activity games, bookmarks, and PowerPoint presentations tailored for student and teacher training session..To ensure widespread accessibility, the entire training package has been translated and contextualised in five regional languages, namely Hindi, Oriya, Assamese, Gujarati, and Telugu.The training material was pilot tested in one school per state.

The training package comprises modules designed for students and teachers, a pocket booklet, eight posters, three videos, activity games, bookmarks, and powerpoint presentations.



D. Training Workshops

Training of Trainers (ToT) Workshop: An online two-day ToT workshop was held to enhance the proficiency of 20 master trainers, including State Coordinators and State Programme Assistants for the InfoSuraksha project. Led by VHA's National Project Team, in collaboration with WHO and ICMR experts, the workshop focused on social media literacy and training material delivery. These master trainers are now equipped to conduct capacity-building sessions in schools.

Training Programmes in Schools: Following their training, master trainers conducted workshops for students (classes 9-12) and teachers, covering topics like social media basics, infodemics, misinformation, fake news identification, responsible digital citizenship, cyberbullying, and digital safety. Sessions utilized presentations, storytelling, videos, group activities, posters, and games to promote responsible social media use and critical evaluation of information. Each school trained 100 students in two batches and 10-12 teachers in a single session.

E. Mass Awareness

Extensive awareness has been disseminated across multiple levels by these trained educators and champions, encompassing schools, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA), as well as family and peer groups beyond the school environment. Media channels, including print and social media platforms, have been utilized to efficiently spread awareness among the public.

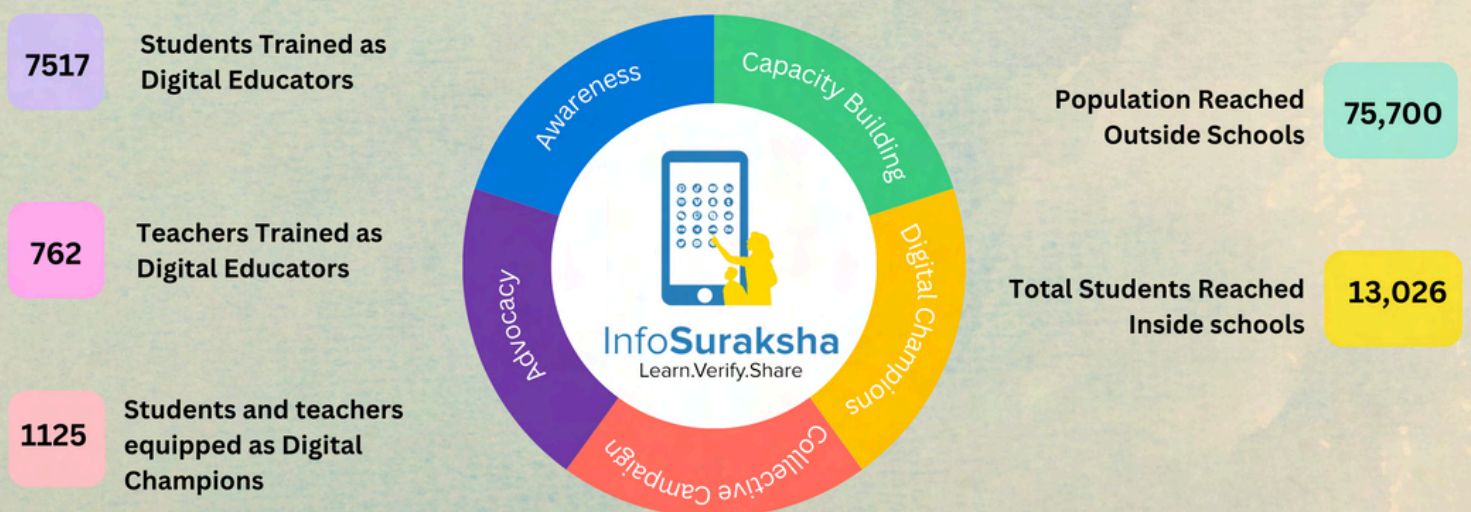
F. High Level Advocacy

The project aims to integrate the Social Media Literacy program into state board curricula. Discussions with Education Department officials in five states, led by the InfoSuraksha team, WHO, and ICMR, presented ongoing initiatives and urged state-wide implementation. Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Assam showed interest, with Andhra Pradesh actively working on integration and proposing training for District Education Officers and Nodal teachers.

G. Endline Evaluation

An endline evaluation was conducted using a sample size determined by the initial needs assessment. The evaluation measured the program's impact on social media literacy, revealing significant improvements among students and teachers. Among students, awareness of fake health information increased from 32.2% to 90.8%, and there was a better understanding of misinformation and disinformation. Post-training, 72.2% of students verified health news before sharing, compared to 28.5% prior. Confidence in discerning fake news rose to 93.4%, and 93.7% of students now actively report fake news online, up from 15.6%. Teachers also showed remarkable improvement, with awareness of false health information soaring from 50.4% to 95.7%. Understanding of terms like misinformation and disinformation surged from 42.1% to 98.1%, and verification of health news before sharing rose from 41.9% to 80.8%. Confidence in identifying fake news increased from 21.9% to 77%, while awareness of reliable health sources climbed from 75.7% to 96.5%.

Project Outreach



In total, 75 schools spanning across five states, with 15 schools in each state, were included comprising a mix of public, private, and semi-aided educational institutions.



‘Students need to be trained in balanced use of technology’



The Commissioner, School Education, S. Suresh Kumar on Thursday said in this age of technology, digital devices played a key role. Speaking after releasing the posters and modules developed by the organisations like

the World Health Organisation, the Indian Council of Medical Research and Voluntary Health Association of India , with which the School Education department is collaborating for implementation of various initiatives, Mr. Suresh Kumar said however, technology was a double-edged sword and students should be trained in proper and balanced use of smart phones, tabs and social media platforms to benefit from the technological advancements. Referring to the rising number of cyber crimes, he cautioned against excessive use of social media and also warned students against getting influenced by fake news. Director of School Education P. Parvathy, India representative of WHO Tran Minh Nhu Nguyen, WHO national programme officer Sophia Lonappan, chief executive of VHA I Bhavana B. Mukhopadhyay and national programme officer, VHA I, Nancy

టీచర్లు, విద్యార్థులకు డిజిటల్ శిక్షణ అవసరం

పాఠశాల విద్యాశాఖ కమిషనర్ సురేష్ కుమార్
సాఫ్ట్, అమరావతి: డిజిటల్ సరికాం వాడకంలో విద్యార్థుల సమయం దుర్వినియోగం కావడమే కాకుండా వ్యవసాయా మార్ అవకాశం ఉంది పాఠశాల విద్యాశాఖ కమిషనర్ ఎన్.సురేష్ కుమార్ అన్నారు. ప్రపంచ ఆరోగ్య సంస్థ, ఇండియన్ కౌన్సిల్ ఆఫ్ మెడికల్ రీసెర్చ్ (ఎన్ఐఎఐ), వలంబరీ హాల్ ఆఫీసులో ఆన్ లైన్లో ప్రతినిధులతో సదుపాదం సమగ్ర శిక్షా రాష్ట్ర కార్యాలయంలో కమిషనర్



సోషల్ మీడియా, డిజిటల్ సరికాం వాడకంలో ప్రతినిధుల సమావేశమయ్యారు. ఈ సందర్భంగా ఆయన మాట్లాడుతూ.. ప్రస్తుత సాంకేతిక యుగంలో డిజిటల్ వాడకానికి ప్రాధాన్యం పెరిగింది, వాటిని సరైన రీతిలో వినియోగిస్తే

వలంబరీ హాల్ లు ఉండవలసి అన్నారు. సోషల్ మీడియా అతి వాడకం, తప్పుడు వార్తల ప్రచారం సైబర్ నేరాలకు పురిగొల్పాలాయని, సాఫ్ట్ పోస్ట్, ట్యాబ్ వంటి డిజిటల్ వలంబరీ, సోషల్ మీడియా వాడకం ప్రయోజనాల, దుష్ప్రయోజనాలపై ప్రచురణ పాఠశాల విద్యార్థులకు, ఉపాధ్యాయులకు శిక్షణ ఇవ్వాలని సూచించారు. ఈ సందర్భంగా ఆయన అంకాంపై రూపొందించిన మాడ్యూల్స్, పోస్టర్లను కమిషనర్ అవిష్కరించారు. కార్యక్రమంలో పాఠశాల విద్యకైతర్ పి.పార్వతి, డిప్యూటీ సెల్ డైరెక్టర్లు డాక్టర్ ట్రాన్ మిన్హు ఎన్ఐఐ, సోఫియా భావన వి.ముఖోపాధ్యాయ డాక్టర్ నాన్హు స్రీతీ లాల్, కేపీ మోహనరావు, సీట్ ఇన్స్పెక్టర్, ఆర్.మనోహర్ పాల్గొన్నారు.

InfoSuraksha: Empowering students and Teachers against Infodemic threats on Social Media

OUR CORRESPONDENT
Lucknow: In today's time, social media has emerged as the prominent source of news & information. But with such an over-abundance of information on social media, people are also exposed to misinformation or false information which is referred to as 'Infodemic'. Children are most vulnerable for these misinformation and are at higher risk for its negative impacts. Also, increased exposure of children to social media platforms has led to serious

oration with State & District Education Department and organized first training programme for Students & teachers in D.A.V. Public School, Indira Nagar, Lucknow on 09th Aug. In this training programme, the participants were trained on how to identify, verify and report fake news and how to protect themselves from the negative effects of excessive social media usage. The participants were motivated and encouraged to become responsible digital citizens by protecting them-



entist, Dr. Shyamjeet Yadav highlighted the importance of social media literacy particularly in the management of infodemic because health related misinformation se- and promoting social media literacy as it contributes directly to overall well-being and development of students and larger society. School Principal, Ms. Mon-

Empowering Community-Based Institutions for Improving Routine Immunization

India boasts the largest immunization program globally, targeting approximately 26.7 million infants and 29 million pregnant women annually. As a result of the government's dedicated efforts in strengthening this program, immunization rates have significantly improved. However, there is still much work to be done in reaching every child in the country. Challenges such as a large population, community ignorance and resistance, and difficult-to-access areas contribute to low immunization rates in certain states.

Particularly in Nagaland, Arunachal, Assam, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Manipur, the full immunization coverage status is extremely poor compared to the national average. To achieve the nationwide target of 90% coverage, special attention must be given to these underperforming states and districts. Low demand for immunization services also plays a critical role in the low uptake rate. Despite the availability of immunization services in various areas, communities often refrain from utilizing them due to fears and misconceptions, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lockdowns, restrictions, and the diversion of health staff to COVID-19 efforts, further hindered immunization services throughout the country. Therefore, it is crucial that immunization and COVID-19 prevention efforts go hand in hand. Community-based organizations (CBOs) and influencers can play a significant role in addressing these issues and strengthening the demand for immunization services in low-performing districts. CBOs can mobilize the community and support the health team in delivering immunization services.

As part of VHAI's comprehensive program, partner NGOs are working with CBOs and influencers to mobilize communities, raise awareness about immunization, eliminate COVID-19 stigmas, and promote vaccination. This initiative has been ongoing for the last three years and focuses on remote and hard-to-reach areas, including the northeastern states of Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, and Arunachal Pradesh. Partner NGOs collaborate with block-level NGOs to engage local CBOs and influencers, building their capacity to promote COVID-19 vaccination, routine immunization, and adherence to COVID-19 appropriate behavior.

During the year 2023-24, VHAI, along with its field team, remains dedicated to empowering local CSOs, CBOs, and influencers to improve routine immunization in their respective localities. Through close coordination with government frontline workers, empowered local CBOs are still continuing with the work in their locality areas to increase demand for routine immunization services, and to overcome vaccine hesitancy.





Promoting Adolescent Health

Young people health and rights including their reproductive play a vital role in their lives. However, due to a lack of comprehensive life skills education and information about reproductive, accessing reproductive health services and achieving gender equality becomes incredibly challenging for young individuals. Moreover, societal norms that regulate female decision making power, unfavorable attitudes from healthcare professionals, and taboos surrounding reproductive health further hinder their ability to openly discuss these issues.

In order to address these barriers, VHAI has taken the initiative to promote health-seeking behaviors among adolescents and young people residing in remote tribal villages of District Mayurbhanj and villages of District Ganjam, Odisha. The main objective of this initiative is to facilitate better access to necessary healthcare services for these communities.

Strengthening Peer Education Model

Over the course of our extensive five-decade-long service in public health, peer education has consistently demonstrated its effectiveness in various domains. This approach has successfully been utilised in areas such as reproductive health, averting child marriage, nutrition education, family planning, substance use prevention, and violence prevention amongst others.

By harnessing the power of adolescent and young individuals as change agents, awareness can be raised and myths and misconceptions surrounding sexual and reproductive health, as well as other health and social issues, can be dispelled at the community level.

At the village level, we focused on the identification and capacity building of Peer Educators in areas such as SRHR, Life Skill Education, Nutrition, Gender based violence, mental health, anemia and prevention and management of NCDs. These Peer Educators were then equipped to train and educate their respective groups on these crucial issues.



Significant Achievements through Peer Education Model

01

Conducted comprehensive training for 150 Peer Educators on health and well-being, Life Skills Education (LSE), and government social security and welfare programs."

02

Implemented regular health education sessions in 70 villages, leveraging expertise of peer educators, along with the support of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs).

03

Successfully sensitized over 6200 adolescents and youths on health & wellbeing including reproductive health, prevention of gender based violence, mental health and LSE through engaging group sessions led by peer educators.

04

Regular awareness and screening session for anaemia prevention and management conducted at the community level with support of local PHCs and SCs

05

Organized demonstration sessions in 65 villages, facilitated by adolescent group members, to create widespread awareness on topics such as Eat Right, Nutrition, hygiene, and sanitation including menstrual hygiene and environmental sustainability

Eat Right Movement

A healthy diet is one of the key responses to the rising incidence of non-communicable diseases. Launched in July 2018, 'The Eat Right Movement' is aligned with 'Ayushman Bharat', 'Jan-Aandolan' & 'Poshan Abhiyaan'. It is an all-encompassing nation-wide campaign with a focus on preventive and promotive healthcare through social and behavioural change on eating healthy and safe food. VHAI is a technical partner of FSSAI in the Eat Right Movement and is actively involved in the programme.

As a part of the movement, the EAT RIGHT toolkit has been co-developed by three organizations- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI) & National Health Systems Resource Centers (NHSRC). The toolkit is developed with the aim to complement the existing components on preventive and promotive health. It will reach out to the citizens through the channel of Health & Wellness Centres under AYUSHMAN BHARAT, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India. The Eat Right Toolkit is built on two broad pillars- Eat Healthy and Eat Safe, delivering clear and simple messages on eating healthy, foods to eat (balanced diet, nutrition during first 1000 days of life and foods to avoid (high fat, sugar and salt foods). It also includes crucial components on eating safe which deals with maintaining hygiene (personal and environmental) and food safety & food adulteration. The toolkit through its engaging component aims to target the front-line health workers as well as local communities. It will be implemented by front-line health workers like ASHAs, Anganwadi workers (AWWs), Mid-level health providers and Medical Officers at the Primary Health Centers (PHCs) and Health & Wellness Centers (HWCs).

This toolkit has been contextualized and translated by VHAI in five languages - Hindi, Punjabi, Oriya, Assamese and Gujarati.

Training of Grass root Health Workers and Young Peer Educators: In the year 2023-24, VHAI has trained more than 550 field health workers such as ASHAs, AWWs and 720 peer educators in various part of the country on Eat Right Toolkit.



VHAI-IUHPE Collaborative Efforts

The major cause of disease burden and premature deaths among countries in the South-East Asia Region (SEAR) are communicable and non-communicable diseases as well as the new emerging threats such as COVID-19. Tuberculosis, malaria & HIV/AIDs remain a major public health concern, while non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and cancers are increasing even among the poor. Furthermore, due to rapid globalization, the countries in the region are experiencing drastic changes in consumption patterns of food, tobacco and alcohol. Added to these are the huge disparities between and within the countries.

As all of us know, Health Promotion is a sustainable strategy to address the underlying causes of the growing disease burden and to reduce premature mortality as well as inequalities. Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI) and the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) have collaborated to systematically expand IUHPE's Health Promotion agenda in the South East Asia Region (SEAR). The International Post of IUHPE for the SEAR is based at VHAI, New Delhi to carry out collaborative work in the region with specific objectives.

Leveraging existing networks to:



THE IUHPE EXECUTIVE BOARD 2022-2025

Ms. Bhavna Mukhopadhyay, Chief Executive, VHAI has been elected to the Executive Board of IUHPE 2022-2025. The Executive Board governs and administers the IUHPE on behalf of the General Assembly. The board determines policies, strategies and integrated work programmes for the Organisation. The board is responsible for reviewing and approving triennial Integrated Work Plan, financial budgets and approving Global and Regional Bye-Laws along with other administrative roles.

GOVERNING BOARD MEETING: STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PRIORITIES

Ms. Bhavna B Mukhopadhyay, as a governing board member of the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE), played an active role in the board meeting held on May 18th, 2023 and September 27, 2023. The primary agenda of the meeting was a thorough review of IUHPE's Strategic Plan (2021-2026), which involved assessing the progress made so far and setting strategic priorities for the future. Ms. Mukhopadhyay's participation in these meetings exemplifies VHAI's commitment to shaping IUHPE's strategic direction and advancing the field of health promotion and education.



Introducing



V4 HEALTH

V4Health, an initiative spearheaded by the Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI), serves as a natural evolution of VHAI's enduring commitment to community health and promoting holistic well-being

About V4Health

V4Health is an online initiative that seamlessly blends the wisdom of traditional systems of medicine with the principles of evidence-based modern science. Our goal is to ignite a paradigm shift towards a healthier, more joyful, and purposeful life for everyone.

This initiative is a logical progression in our mission under the flagship program "Health, Wellbeing, and Equity", to create mass awareness using new-age media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, etc.

In today's digital landscape, navigating and distinguishing between authentic and misleading health information has become increasingly challenging. Over the past decade, there has been a significant shift in health-seeking behaviour, with more people turning to online platforms to access health information. V4Health offers a trusted and well-researched source of accurate health content, reaching the masses with reliable health information.

Our dedicated team is committed to debunking common myths circulating on social media by providing scientifically-backed facts. V4Health emphasise the importance of addressing both the physical and emotional aspects of health, ensuring our content is accessible to social media users of all ages.

Our mission under this initiative is to **Connect, Transform, and Heal:**

- **Connect:** To guide individuals in rediscovering their innate connection with themselves by blending traditional Ayurvedic knowledge with evidence-based modern science.
- **Transform:** To equip individuals with the tools to listen to their bodies, enabling them to take charge of their health.
- **Heal:** To facilitate natural healing, empowering individuals to address the root causes of their health problems and restore balance for optimal well-being.

V4Health offers personalized wellbeing advice through an app-based platform and V4Health website



WEBSITE



www.v4health.co



SERVICES

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Talk to our experts
+91 73037 29885



Unlocking your full potential with V4Health

Connect. Transform. Heal

GET THE APP



Our Mission

To 'Connect, Transform, and Heal' individuals through a personalized wellness approach that harmonizes your unique body constitution and needs.



Connect

To guide individuals in rediscovering their innate connection with themselves, by blending traditional ayurvedic knowledge and evidence based modern science.



Transform

To equip individuals with the tools to listen to their body systems, enabling them to take charge of their health.



Heal

To facilitate natural healing, empowering individuals to address root causes of their health problems and restore balance for optimal well-being.



V4 HEALTH

Your Guide to Well-Being

Health & Happiness is only a tap away



Let's Begin



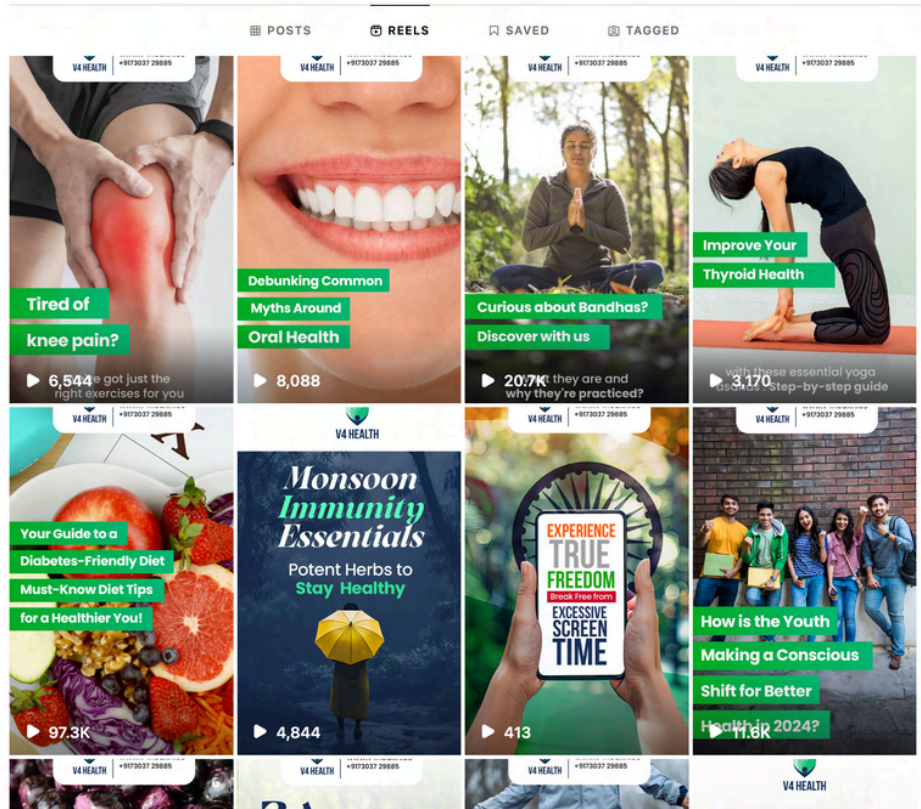
Android



Download the App Now

Instagram

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- Explore
- Reels
- Messages
- Notifications
- Create
- Profile
- Threads
- More



Reach ⓘ

359,725

Accounts reached

Followers	0
Non-followers	359,725

By content type

All Followers Non-followers

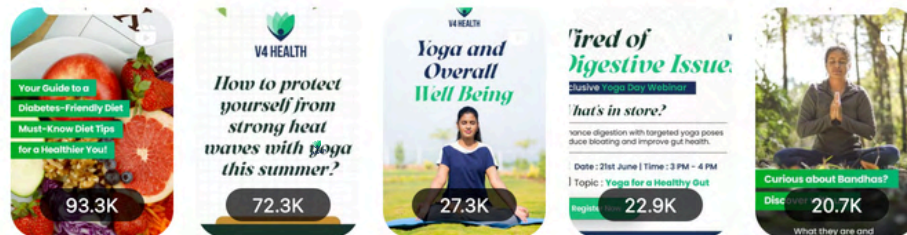
Reels	4.9K
Posts	1.3K
Stories	462



Followers Non-followers

Top content based on reach

[See all](#)



Social Media Snippets

The Social Media team at VHAI regularly updated VHAI's social media handles on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.



Vhai India
February 15 · 🌐

Addressing the escalating cancer crisis in India demands urgent action. From 1.2 million cases in 2019 to 1.41 million in 2022, the numbers speak volumes about the challenge we face. Prevention and early detection are critical, yet many cases remain unnoticed until it's too late. It's time to adopt proactive approaches.

On [#WorldCancerDay2024](#), VHAI organised awareness sessions and campaigns reaching 500+ individuals, including women's groups, frontline health workers, adolescents, students, and teachers in Odisha. The sessions and campaigns stressed on the significance of preventive care, regular screenings, and embracing a healthy lifestyle to combat cancer.

[#cancerawareness](#) [#healthpromotion](#) [#earlydetection](#) [#PreventiveHealthcare](#) [#vhai](#) [#WorldCancerDay](#)

Vhai India
April 28, 2023 · 🌐

Engaging local communities to create awareness about the benefits of consuming locally grown millet (Mandia) in remote parts of Odisha.

Join us in supporting the International Year of Millet 2023 by taking part in "Millets Pe Charcha", an initiative launched by the Voluntary Health Association of India.

Let's promote the consumption of millets for a healthier and more sustainable future. For more information, please visit our website: <https://vhai.org/support-the-millet-initiative/>

[#VHAI](#) [#VHAIMilletsPeCharcha](#) [#FSSAI](#) [#milletmission](#) [#IYM2023](#) [#healthyeating](#) [#sustainableliving](#)

Vhai India
May 2, 2023 · 🌐

Discover the power of millets!
Did you know that millets are classified as 'Major' and 'Minor' based on their grain size? Sorghum, pearl millet, and finger millet are Major millets, packed with energy, proteins, good fats, minerals, and vitamins. It's no wonder they're called 'Superfood'!

To learn more, please visit our website: <https://vhai.org/support-the-millet-initiative/>

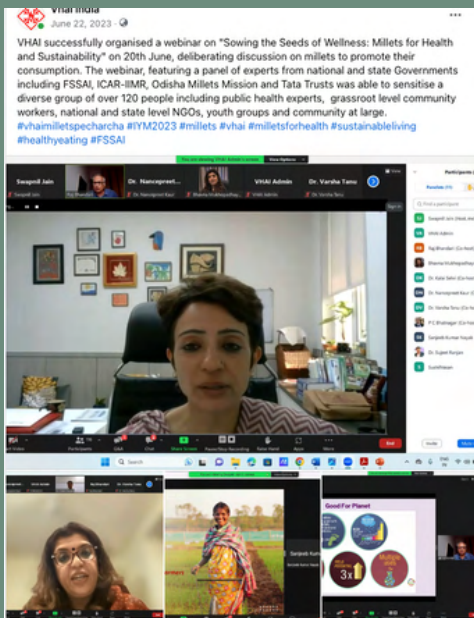
[#vhai](#) [#vhaimilletspecharcha](#) [#FSSAI](#) [#milletmission](#) [#IYM2023](#) [#healthyeating](#) [#sustainableliving](#)

Infosuraksha
September 27, 2023 · 🌐

An Infodemic is too much information including false or misleading information in digital physical environments during a disease outbreak.

Let's flatten the Infodemic curve.

[#Infosuraksha](#) [#WHO](#) [#ICMR](#) [#infodemic](#)



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS 2023-24

FUNDS		
PARTICULARS	As on 31.03.2024	As on 31.03.2023
Capital Fund	7,19,80,407.88	7,07,38,703
Other Funds & Reserves	6,99,46,219.00	7,10,36,080
Unutilised Grant Balances	8,78,097.16	62,10,331
Bank Loan for Vehicle (Secured by Vehicle)	21,92,441.11	3,78,815
Income & Expenditure Account	(18,25,573.83)	(14,70,975)
Total	14,31,71,591.32	14,68,92,954

APPLICATION OF FUNDS				
		As on 31.03.2023		As on 31.03.2023
Fixed Assets (at Cost)		7,10,05,408.88		6,97,63,704
Investments		6,27,44,684.65		6,65,29,342
Current Assets, Loans, Advances	1,00,62,861.02		1,19,46,725	
Less: Current Liabilities	29,81,587.51	70,81,273.51	32,00,637	87,46,088
Grants Awaiting Reimbursement		23,40,224.28		18,53,820
Total		14,31,71,591.32		14,68,92,954

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31.03.2024

EXPENDITURE	AMOUNT (Rs.)	INCOME	AMOUNT (Rs.)
Tobacco Control Programmes	1,52,75,191.28	Opening Balance of Grant Funds (Net)	43,56,511.16
Social Media Awareness & Digital Literacy Programmes	53,44,538.00	Add: Grants Received for Specific Projects:	
Community Health & Communicable Diseases control	4,74,311.50	WHO	53,44,538.00
Policy Research work for better development - ICHI	20,86,505.67	Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids	95,03,543.00
Health Promotion & Non communicable diseases control	37,24,531.83		1,92,04,592.16
Health Programmes in Aspirational Distt	22,71,773.50	Less : Closing Balance of Grant Funds (Net)	(14,62,127.12)
Children Welfare Programme	3,37,843.50	Core & Local Donations	05,35,000.00
Support to SVHAs	2,95,113.00	Membership Fee	50,000.00
Information, Publications & Website	5,60,166.00	Rent Income	65,41,950.00
Finance Services	10,62,704.00	Consultancy Income	93,105.00
Administrative Expenses	42,44,198.49	Collection from Distribution of Material	2,86,476.75
Support Staff costs	6,70,373.00	Collection from Gallery Freedom	2,84,950.00
Gratuity paid to outgoing staff	3,00,000.00	Interest on Investments & Savings account	46,30,058.81
Loss in sale of Assets	22,09,087.00	Maintenance Charges	48,29,280.85
Transfer to Land Equipment & Furniture Fund	46,95,292.00	Misc Income	7,36,041.50
Transfer to Gratuity Reserves	7,10,139.00	Transfer from Land Equipment & Furniture Fund	34,53,587.00
Excess of Expenditure over Income	(3,54,598.58)	Transfer from Gratuity Reserve - Paid during the year	3,00,000.00
	4,39,07,169.19	Transfer from General Reserve	15,00,000.00
			4,39,07,169.19

Executive Board Members (2023-25)

Dr. B.S. Garg
President

Dr Sushila Nayar School of Public Health
Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical
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Dr. Harshaben Shah
Vice-President

Gram Seva Trust,
Kharel,
Gujarat

Ms. Andamma Mani
Secretary

Administrator, Mitrani Ketan
Hospital, Vagamon – 685 503
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Mr. K. Pradipkumar
Treasurer
President
Manipur VHA

Sr. Michael L. Mary
Member

St. Joseph Health Centre
Vardhaman Nagar, P.O. Marwa,
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Mr. Satyen Chaturvedi
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Mr. Shaik Ismail
Member

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Ex-officio Member

Chief Executive
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VHAI Advisory Committee

Mr. Alok Mukhopadhyay
Chairman

Mr. J.V.R. Prasada Rao
Former Secretary (Health),
Government of India
UN Secretary-General Special Envoy for AIDS-Asia
and Pacific

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Former Director, AIIMS, New Delhi

Dr. S.Y. Quraishi
Former Chief Election Commissioner of India

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Mr. Deepak Gupta
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Former Chairman, UPSC

Dr Anand Krishnan
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VHAI Team

Alok Mukhopadhyay
Chairman (Advisory Committee)

Bhavna B. Mukhopadhyay
Chief Executive

Dr. P.C. Bhatnagar
Senior Technical Consultant

Dr. Rajni Kant Srivastava
Senior Technical Advisor

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Programme Manager

Binoy Mathew
Programme Manager
(Communications)

Dr. Swapnil Jain
Senior Programme Officer

Akanksha Bangwal
Programme Officer

Maansi Verma
Senior Programme Officer

Debananda Mohanta
State Programme Officer, Odisha

Dr. Satya Gupta
State Programme Officer, Uttar Pradesh

Deepak Khuntia
Programme Assistant, Odisha

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Consultant, Uttar Pradesh

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Vikram Mishra
Consultant, Uttar Pradesh

Ruchira Neog
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Mumtaj Ali
Field Officer, Uttar Pradesh

Mr. Satyanarayana Bandaru
State Consultant, Andhra Pradesh

Mr. Avdhesh Mallick
State Programme Manager, Chhattisgarh

Dr. Meena Shah
State Consultant, Gujarat

Ms. Susmita Shrivastava
State Programme Officer, Chhattisgarh

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Vinay Sharma
Finance & Accounts Officer

Sushil Kumar Vasan
Senior Manager (Administration & Personnel)

Subhash Bhaskar
Junior Programme Officer

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Assistant

Sanjay Kumar
Assistant

Bhola Nath
Driver

Rakesh Kumar Jha
Helper

Hari Jena
Helper



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VHAI Anthem

Where the mind is without
fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been
broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls
Where words come out from
the depth of truth
Where tireless striving
stretches its arms towards
perfection
Where the clear stream of
reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of
dead habit
Where the mind is led forward
by thee Into ever-widening
thought and action Into that
heaven of freedom, my
Father, let my country awake!

- Rabindranath Tagore





Voluntary Health Association of India

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