



**ROOTED IN
COMMUNITIES**

**BUILDING AN
INCLUSIVE
TOMORROW**

**Annual Report
2024-25**



**VOLUNTARY HEALTH
ASSOCIATION OF INDIA**

Making Health and Development a Reality for the people of India



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MILESTONES AND MOMENTS



REFLECTIONS OF THE YEAR 2024-25



IN EVERY FRAME, A STORY OF COMMITMENT TO HEALTH AND DIGNITY



CROSSING ONE MILLION MARK

In 2024-25, our programs and outreach efforts touched the lives of over 1 million individuals, advancing our vision for inclusive and sustainable development



HIGHLIGHTS

Climate Change and Health

VHAI launched its climate change and health initiative with a technical session at AGBM, featuring experts from ICMR, NCDC, TCI Foundation, and AIIMS who discussed the health impacts of climate change, followed by grassroots implementation through youth-led awareness and community activities.

V4Health Initiative Launched

In 2024, VHAI launched V4Health, a digital campaign promoting authentic health information by blending traditional Ayurveda with modern science. Using platforms like Instagram and Facebook, the initiative raises mass awareness and empowers informed health choices.

GAVI Expanded Partners Meeting

Attended the Partners Convening in Washington, DC, on May 22–23, 2024. The meeting focused on identifying what works in technical assistance (TA), exploring challenges in current Gavi practices, and developing practical recommendations for improvement.

Boosting Routine Immunization

In 2024, VHAI with support from UNICEF is implementing the project 'Boosting Demand for Routine Immunization and Reducing Zero Dose Children in 12 priority low-performing districts of Arunachal Pradesh' supported by GAVI HSS-3 grant.

Collaboration with Odisha Millet Mission

VHAI signed a MoU with the Odisha Millet Mission, Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment, Government of Odisha, to promote millet consumption at the household level. This aims to enhance food security and nutrition through increased millet use in local communities.

Youth-Led Solutions for Health and Sustainability

VHAI empowered over 25,000 youth and adolescents last year through capacity-building activities on key issues like substance abuse (tobacco and alcohol), climate change, millet promotion, food security, health equity, NCDs and others.



ABOUT VHAI

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**



VISION

TO MAKE HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT A REALITY FOR PEOPLE OF INDIA

MISSION

Guided by our vision and mission, VHAI continues its commitment to promoting equitable and sustainable health for all.

01

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.

03

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.

02

To promote and strengthen a medically rational, culturally acceptable and economically sustainable healthcare system in the country.

04

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.



VHAI'S PRESENCE IN ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Where health decisions are made – VHAI contributes, advises, and leads

01

National Health Missions & Programmes

- National AIDS Control Board
- National Nutrition Mission
- Common Review Mission of NRHM
- Advisory Group on Community Action under NRHM

02

Tobacco & Substance Use Control

- Task Force on Tobacco Control
- Task Force on Nasha Mukti Abhiyan
- Committee to Review COTPA and suggest amendments
- Technical Advisory and Monitoring Committee for GATS-3 &
- Expert Committee for Specified Health Warnings

03

Technical & Disease Specific Advisory Committees

- Technical Experts Committee for NPCDCS
- Technical Advisory Committee on Vector Borne Diseases
- Institute Ethical Committee, NICD
- Geoscience for Sustainable Development: Central Geological Programme Board

04

School & Child Health Initiatives

- Technical Review Committee of School Health under AYUSHMAN Bharat
- Advisory Committee – National Policy for Children
- National Mentoring Group for ASHA
- Governing Board of SRHR Alliance

05

Health Systems Strengthening & Governance

- Governing Body of National Institute of Health and Family Welfare
- Task Force on Public Private Partnership
- Expert Committee for Online Violations of COTPA & Prohibition of E-cigarettes Act
- Governing Board of IUHPE

06

State-Level Health Missions & Population Councils

- Delhi State Health Mission
- Rajasthan Population Council
- Bihar State Institute of Health and Family Welfare
- Madhya Pradesh State Population and Development Council

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS



Section 2 of the report, Investing in NCD Prevention and Management: Improving Health and Economic Outcomes, explores the growing impact of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) as a dual threat—undermining both public health and economic stability. It emphasizes the urgent need for accelerated responses from the government and key stakeholders, noting that a siloed approach is insufficient in addressing the NCD burden. This section advocates for a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach, with a focus on health promotion, early intervention, and strategic investments to manage and prevent NCDs.

Section 3, Mapping India's Health Expenditure: Trends, Observations, and Recommendations, presents an in-depth analysis of government spending trends in health, questioning whether the current allocation—hovering around 4% of GDP—is sufficient. It outlines key spending patterns, gaps in resource distribution, and proposes targeted recommendations for increasing health investment, ensuring equitable financing, and improving health outcomes across the country. Overall, the report serves as a vital resource for policymakers, public health professionals, and development partners aiming to strengthen India's health system.

This monograph has been widely circulated among key decision-makers and stakeholders, including national-level policymakers, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), NITI Aayog, as well as Chief Ministers and Health Secretaries across various states, with the objective of providing an evidence-based roadmap to inform and guide strategic health planning and investment decisions in the country.

The ICHDI members convened in January 2025 in Delhi to discuss and plan the future course of action, prioritizing three key areas for the financial year 2025-26



- **Bridging Grassroots Realities with Policy Advocacy-** The Commission emphasized the importance of linking lived experiences from the field with policy frameworks, focusing on evidence-informed advocacy that reflects the voices and needs of marginalized communities.
- **Strengthening Knowledge Platforms-** Plans were laid out to curate thematic publications and issue-based monographs addressing critical development and public health challenges, with the aim to drive national dialogue and institutional learning.
- **Expanding Youth and Community Leadership-** Recognizing the central role of young changemakers, the Commission committed to supporting initiatives that promote youth engagement and local leadership in public health, nutrition, and social justice campaigns.



HEALTH WELLBEING AND EQUITY

Bridging health gaps with dignity, access, and compassion



Resilience grows when the most vulnerable are no longer left behind.

At VHA, we are driving a paradigm shift from reactive healthcare towards proactive, preventive action addressing lifestyle factors, environmental conditions, and socio-economic disparities that underpin health inequities. This approach reflects the evolving global recognition that health promotion and disease prevention must be participatory, community-driven, and equity-focused.



The rising global burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and respiratory illnesses coupled with emerging new health challenges, underscores the urgent need for a stronger focus on health promotion. Recognizing this, VHAI has positioned health promotion as a core strategy to improve health outcomes, build resilience, and prevent disease. Drawing on lessons from both the persistent challenges of NCDs and the unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we strive to educate and empower individuals and communities, and to advocate for equitable policies that support health and wellbeing for all.

Over the past three decades, VHAI and its network of member institutions have implemented a range of innovative programs emphasizing healthy lifestyles, community wellbeing, and preventive care. Today, as we navigate new realities and opportunities, we remain committed to innovation and adaptation, building on best practices from across the country and the critical insights gained during the pandemic.

Through our recent holistic program on Health, Wellbeing, and Equity, we are deepening our efforts to strengthen the health and resilience of vulnerable populations. We are confident that by continuing to embrace change and champion inclusive health promotion, we will make a meaningful and lasting contribution to the nation's health and development.

HEALTH WELLBEING AND EQUITY-CONCEPT



HEALTH PROMOTION

Proactively promoting health to prevent illnesses and enhance well-being through targeted initiatives.



SELF-CARE FOR HEALTH AND COMMON AILMENTS

Empowering individuals to manage common health issues and adopt healthier lifestyles through self-care practices.



EQUITY FOR HEALTH

Addressing the social and economic factors influencing health outcomes, particularly among marginalized and disadvantaged communities, to ensure equitable access to healthcare and enhance well-being through targeted initiatives.

Equity in Action: Promoting Access to Welfare Schemes for Social Justice and Inclusion

Social welfare services from both Central and State Governments aim to support individuals facing barriers-social, economic, or physical, that prevent access to essential services. These programs are designed to help vulnerable populations, including women, children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, SC, ST, and other marginalized groups.

However, many individuals, particularly in remote and tribal areas, continue to struggle with access due to lack of awareness, procedural complexity, and distance from administrative centers. Vulnerable groups, such as elderly or widowed women living alone, are particularly excluded.



To address these access gaps, VHAI has been working to empower communities to claim their rightful entitlements by tackling barriers such as lack of awareness, procedural complexity, and local-level coordination challenges. With the active involvement of frontline health workers, community-based organizations, Panchayati Raj Institutions, youth leaders, and peer educators, VHAI is mobilizing rural populations, building local capacities, and fostering collaboration with government functionaries. This comprehensive approach is improving outreach, enhancing service delivery, and progressively reducing the number of excluded families, ensuring no one is left behind.

KEY ACTIVITIES



Baseline Assessment

A detailed assessment was carried out to understand awareness, perceptions, and access to government welfare schemes among tribal and vulnerable communities.

Identification and Orientation of Young Enablers

Local youth volunteers, “Young Enablers,” were identified and trained to support beneficiaries with scheme applications and grievance redressal.

Household Assessment

Young Enablers conducted door-to-door surveys to map eligible individuals and document barriers to accessing entitlements, creating a targeted database.

Collaborative Camps

Multi-service camps, organized with government and NGO support, helped people apply for Aadhaar, ration cards, pensions, health insurance, and more.

Orientation Sessions

Frontline workers, PRIs, and peer educators received training on social protection schemes to enhance their support for communities.

Awareness Sessions

Community sessions engaged women’s groups, VHSNCs, adolescents, and leaders to increase awareness and participation in welfare programs.

Education Sessions for Students and Parents

Awareness sessions in schools and PTAs informed students and parents about scholarships and child-focused government schemes.

Engagement with Officials

Regular dialogues with local authorities and PRIs helped identify gaps and suggest ways to strengthen scheme outreach and delivery.

Follow-up and Monitoring

Ongoing coordination with officials ensured timely enrollment of eligible individuals in PDS, housing, pension, and other welfare schemes.

Strengthening Social Protection at the Grassroots

SCALING EQUITY THROUGH COMMUNITY ACTION

Key Achievements



100,000+ Population Reached



10,000+ Households Reached



30,000+ Vulnerable Individuals Reached



9,524 Individuals Linked to Social Protection Schemes



1,436 Beneficiaries Enrolled in Pension Schemes



900+ Families Enrolled in PDS



4,000+ Youth Group Members Sensitized



8,000+ Women SHG Members Sensitized



4,000+ Students and 2,000 Parents Sensitized

Community Health Promotion

VHAI's community health promotion initiative focuses on empowering individuals and local communities to make informed health choices, thereby reducing the risk of diseases and disabilities. Through widespread awareness campaigns, we educate the public about prevalent health risks and their associated factors. We actively promote the adoption of healthier lifestyles and advocate for early detection and timely treatment to improve overall quality of life. In collaboration with local healthcare providers, we also work to enhance the accessibility and availability of essential health services, ensuring that communities receive the support they need for better health outcomes.



Key Activities

01

Youth for Health Campaign

Engaged 3,000+ youth, peer educators, and volunteers in sessions, rallies, and campaigns on NCDs, healthy lifestyles, substance use, nutrition, climate action, and millet promotion.



05

Nutrition & Hygiene Promotion

Conducted sessions in 76 villages across two districts, reaching women SHG members, male group members, and youth on hygiene, self-care, safe drinking water, and nutrition.

02

Sensitization on NCDs

Conducted programs for VHSNC members in remote villages to raise awareness on NCD prevention and risk factors.

03

Orientation for Mothers

Conducted sessions in remote villages for pregnant and lactating women on ANC, PNC, child feeding, and diarrhoea management, supported by AWWs and peer educators.

04

VHND Sessions

Educated 1,135 pregnant and lactating mothers and 1,654 adolescent girls in 54 villages on Eat Right practices, handwashing, hygiene, and sanitation

NCDs Awareness and Screening Camps

VHAI organized Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) awareness and screening camps in rural and semi-urban areas, particularly focusing on hard-to-reach villages. These camps aimed to educate communities on NCDs, their risk factors, and the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. The program also facilitated early diagnosis and treatment through community-based screenings for high-risk conditions such as diabetes and hypertension, with referrals to local health facilities for further care, diagnosis, and patient counselling.

In 2024–25, VHAI collaborated with local PHCs and CHCs to conduct screening and treatment camps, supported by ASHAs, AWWs, community volunteers, and young enablers. A total of 1,273 individuals were screened, with 185 referred for further treatment. Sensitization sessions were held to raise awareness about NCD prevention and management, particularly among women, adolescents, and other community members. Ongoing follow-ups for identified cases were ensured with the help of young enablers.



Emotional Well-being in Focus: A Community-Driven Approach to Mental Health Promotion



VHAI strengthened its mental health promotion efforts through a range of community and school-based initiatives. Mind-Body Balance sessions were organised, combining light sports activities with yoga, pranayama, and group meditation to promote physical and emotional well-being. Peer educators were trained to identify and address common adolescent mental health challenges such as societal pressure, bullying, body shaming, and puberty-related changes. In schools, sessions were conducted on mental health practices, focusing on exercise, nutrition, sleep hygiene, self-esteem, and stress management through hobbies and music. Special focus was given to digital detox, where youth were sensitised to the effects of digital addiction on mental health, and encouraged to adopt healthier screen habits and offline engagement.



Promotion of Kitchen Gardens

Kitchen gardens provide a low-cost, effective way to improve family nutrition, increase dietary diversity, and reduce malnutrition—especially among children and adolescents. In 2024–25, VHAI, with support from Panchayati Raj Institutions, promoted kitchen gardening in remote areas of Ganjam and Mayurbhanj districts, Odisha. Seeds, organic fertilizers, and eco-friendly pesticides were distributed to 1,465 low-income households, while over 2,000 SHG women, 3,000 adolescents, and 1,000 farmers were sensitized on their health and nutrition benefits.

School Health Promotion

In 2024–25, VHAI promoted health and hygiene in 66 schools across Ganjam and Mayurbhanj, sensitizing over 5,000 students and 210 teachers on nutrition, mental health, physical activity, and safe practices through focused education and demonstrations.

- Health education sessions on hygiene, sanitation, nutrition, millet promotion, anaemia, communicable & non-communicable diseases, and environmental health.
- Student competitions: debates, essay writing, slogan creation, and poster-making on health themes.
- Climate change education with demonstrations on practical mitigation actions.
- Hands-on demonstrations on handwashing, millet-based recipes, first aid, Eat Right practices, and yoga.
- Orientation for students and teachers on responsible social media use, cyberbullying, and tackling misinformation.
- Student-led campaigns advocating for plastic-free and junk food-free school campuses.



Voluntary Movement in India at the Crossroads Reflections from VHAI's 50th Annual General Body Meeting

As part of VHAI's 50th Annual General Body Meeting, a significant session titled "Voluntary Movement in India at the Crossroads" brought together Executive Directors and senior programme staff from State Voluntary Health Associations. Chaired by Mr. Alok Mukhopadhyay, Chairman (Advisory Committee), the session served as a platform for introspection, dialogue, and collective thinking around the evolving role of the voluntary sector in public health.



Mr. Mukhopadhyay opened the discussion by reflecting on the historical evolution of India's voluntary movement from early post-independence efforts to the present-day challenges faced by civil society organizations. He highlighted the sector's critical contribution in transitioning healthcare delivery from institutional to community-based models. Discussions spanned a wide range of themes including declining NGO funding, corporatization of health, CSR realignment, and the need for strong partnerships with government to address current public health challenges like non-communicable diseases and climate change.

State VHAs shared their perspectives, highlighting their innovative work, challenges with funding and sustainability, and the importance of building local leadership and engaging young volunteers. Common concerns included the narrowing space for independent NGOs, limitations in CSR access, and the need for stronger networking and capacity-building across the VHAI network. Emphasis was also placed on ensuring equity in access to government schemes and the importance of transparent fund management.

Reimagining the voluntary movement to meet today's public health challenges

The session concluded with a collective call to action urging State VHAs to recommit to the core values of the voluntary movement, strengthen their regional presence, and deepen community partnerships to address emerging health priorities.



Bringing grassroots realities to the forefront

The meeting reaffirmed the crucial role of the VHAI network in bridging policy and grassroots realities, especially at a time when the sector is navigating complex socio-political and economic landscapes.

As VHAI moves forward, these reflections will help inform the organisation's future strategies reaffirming its commitment to people-centred health systems, participatory governance, and strengthening the voice of communities in shaping equitable health responses.



State-level Workshop on Health, Wellbeing and Equity in Assam

VHAI, in collaboration with the Voluntary Health Association of Assam (VHAA), organized a one-day workshop on Health, Wellness & Equity for Civil Society Organizations on 20th March 2025 in Guwahati. The workshop focused on introducing the key components of VHAI's Holistic Model of Health, Wellbeing and Equity, which is anchored in three pillars: health promotion, self-care, and addressing social determinants of health including equity and entitlements.

Discussions highlighted the importance of shifting from a treatment-centric approach to one that emphasizes prevention, community resilience, and behaviour change. The concept of health promotion was explored in depth, including its role in preventing both communicable and non-communicable diseases, and its relevance for community-based interventions such as awareness generation, screening, and referral mechanisms. The scope and significance of self-care were also discussed, with emphasis on enhancing health literacy, promoting healthy lifestyles, and reducing the burden on formal healthcare systems.

Participants were also oriented on the structure and expanded service delivery under the Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (now Ayushman Arogya Mandirs), including their role in delivering comprehensive primary health care. The discussion covered the range of services offered, human resource requirements, and compliance with Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS), with a focus on strengthening community-level health systems through integrated and inclusive strategies.



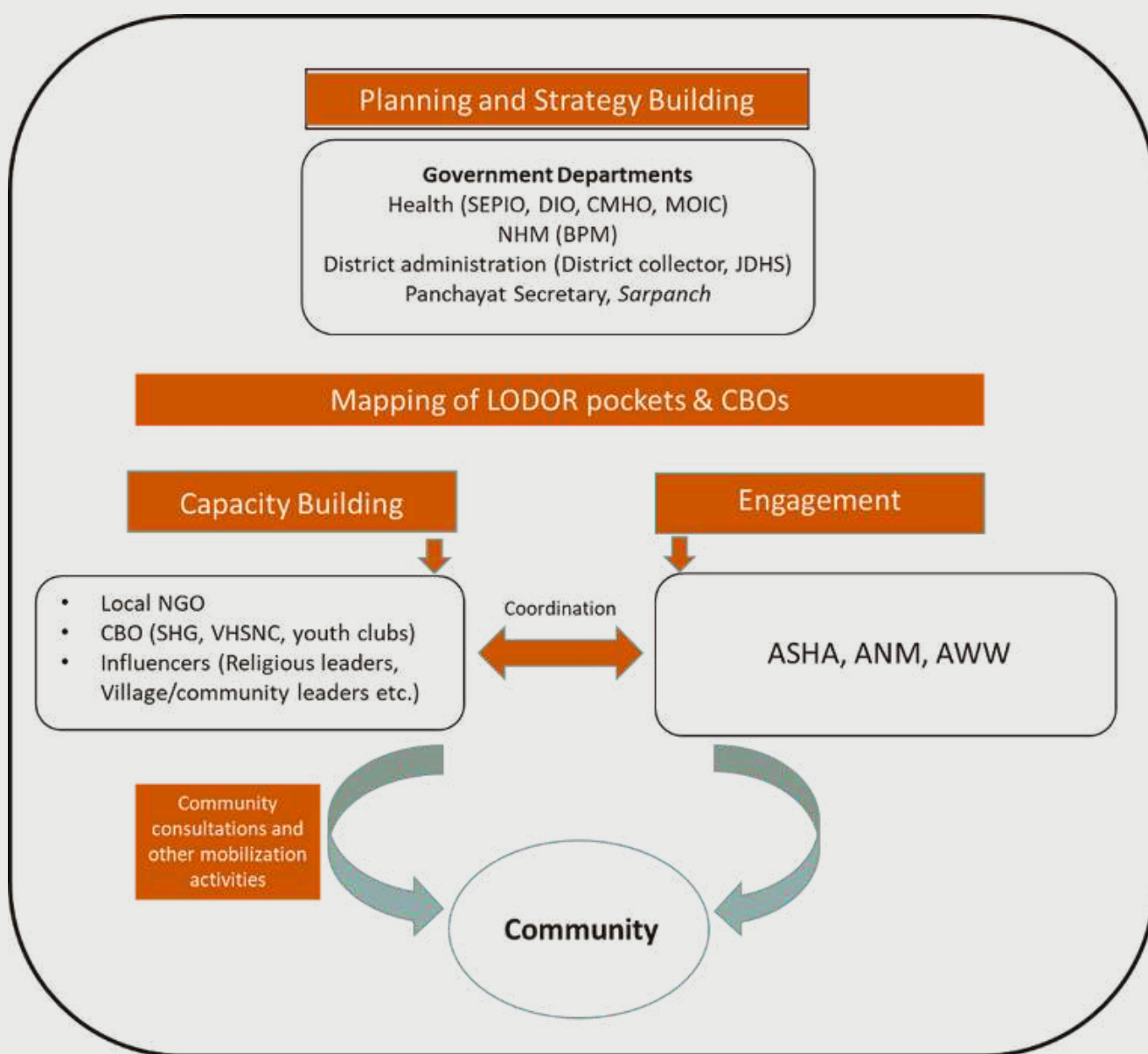
BOOSTING DEMAND FOR ROUTINE IMMUNIZATION AND REDUCING ZERO DOSE CHILDREN

Routine immunization stands as one of the most effective and essential public health strategies, protecting children from life-threatening, preventable diseases, ensuring they grow up healthy, strong, and ready to thrive. Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI) has partnered with UNICEF since 2019 to promote Routine Immunization in the low-performing districts of the country. In 2024, VHAI with support from UNICEF is implementing the project 'Boosting Demand for Routine Immunization and Reducing Zero Dose Children in 12 priority districts of Arunachal Pradesh' supported by GAVI HSS-3 grant. The project aims to increase the demand for immunization services, identify the zero dose and drop out children and mobilizing them for immunization through community engagement in identified districts of Arunachal Pradesh.



Arunachal Pradesh borders the state of Assam and Nagaland to the south and shares international borders with Bhutan in the West, Myanmar in the East and China in the North. By March 2026, through this project, we aim to strengthen the hands of the State Health/Immunization system by linking at least 70% of zero-dose and partially immunized children in difficult areas with immunization services. This will be achieved by ensuring community engagement through a tailored and strategic social and behaviour change programming for improving awareness, generating demand, and ensuring public confidence in the vaccine.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MODEL



PROJECT OUTCOMES

By March 2026



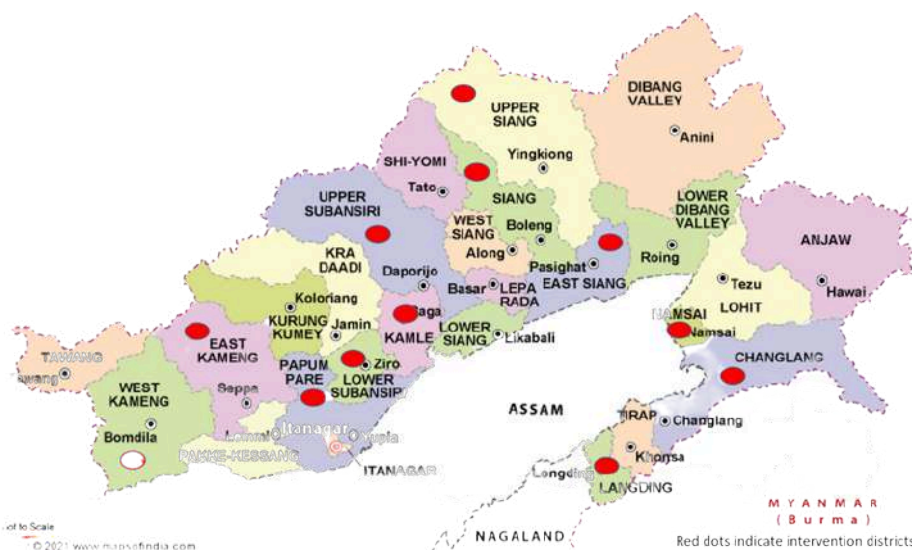
70% zero dose children and partially immunized children in intervention districts and blocks of Arunachal Pradesh will be linked with age-appropriate immunization services for FIC through intensive community-based identification and referrals.



70%, of community groups in intervention districts and blocks of Arunachal Pradesh have capacities to develop and maintain the village immunization or health register and mobilize vaccine hesitant families.

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

36 blocks of 12 districts of Arunachal Pradesh



- West Kameng
- East Kameng
- Upper Subansiri
- Lower Subansiri
- Upper Siang
- Siang
- East Siang
- Papumpare
- Namsai
- Longding
- Kamle
- Changlang

KEY INTERVENTIONS UNDER THE PROGRAMME

On 15th October 2024, VHAI, in collaboration with NHM and UNICEF, successfully organized the Orientation & Planning Workshop on GAVI HSS-3 in Naharlagun, Arunachal Pradesh. The broad objective of the workshop was to officially kick start the project and bring together all the relevant stakeholders for successful implementation of the programme.

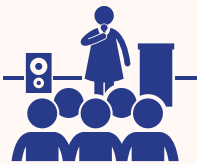


<p>Orientation</p> <p>Orientation of stakeholders regarding the objectives and approach of the immunization programme.</p>	<p>Identification</p> <p>Identification of demand-side barriers affecting the uptake of Routine Immunization (RI) services.</p>	<p>Planning</p> <p>Strategic planning for effective Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) interventions to cover zero-dose and drop-out children.</p>
<p>Coordination</p> <p>Enhancing coordination among stakeholders, including development partners, for cross-sectoral synergy.</p>	<p>Strengthening</p> <p>Strengthening reporting mechanisms for effective monitoring and evaluation.</p>	<p>Government Support</p> <p>Discussing the support required from government counterparts to ensure successful implementation.</p>

The event was graced by esteemed dignitaries, including Mr. Marge Sora, MD-NHM; Dr. Amping Perme, Director of Family Welfare; Dr. Runi Tasung, Joint Director - DHS; and Dr. Dimong Padung, State Immunization Officer. It saw active participation from District Reproduction and Child Health Officers (DRCHO) UNICEF officials, and development partners such as UNDP and WHO, alongside the dedicated VHAI project team. The valuable insights and strategic directions shared during the workshop are expected to play a vital role in strengthening immunization efforts and ensuring that more children are brought under the protective umbrella of life-saving vaccines.

BOOSTING CAPACITY TO BRIDGE IMMUNIZATION GAPS

To strengthen the effectiveness of the immunization programme, capacity building of the project team is crucial. Training empowers the team with essential skills in behavioural analysis, community engagement, strategic communication, and monitoring. This workshop was designed to enhance their capacity on promoting vaccine acceptance, reducing drop-outs, and ensuring higher immunization coverage. Key participants included representatives from UNICEF's regional and state teams, WHO and UNDP, along with VHAI's national, state, and district-level teams.



To orient the project team on the overall programme framework and principles of Social Behaviour Change (SBC).



To build knowledge on vaccination and immunization schedules, identification of left-out, drop-out, and resistant cases, and understanding Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI).



To discuss strategies for addressing concerns, misconceptions, and improving community communication around vaccines.



To plan targeted SBC approaches for identifying zero-dose and drop-out children and improving overall immunization coverage.



To clarify the roles and responsibilities of District Coordinators, Block Coordinators, and Community Mobilizers.



To finalize the implementation strategy, supervision mechanisms, and reporting formats for smooth project execution.



ORIENTATION OF DISTRICT & BLOCK LEVEL STAKEHOLDERS

After the state level orientation, VHAI organized the Orientation of District & Block level stakeholders on Zero-dose programme. Separate orientation programmes were organized at the block & district level with following objectives:



To familiarize stakeholders with the details of the program.



To assess local/on-the-ground challenges that hinder the uptake of Routine Immunization (RI) services.



To develop Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) interventions aimed at reaching zero-dose and drop-out children.



To promote collaboration and coordination among various stakeholders, including frontline workers for integrated efforts.

In majority of the locations, the meeting has been organized in collaboration with District Task Force for Immunization (DTFI) and Block Task Force for Immunization (BTFI) meetings. These orientation meetings have also played an important role in rejuvenation of dysfunctional DTFI/BTFI. A total of 44 orientations have been organized in the reporting period.

CAPACITY BUILDING OF COMMUNITY GROUPS AND INFLUENCERS

Community engagement is the crucial component of the programme to ensure the accountability and ownership of the community to promote immunization. VHAI has identified and trained community groups (SHGs, PRIs, traditional healers, influencers including community leaders, religious leaders, buddy mothers etc.) on mobilizing zero-dose and hesitant children on disseminating the key messages on immunization, addressing stigmas and misconceptions, importance of immunization and identification and immunization of Left-out, Drop-out and Resistant (LODOR) children in their community. With the trained members of community groups, we have formed around 709 Community Core Groups (CCG) which are leading our zero-dose campaign at village level.



ORIENTATION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH PLATFORMS



There are existing village level groups created under different health and ICDS programmes such as Village Health, Sanitation & Nutrition Committee (VHSNC), Jan Aarogya Samiti (JAS), Mahila Aarogya Samiti (MAS), Mothers' group etc.

Through these meetings, VHAI oriented these groups about the Zero-dose programme and ensure that Immunization is the among the key agenda for this group. The participants were trained about various aspects of Immunization and ensured that they play an active role in identification and immunization of the LODOR children. These community groups played an active role and act as a link between the service providers and the community for boosting immunization and ensuring that no child in their community is left behind.



ORIENTATION OF FRONTLINE WORKERS

To strengthen frontline health workers' capacity on immunization and identification of zero-dose children, orientation programmes were organized in high-risk pockets of intervention districts. With support from Medical Officers, ANMs, ASHAs, AWWs, and immunization staff were oriented on technical aspects of the programme. These sessions also highlighted low-performing areas with a high burden of LODOR/zero-dose children. VHA shared identified LODOR cases and emphasized updating due lists. The team also sensitized MOs and frontline workers about planned SBC activities and sought their collaboration for effective implementation.

MOBILIZING COMMUNITIES FOR IMMUNIZATION

MONTHLY MEETINGS FOR COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

With support from Community Core Group members like SHGs, PRIs, religious and community leaders, VHA conducts monthly meetings to identify and engage with left out, drop-out, and hesitant families. These meetings help understand both demand and service-side challenges affecting immunization uptake. They also serve as a platform to dispel myths, address misconceptions, and build trust. The discussions promote awareness and motivate families to get their children fully immunized.



PROMOTING MALE ENGAGEMENT IN IMMUNIZATION

Recognizing men as key decision-makers in households, VHA actively engaged them to support immunization efforts. Male involvement helps challenge gender norms and creates a more supportive environment for child health. By raising awareness about vaccine benefits, men are encouraged to advocate for timely immunization and ensure family participation. VHA's efforts aimed to build shared responsibility and strengthen community ownership of immunization.

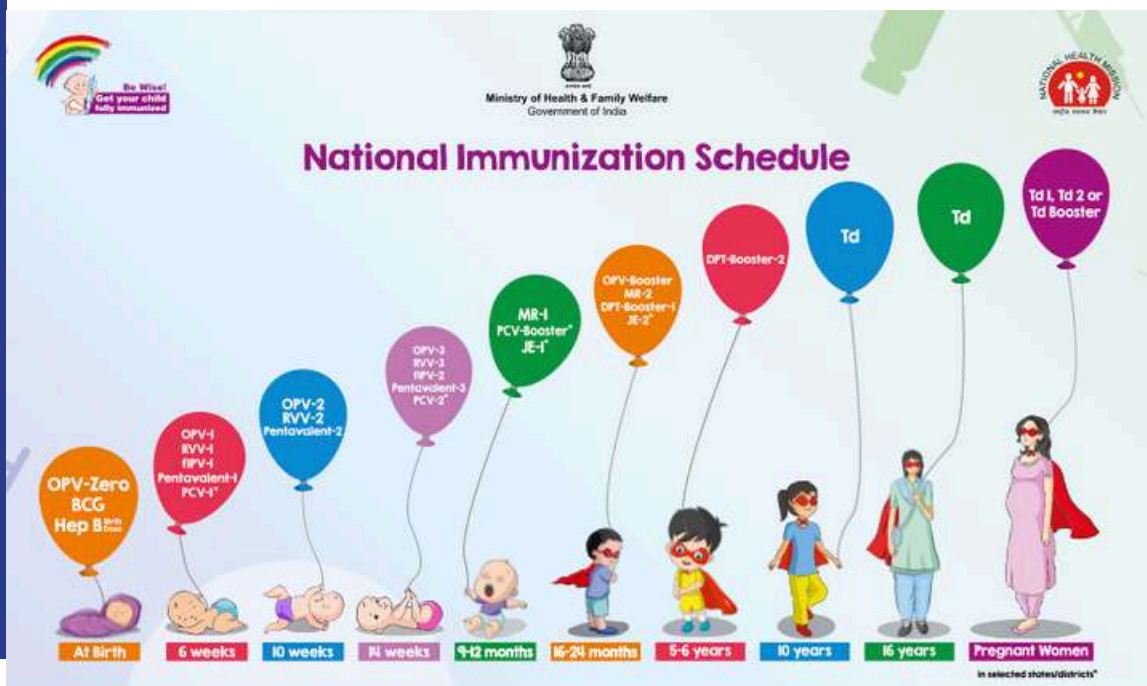
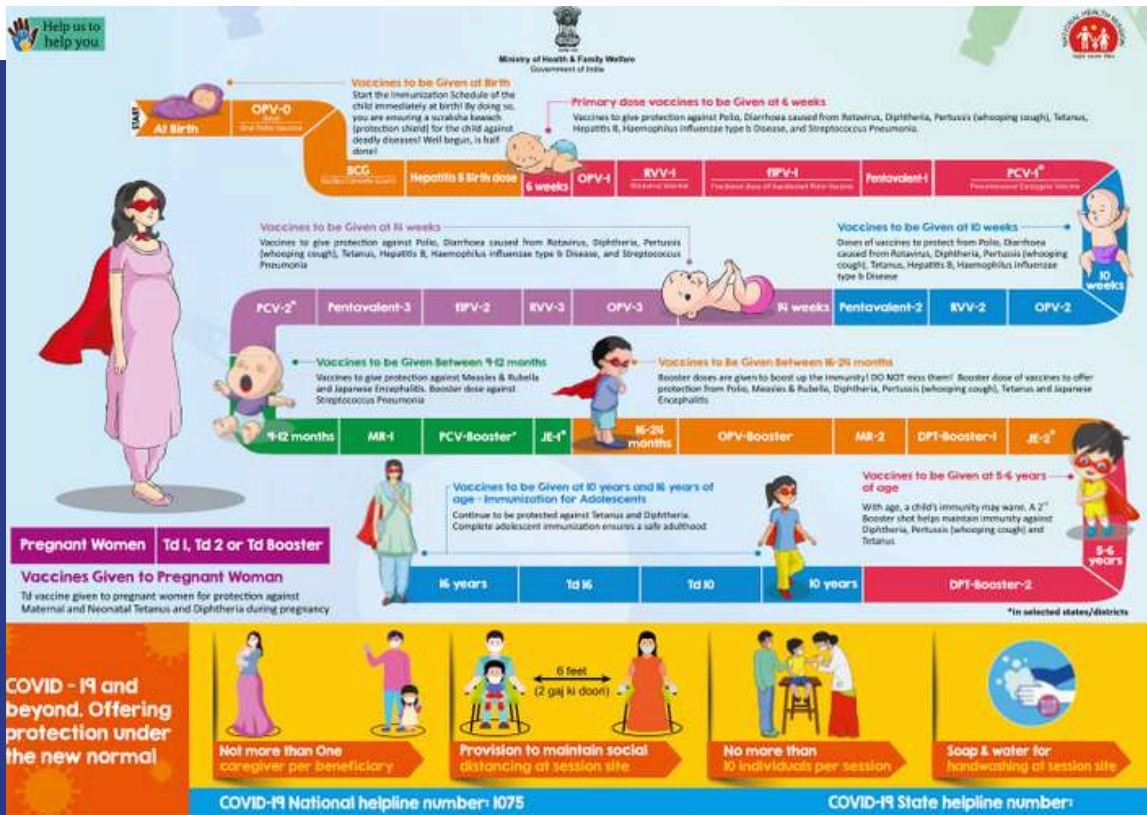




STRENGTHENING IMMUNIZATION THROUGH INFORMATION

To support ongoing community engagement on routine immunization, a set of visually appealing and easy-to-understand IEC materials were printed and circulated.

SPREADING THE MESSAGE:
IMMUNIZATION IEC OUTREACH



IDENTIFICATION AND MOBILIZATION OF ZERO-DOSE AND PARTIALLY IMMUNIZED CHILDREN

VHAI team with support from the local CBOs and influencers actively identified the Zero-dose, left out and drop out children in the high risk pockets. In unserved regions, the team has done advocacy with the immunization department to organize special sessions. In the reporting period around 1400 missed children are identified and efforts are being made to link them with the immunization.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Society

12	INTERVENTION DISTRICTS
36	INTERVENTION BLOCKS
720	INTERVENTION VILLAGES
709	COMMUNITY CORE GROUPS FORMED AND TRAINED
44	ORIENTATION SESSIONS FOR DISTRICT AND BLOCK LEVEL STAKEHOLDERS
324	VHSNG/MAS/PRI/J SI GROUPS ORIENTED ON GAVI
180	ORIENTATION SESSIONS ORGANIZED FOR FRONTLINE WORKERS

1404
ZERO-DOSE AND PARTIALLY IMMUNIZED CHILDREN IDENTIFIED AND MOBILIZED



MILLETS FOR HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

Millets have been an integral part of Indian diets for centuries, valued for their rich nutritional profile—high in iron, zinc, calcium, and bioactive flavonoids. They offer a sustainable solution to addressing micronutrient deficiencies, enhancing food security, and promoting climate-resilient agriculture. Their revival is essential not only for nutrition but also for sustainable livelihoods and environmental resilience.

In recognition of their importance, the Government of India successfully advocated for 2023 to be declared the International Year of Millets (IYOM) by the United Nations, with support from 72 countries. This global recognition has reignited efforts to revive millet cultivation and promote their widespread consumption.

To support this national initiative and recognizing the immense nutritional and ecological value of millets, VHAI has been implementing a comprehensive program titled “Sowing the Seeds of Wellness- Millets for Health and Sustainability” for the last two years. This program focuses on raising awareness, promoting sustainable millet-based agriculture, and advocating for millet consumption across multiple levels—from policy to the grassroots.

In continuation of these efforts, VHAI entered into a technical collaboration with the Odisha Millet Mission (OMM) last year to strengthen millet promotion initiatives in Odisha. Under this partnership, VHAI is working in two districts—Mayurbhanj (tribal) and Ganjam (non-tribal) with a dual focus on reviving millet cultivation and mainstreaming millet consumption.

The initiative adopts a holistic, community-based approach, engaging a wide range of stakeholders including Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Anganwadi Centres, Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees (VHSNCs), schools, and local governance bodies. It seeks to reintroduce millets into local diets, farming systems, and cultural traditions, thereby advancing the goals of improved nutrition, sustainable livelihoods, and ecological resilience.



KEY ACTIVITIES

EMPOWERING COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS-MILLET SATHIS



VHAI has trained and empowered 350 peer educators as “Millet Sathis” to serve as grassroots champions for millet promotion. These individuals are instrumental in mobilizing communities, facilitating health and nutrition education, and promoting both millet cultivation and consumption. They actively engage with youth and adolescent groups, raising awareness about the nutritional benefits of millets and encouraging healthier dietary practices within their communities.

AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS AND OUTREACH



VHAI has organized awareness campaigns and sessions to educate communities and schools on the nutritional benefits of millets. Special focus has been placed on engaging women, especially pregnant and lactating mothers, at Anganwadi Centres, promoting millet inclusion in mid-day meals. Over 65,000 individuals have been reached through these efforts.

DEMONSTRATION SESSIONS ON MILLET-BASED RECIPES DURING VILLAGE HEALTH AND NUTRITION DAYS (VHND)



Practical cooking demonstrations featuring millet-based recipes were organized during VHNDs, helping women’s groups prepare nutritious and culturally relevant millet dishes using locally available ingredients. This encouraged the regular inclusion of millets in their diets.



DEMONSTRATION SESSIONS AT ANGANWADI CENTRES

Tailored sessions were held at Anganwadi Centres to promote millet inclusion in meals for children and pregnant or lactating women. These demonstrations empowered Anganwadi workers and caregivers with practical knowledge on preparing nutrient-dense recipes. VHAi has facilitated the community contribution and donation of millets to 34 Anganwadi Centres, promoting the inclusion of millets in meals served to children.

SENSITIZATION SESSIONS FOR ADOLESCENT GROUP MEMBERS BY MILLET SATHIS

Adolescents, especially girls, participated in focused group discussions and interactive sessions to learn about the nutritional importance of millets. The aim was to promote early awareness, encourage healthy dietary habits, and address issues like anaemia and nutritional deficiencies.

EDUCATION SESSIONS FOR FRONTLINE HEALTH WORKERS AND COMMUNITY-LEVEL SERVICE PROVIDERS

Capacity building workshops were conducted for frontline functionaries, including Anganwadi Workers (AWWs), ASHAs, and community leaders. These sessions covered topics such as the nutritional value, food preparation, environmental benefits, and economic viability of millet-based farming systems. Around 85 Anganwadi Workers and 54 ASHA workers were trained during this initiative.

EDUCATION AND DEMONSTRATION SESSIONS IN SCHOOLS

School-based programs were conducted to introduce students and teachers to millets through interactive learning modules and recipe demonstrations. These sessions conducted in about 28 schools, aimed to embed millet awareness in young minds and promote healthy eating habits both in school and at home.

SENSITIZATION OF FARMERS

Sensitization sessions were organized for farmers to encourage the adoption of millet cultivation, emphasizing its nutritional, environmental, and economic benefits.



**OVER 3000 STUDENTS
AND 100 TEACHERS
REACHED**



INSPIRING WOMEN FOR MILLET FARMING

To motivate women in millet farming, Mrs. Subasa Mohanta, a prominent millet farmer from Mayurbhanj district, was actively involved in our millet promotion activities. As the brand ambassador of the Odisha Millet Mission at the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi, Mrs. Mohanta, recognized for her outstanding contributions to millet promotion, was invited to share her valuable experiences with local women. Her inspiring journey encouraged women in Mayurbhanj district to embrace millet farming and become leaders in sustainable agriculture.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE CONTROL



Awareness today, resilience tomorrow



The rising use of harmful substances including tobacco, alcohol, and drugs among children and adolescents is a growing concern across India. Early exposure and experimentation during adolescence often set the stage for lifelong dependence, with serious consequences for health, education, and overall development. Peer influence, curiosity, stress, and easy availability of addictive substances increase the vulnerability of youth, particularly in underserved or high-risk communities. Studies show that the age of initiation is lowering, and without timely interventions, the patterns of use can escalate into serious health and social issues.



Schools are crucial intervention points to address this challenge. They not only serve as educational spaces but also as environments where behaviors, attitudes, and life skills are shaped. Preventive education at the school level can significantly delay or deter initiation into substance use. It provides children and adolescents with correct information, equips them with decision-making and refusal skills, and fosters a supportive peer culture. Recognizing this, VHAI and its state chapters organized focused Substance Abuse Control awareness sessions across several schools and colleges in 2024-25

OBJECTIVES

AWARENESS

To raise awareness among school and college students about the health, social, and legal consequences of tobacco, alcohol, and drug use.

PREVENT

To delay or prevent initiation into substance use by providing accurate information and building critical thinking among adolescents.

EMPOWER

To empower students with life skills, including decision-making, assertiveness, and refusal strategies to resist peer pressure and risky behavior.

SUPPORT

To foster supportive environments within educational institutions that promote healthy choices and discourage substance use.

ENGAGE

To engage educators and stakeholders in creating a sustained preventive framework through awareness, policy implementation, and student support.

LINK

To link schools and colleges with local health systems and district authorities for referral, counseling, and continued outreach on substance abuse issues.

Three Decades, One Mission: Protecting Lives from Tobacco Harm

VHAI has been at the forefront of tobacco control efforts in India for over three decades. With a vision of making health and development a reality for the people of India, the organization has been consistently providing technical support to the Government of India on tobacco control initiatives. VHAI's work focuses on safeguarding the public from second-hand smoke, protecting children and youth from initiating tobacco use, and restricting access to tobacco products. Over the years, VHAI has played a vital role in supporting State and District Tobacco Control Cells by linking them with communities, expanding outreach, raising awareness of laws, and assisting with enforcement. Its strength lies in building partnerships — with schools, civil society organizations, and local bodies — to broaden the base for public health advocacy and action.



A. SCHOOL SENSITIZATION EVENTS ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE CONTROL

THE MOTHERS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

DELHI/NCR



On August 17, VHAI conducted a youth sensitization program at The Mother's International School, Delhi, to raise awareness about the harms of tobacco, alcohol, and other unhealthy products, while promoting health and nutrition. Over 350 students from classes 8 to 10 actively participated through discussions, roleplays, and reflections. A detailed presentation highlighted the long-term effects of substance abuse and the need for early prevention. Supported by the school's tobacco control committee, the session was reinforced with posters, factsheets, and leaflets for continued learning.

MAYOOR INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, NOIDA

The sensitization program at Mayoor International School, Noida, held on December 13, saw the active participation of 250 students from Grades 8 to 10, along with 20 school staff members. The event was designed to be highly interactive, ensuring that students remained engaged throughout the session.

The session began with an informative presentation on the growing concern of substance abuse in India, particularly among youth, and how unhealthy lifestyle choices contribute to this trend. One of the key highlights was a student-led roleplay, which creatively showcased the dangers of tobacco use and the immediate and long-term health consequences associated with it.



ODISHA

In Odisha, awareness sessions were conducted on August 12, International Youth Day, in District Ganjam and Khallikote, where over 120 school students were sensitized. Another major sensitization program took place on December 18, with the participation of 400 students from Grades 8 and 9, along with 15 teachers. The events aimed to create a dynamic learning environment where students could actively engage in understanding the implications of substance abuse and the importance of prevention through informed choices.

The sessions began with an engaging quiz competition designed to test students' knowledge on substance abuse, its health impacts, and healthy lifestyle practices. Following the quiz, a poster-making competition was held under the theme "Tobacco-Free Youth." Students showcased impressive creativity and awareness, producing impactful posters that visually communicated strong messages about healthy living and resisting harmful substances. Collaboration with the National Service Scheme (NSS) enabled wider outreach, ensuring that the awareness messages extended beyond the participating students to the broader school and community network.

CHHATTISGARH

In Chhattisgarh, VHAI organized youth sensitization sessions on August 14 (International Youth Day) and December 19, engaging over 200 students and staff from Grades 8 and 9. The sessions began with the screening of a powerful documentary highlighting the harmful effects of tobacco and alcohol use, followed by an engaging Q&A with healthcare professionals who addressed myths, clarified doubts, and emphasized the importance of early prevention. Students performed an insightful skit promoting physical activity, millet consumption, and balanced lifestyles. Educational materials were also shared to reinforce learning. To sustain efforts, Tobacco Control Committees were formed in collaboration with school staff to monitor and reduce substance use among students.



UTTAR PRADESH



At Indus International Academy, Mohanlalganj, Uttar Pradesh, a sensitization session was held on August 12 to commemorate International Youth Day. The event brought together over 170 students from classes 10 to 12 under the theme "Empowering Youth for a Healthier Tomorrow."

The session focused on raising awareness about the risks associated with alcohol, tobacco, and junk food consumption. Through an interactive presentation, students were encouraged to understand the consequences of these habits and reflect on how small changes in their routines could lead to healthier, substance-free lives.

Informed youth make healthy choices.

The event concluded with a student-led brainstorming session, where participants actively shared ideas to promote health-conscious behavior within their families and communities. Their enthusiastic engagement highlighted a strong willingness to become youth advocates for substance abuse prevention and overall well-being.



School committees and NSS units played a vital role in ensuring the sustainability of the initiative.



1,178 STUDENTS PARTICIPATED



1500 IEC MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED



ARUNACHAL PRADESH

On 27th February 2025, a dynamic sensitization session was conducted at Green Valley School, Namsai, engaging 130 students on the importance of preventing substance abuse through healthy lifestyle choices. The session emphasized the harmful effects of tobacco and alcohol, underscoring their impact on both immediate and long-term well-being. Students participated actively in discussions and expressed their commitment to making healthier decisions. The following day, an interactive session was organized at Blue Hills Academy, Mahadevpur, with 75 students. Health experts led discussions on the dangers of substance use, linking it to chronic health issues, and highlighting the importance of physical activity, balanced nutrition, and mental well-being in maintaining a substance-free life. Students responded with enthusiasm, sharing reflections and pledging to adopt healthier habits.

In parallel, community engagement efforts extended to Joidan Community Hall and Bhogamur Village, where over 130 individuals, including young adults and Self-Help Group (SHG) members, actively participated. These outreach sessions focused on raising awareness about the effects of tobacco and alcohol use, stressing the value of early prevention and community-led intervention. By involving families and local leaders, the program aimed to foster collective responsibility and empower communities to support youth in choosing healthier, substance-free lifestyles.

TRIPURA

The Voluntary Health Association of Tripura (VHAT) successfully conducted sensitization workshops in four schools across the state, engaging over 220 students to raise awareness about Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and promote healthier lifestyle choices. The interactive sessions addressed the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol, poor diet, and physical inactivity, encouraging students to reflect on their habits and understand the importance of prevention. VHAI supported the initiative by providing key background materials, including presentations and IEC resources, ensuring the workshops were both informative and impactful, and reinforcing VHAT's commitment to preventive health education for young people.



BIHAR

A series of substance abuse awareness sessions were conducted across ten schools in Gopalganj, Saran, and Patna by VHAI and BVHA, reaching 864 students and 133 teachers, along with local social activists. These interactive sessions focused on the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and junk food, while addressing peer pressure and promoting informed, healthy choices. Through expert-led discussions, role-plays, and group activities, students explored the long-term health risks of substance use. By engaging teachers and community members, the initiative created a supportive environment for behavior change and empowered youth to become health advocates within their schools and communities.



2800
STUDENTS



280
TEACHERS

**SENSITIZED ON SUBSTANCE
ABUSE ISSUES**

B. SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV, UNION MOS FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE, LAUNCHES TOBACCO FREE YOUTH CAMPAIGN 2.0 TO PROTECT THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF INDIA'S YOUTH.

At the launch event of the second edition of the Tobacco-Free Youth Campaign, Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Prataprao Jadhav said tobacco kills 13 lakh people every year in India. He said that the campaign aims to protect the health and well-being of young people from the harmful effects of tobacco.

The Tobacco-Free Youth Campaign 2.0 aims to protect the health and well-being of young people from the harmful effects of tobacco. As part of it, the MoS also inaugurated tobacco cessation centres in medical institutions across India.

The launch event of the campaign saw the in-person participation of over 500 people, and many participants joined online. Shri Apurva Chandra, Union Health Secretary; Smt. Puniya Salila Srivastava, Officer on Special Duty, MoHFW; Dr Atul Goel, Director General of Health Services, Smt. V Hekali Zhimomi, Additional Secretary, MoHFW; Dr Sarita Beri, Director, Lady Hardinge Medical College; Dr. Roderico Ofrin, WHO Representative to India, senior officials from MoHFW, celebrities, influencers, among others. More than 300 school students from nearby Tobacco Free Educational Institutions (ToFEI), NSS volunteers from My Bharat initiative and representatives from civil society organisations also participated in the event.

The event also saw the presence of Bollywood actor Aparshakti Khurrana, renowned sports personalities like Manu Bhaker, and several social media influencers who joined hands to amplify this important message.



B. PV SINDHU APPOINTED AS BRAND AMBASSADOR FOR MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA'S TOBACCO CONTROL CAMPAIGN

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Govt. of India requested VHA I to support them in engaging international badminton player, Ms. PV Sindhu as the brand ambassador for the Govt's Tobacco Control Campaign. VHA I coordinated with Ms. Sindhu, briefing her about the campaign, and facilitated meetings between her and the MoHFW. Ms. P.V. Sindhu was officially been appointed as the brand ambassador for this important initiative.



In recognition of World No Tobacco Day, Ms. Sindhu recorded a message urging young people to stay away from tobacco. VHA I drafted the content for this message, which Ms. Sindhu graciously delivered. This video message was launched at the World No Tobacco Day event organized by the MoHFW at Nirman Bhawan on 31st May, 2024.

The MoHFW has expressed their appreciation for VHA I's efforts in facilitating Ms. Sindhu's involvement in the Tobacco Control Campaign.

D. ENGAGEMENT WITH CITIZEN REPRESENTATIVES ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Throughout the year, VHA I conducted a series of consultative meetings with citizen representatives and key stakeholders to mobilize support for stronger public health action, particularly in preventing substance abuse among youth. These discussions served as key platforms to showcase VHA I's ongoing efforts in tobacco and alcohol control, curbing junk food consumption, and promoting health-positive behaviors. The urgent need to address the easy accessibility of harmful substances to children and adolescents was underscored, with emphasis on community-level interventions, awareness campaigns, and school-based sensitization. The rising burden of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), often linked to early substance use and unhealthy lifestyles, was also highlighted. Stakeholders were urged to support policy implementation aimed at both substance abuse prevention and long-term NCD risk reduction—advancing the vision of a healthier, more resilient India.



E.ENGAGEMENT WITH MOHFW ON KEY TOBACCO CONTROL DISCUSSIONS

During the year, VHA team members actively participated in several high-level meetings organized by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) at Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi, including consultations on World No Tobacco Day, E-cigarette regulation, OTT tobacco imagery, and the upcoming GATS and GYTS surveys. These engagements enabled VHA to contribute timely inputs, strengthen collaboration with MoHFW, and reaffirm its role as a key technical and advocacy partner in advancing tobacco control policies for public health protection.



MEETING OF THE EXPERT COMMITTEE CONSTITUTED FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SPECIFIED HEALTH WARNINGS

Ms. Bhavna Mukhopadhyay, Chief Executive, VHA participated in the meetings of the expert committee constituted under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare to review and recommend new specified health warnings on tobacco product packaging, in alignment with COTPA, 2003 and WHO FCTC guidelines. Held on 20th March and 2nd May 2024, the meetings focused on reviewing shortlisted images and field testing results presented by WHO India. The Committee finalized images and messages for implementation during the rotation period starting December 2024.



MEETINGS OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY & MONITORING COMMITTEE ON THE GLOBAL ADULT TOBACCO SURVEY-3 (GATS-3)

Ms. Bhavna Mukhopadhyay, Chief Executive, VHA, participated in two key Technical Advisory & Monitoring Committee (TAMC) meetings convened by MoHFW to guide the planning and implementation of GATS-3 in India. The first meeting (May 10, 2024) focused on finalizing the questionnaire, sampling design, and technical modalities, while the second (September 3, 2024) reviewed financial proposals and justifications from IIPS. These meetings were instrumental in shaping the operational and financial framework for GATS-3.



F. SOCIAL MEDIA WEBINAR ON 'LEARNING THE ESSENTIALS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT'

VHAI successfully conducted a Social Media Webinar on 10th May 2024 titled "Learning the Essentials of Social Media Management", aimed at equipping state partners and member organizations with practical skills to enhance their digital presence. The interactive session focused on strategies tailored for NGOs in health and social development, covering content creation, impactful campaigning, and navigating the evolving social media landscape. Participants actively engaged and left with valuable insights to strengthen their digital communication efforts.



G. FACULTY CONTRIBUTION TO PHFI'S E-LEARNING COURSE ON TOBACCO CONTROL

Since 2011, the Health Promotion Division at the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) has been offering a well-regarded E-Learning Course on Tobacco Control, training national and international professionals, including medical experts and government nodal officers. In 2024–25, Mr. Binoy Mathew, Programme Manager at VHAI, was invited as a faculty member to deliver a session on "The Role of Media in Tobacco Control." His contribution to this prestigious platform enhanced the organization's visibility and reaffirmed VHAI's commitment to strengthening public health communication and capacity in the tobacco control space.

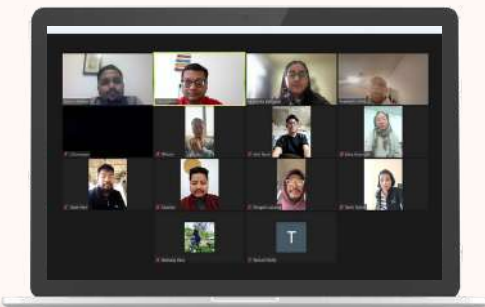


H. LEVERAGING KEY HEALTH DAYS FOR PUBLIC AWARENESS

VHAI actively utilized important health observance days such as World Health Day, World TB Day, World No Tobacco Day, International Youth Day, and National Youth Day to raise awareness on Substance Abuse among the general public, with a special focus on youth. Through a range of community-based activities, school and college sessions, public campaigns, and dissemination of educational materials, VHAI encouraged healthy lifestyle choices and highlighted the dangers of tobacco, alcohol, junk food, and other harmful substances.

Early prevention, strong awareness , equipping teams to safeguard young lives against substance abuse and future health risks.

I. ORIENTATION PROGRAMME FOR BVHA TEAM ON TOBACCO-FREE SCHOOLS PROJECT - GOVT. OF BIHAR



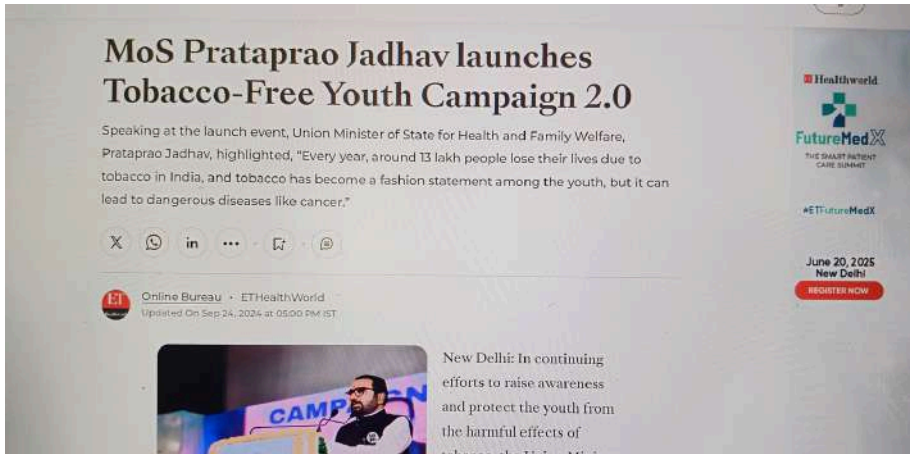
VHAI team organised an orientation programme for team members of Bihar Voluntary Health Association under the Tobacco-Free Schools Project. A total of 16 team members, who will be working on this project, attended the session. During the orientation, VHAI team discussed the key aspects of the Tobacco-Free Educational Institutions Guidelines issued by the Government of India, along with the implementation strategy. Every participant who attended this meeting appreciated the orientation programme provided to the team.

J. ORIENTATION PROGRAMME FOR ARUNACHAL PRADESH TEAM ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION

VHAI conducted an orientation session for the Arunachal Pradesh team to strengthen their understanding of substance abuse issues among schoolchildren and communities. The session focused on the harmful effects of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, and highlighted the need for early prevention and awareness. Attended by State and District Coordinators along with VHAI Team the session included discussions on practical strategies for field implementation. Educational materials and presentations were shared to support upcoming school and community-based activities.

While the primary focus was on substance abuse, the session also briefly addressed how such habits increase the long-term risk of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). The team has since integrated these insights into their ongoing outreach efforts.





Strengthening public awareness through credible and compelling health narratives

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 on Substance Abuse.

Informing minds, inspiring healthier choices

Education, health ministries issue advisory on implementing anti-tobacco manual



STORIES THAT INFORM

This move aims to combat the alarming rise in

Govt wants 30 seconds mandatory anti-tobacco Ad as soon as you open an OTT app, and you can't skip it



To strengthen public awareness on Substance Abuse and other health issues, VHAI contributed to the development of media stories at both national and subnational levels.

These stories featured critical public health themes and highlighted key initiatives, helping to inform and educate a wider audience.

PROMOTING ADOLESCENT HEALTH



Informed choices today lead to healthier generations tomorrow

Reproductive health and rights are vital for young people, but the lack of life skills education and limited access to information make it challenging for them to navigate these issues. Societal norms, restrictive decision-making for females, and taboos further hinder open discussion and access to reproductive health services.

To address these issues, VHAI is implementing a peer education initiative in the remote tribal villages of Mayurbhanj and Ganjam districts in Odisha. This program trains young individuals as "Peer Educators" to raise awareness, dispel myths, and address misconceptions about Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). By empowering youth to share accurate information and foster open dialogue, VHAI aims to improve access to reproductive health services and promote informed decision-making among adolescents and young people in these communities.



When young people lead, communities thrive



Nurturing Resilience & Awareness

- **Climate Change**
- **Nutrition**
- **Anaemia Prevention**
- **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)**
- **Mental Health**
- **Social Media Literacy**
- **Life Skills Education**
- **Financial Literacy**
- **Preventing Injuries and Violence (Including Gender-based Violence)**
- **Substance Misuse**
- **Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)**

Strengthening Peer Education for Adolescent Empowerment

Recognizing the pivotal role of peer educators in adolescent development, VHAH has enhanced its peer education model to address critical health and rights issues among youth. Trained peer educators deliver Life Skills Education (LSE), Financial Literacy, Social Media Literacy, and information on government schemes, acting as relatable figures for their peers, fostering trust and facilitating open communication.

250

PEER EDUCATORS

15,000

ADOLESCENTS





INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

VOICES OF CHANGE BEGIN WITH INFORMED CHOICES

On International Youth Day, VHAH organized a series of activities with youth and adolescent group members, peer educators, and volunteers in Ganjam district, Odisha, on 12th August 2024. The event aimed to motivate and empower young people to take action on global issues like climate change, tobacco and alcohol consumption, NCDs, junk food, and other social challenges. Over 150 youth participated in various activities led by trained peer educators and youth volunteers.

PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF ANAEMIA

Anaemia remains a significant health concern in Odisha, particularly among adolescent girls and children under five. To combat this, VHAH conducted education sessions across two blocks of Ganjam district, targeting adolescent and youth group members, women's groups, and VHSNC members. These sessions focused on the causes, clinical features, preventive measures, and management of anaemia, facilitated with support from young enablers, volunteers, and frontline health workers.

In collaboration with local PHCs and CHCs, VHAH organized 20 anaemia screening and treatment camps at the village level for adolescent girls and at Anganwadi Centres for children under five. Haemoglobin testing, weight and height measurement, general health check-ups, and treatment were provided to 948 adolescent girls and 237 children under five. Identified cases were regularly followed up with support from community volunteers and young enablers.



A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO ADOLESCENT HEALTH

- **Awareness Education Sessions:** Focused on NCD prevention, tobacco and alcohol harms, effects of junk food, anaemia, benefits of millets, climate change, and healthy lifestyle promotion.
- **Rally & Campaign:** Over 120 youth rallied across two villages, spreading awareness on millets, NCDs, tobacco, alcohol, and junk food, and pledged to promote healthy living.
- **Signature Campaigns:** Youth signed pledges raising awareness on the harms of tobacco, alcohol, junk food, and climate change, reinforcing their commitment to healthier communities.

Transformative Impact

In 2024-25, VHAI's adolescent health initiatives reached over 20,000 youth across Odisha's Ganjam and Mayurbhanj districts, empowering them with essential knowledge and skills.



PEER EDUCATION IMPACT

Formed 167 adolescent groups and educated over 15,000 youth on SRHR, life skills, social media literacy, mental health, nutrition, anaemia, NCDs, and financial literacy through 255 trained peer educators.



EDUCATIONAL RE-ENGAGEMENT

Successfully re-enrolled more than 100 students who had dropped out, promoting education continuity.



SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Connected 386 out-of-school adolescents and youth with government skill-building institutions, enhancing their employability.



SOCIAL PROTECTION LINKAGES

Linked 207 economically disadvantaged girls with various social protection schemes, ensuring access to essential resources.



HEALTH INTERVENTIONS

Provided comprehensive health services, including haemoglobin testing, weight and height measurements, general health check-ups, and treatment for 948 adolescent girls and 237 children under five. Follow-up and counselling support was facilitated through field team including community volunteers and young enablers.



INFOSURAKSHA

The Internet has become a dominant force in shaping how we communicate and consume information, especially among youth. With over 881 million internet users in India, the digital shift accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing dependence on social media for health information. However, this also led to widespread exposure to misinformation, adversely affecting public understanding, mental well-being, and trust in institutions. Recognizing the need to equip students and educators with tools to navigate this landscape responsibly, VHA, in collaboration with the WHO Country Office India, ICMR, and State Governments, launched InfoSuraksha—a school-based initiative aimed at building social media literacy and digital safety.

Implemented across five states- Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Gujarat, Assam, and Andhra Pradesh, the initiative reached 75 diverse schools and focused on students from grades 9 to 12. Through structured modules and capacity-building sessions, it empowered students and teachers to critically assess online content, differentiate between credible and false information, and foster responsible digital behavior.



InfoSuraksha
Learn.Verify.Share

**Fighting health misinformation
with knowledge, critical thinking,
and digital resilience.**



Advancing Social Media Literacy in Schools

In continuation of this effort, students across India were sensitized through targeted educational activities, reinforcing digital media literacy as a vital life skill to navigate misinformation and promote safe, responsible online engagement in today's interconnected world. The initiative focused on equipping participants with the tools to critically evaluate digital content, recognize misinformation, and act as informed digital citizens within their school communities and beyond.

Through interactive sessions, hands-on training modules, and the use of relatable, real-life scenarios, the programme cultivated a generation of digitally aware youth and educators. It also promoted a culture of curiosity, fact-checking, and respectful dialogue—laying the foundation for long-term resilience against misinformation. The continued outreach in diverse regions underscored the importance of integrating social media literacy into mainstream education and building a robust information ecosystem rooted in trust and truth.



**+10,000 Students
and
+1200
Teachers
reached**



**Building a generation of
informed, responsible, and
media-literate digital
citizens**



EAT RIGHT MOVEMENT

A healthy diet is one of the most effective responses to the growing burden of non-communicable diseases. Launched in July 2018, the Eat Right Movement aligns with key national initiatives like Ayushman Bharat, Jan Andolan, and Poshan Abhiyaan. It is a nationwide campaign focused on preventive and promotive healthcare through social and behavioural change related to food safety and nutrition.

VHAI, as a technical partner of FSSAI, plays an active role in this movement. Together with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and the National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC), VHAI co-developed the Eat Right Toolkit. Designed to support community-based health promotion, the toolkit is disseminated through Health & Wellness Centres under Ayushman Bharat and is built on two pillars — Eat Healthy and Eat Safe.

It includes guidance on balanced diets, the first 1,000 days of nutrition, limiting HFSS (high fat, sugar, salt) foods, and maintaining hygiene and food safety. The toolkit uses interactive tools to engage communities and frontline workers, including ASHAs, Anganwadi Workers (AWWs), Mid-Level Health Providers, and Medical Officers at PHCs and HWCs.

To strengthen grassroots outreach, VHAI contextualized and translated the toolkit into five regional languages- Hindi, Punjabi, Oriya, Assamese, and Gujarati to ensure accessibility and cultural relevance.

In 2024–25, VHAI trained over 345 frontline health workers and 400+ peer educators across different states on effective use of the Eat Right Toolkit. These sessions enhanced community-level knowledge on safe and nutritious food practices and empowered local health actors to drive behaviour change at the last mile.



**Building healthier futures
with trained health workers**

VHAI-IUHPE COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS



THE IUHPE EXECUTIVE BOARD 2022-2025

IUHPE UIPES
www.iuhpe.org

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.

Countries in the South-East Asia Region (SEAR) continue to face a heavy burden of disease and premature mortality, driven by both communicable and non-communicable diseases, along with emerging health threats such as COVID-19. Infectious diseases like tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV/AIDS remain persistent public health challenges. Simultaneously, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, and cancers are rising at an alarming rate—even among economically disadvantaged populations. The rapid pace of globalization has brought significant shifts in dietary habits and increased consumption of tobacco and alcohol, contributing further to the region's health crisis. These issues are compounded by deep-rooted disparities both between and within countries.

Health promotion offers a sustainable and holistic approach to address the root causes of this growing disease burden, reduce premature deaths, and bridge health inequities. In recognition of this, the Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI) has partnered with the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) to advance a structured health promotion agenda across SEAR. To support this collaboration, the IUHPE's South-East Asia Regional Office is hosted at VHAI, New Delhi, with a mandate to facilitate coordinated efforts, foster regional dialogue, and implement targeted strategies to improve health outcomes across the region.

Leveraging existing networks





IUHPE
UIPES

GOVERNING BOARD OF IUHPE

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GLOBAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE OF IUHPE 25TH WORLD CONFERENCE ON HEALTH PROMOTION

Ms. Bhavna Mukhopadhyay played an active role in the strategic planning and finalisation of the theme and sub-themes of the IUHPE 25th World Conference on Health Promotion, serving as a member of its Global Scientific Committee. Over the past year, she participated in regular monthly meetings focused on shaping the core elements of the conference. Her contributions included finalising the Terms of Reference, developing the concept note for the central theme and sub-themes, designing the overall structure and draft scheme of the conference, and contributing to the preparation of key materials such as the conference timeline (graphic) and abstract submission guidelines.

Health equity begins with informed leadership and collaborative action





CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH

The future of health lies in how we respond to climate change today

Climate change is no longer a distant threat, it is a pressing reality with far-reaching consequences for public health in India. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, deteriorating air quality, and shifting disease patterns are placing unprecedented pressure on already stretched health systems. These impacts are felt most acutely by vulnerable communities, especially those with limited access to healthcare, highlighting the urgent need for context-specific interventions and evidence-informed policy responses.

Far beyond being just an environmental issue, climate change contributes directly and indirectly to a range of health problems. The rising incidence of heatwaves, floods, and droughts has been linked to the spread of climate-sensitive diseases such as vector-borne illnesses, respiratory ailments, and mental health disorders. It also disrupts food and water security, exacerbates malnutrition, and undermines health service delivery particularly in disaster-prone and resource-constrained regions. These complex, overlapping effects call for integrated, multi-sectoral strategies that build community resilience and promote health equity.

Special Issue on “Climate Change and Health”



Health systems must evolve as fast as the climate is changing.



As part of its ongoing efforts to address the growing interlinkages between climate and health, VHAJ has been instrumental in conceptualising a special issue of Health for the Millions (HFM) on the theme “Climate Change and Health.” The organization played a key role in shaping the thematic framework, identifying priority focus areas, and aligning the issue’s content with national health imperatives and global climate commitments. VHAJ also curated a panel of leading authors and domain experts from public health, environmental science, and policy fields, while providing editorial support to uphold scientific rigour and ensure accessibility for a wide range of readers.

The issue offered a comprehensive, multidisciplinary perspective on the intersections between climate change and health. It explored critical areas such as the rising burden of climate-sensitive diseases, including the alarming increase in vector-borne illnesses like dengue and malaria due to altered temperature and rainfall patterns. It also examined the emerging linkages between climate change and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), with particular attention to respiratory and cardiovascular health impacts driven by air pollution, heatwaves, and nutritional insecurity.

Additional focus was placed on the cascading effects of extreme weather events on healthcare delivery and infrastructure, and how existing social and economic inequalities are further aggravated by climate-related vulnerabilities. The edition also featured best practices and community-driven innovations, demonstrating how localized adaptation strategies and community engagement are strengthening resilience at the grassroots level.

Through its strategic and editorial involvement, VHAJ helped ensure the issue serves as a practical and action-oriented resource, informing both community-led responses and national and state-level policy dialogues on climate and health.

Youth for a Healthy Planet: Community-Based Climate Action

In 2024, VHAI deepened its grassroots engagement by fostering youth-led climate action in various part of the country. This initiative focused on building awareness and capacity among students, adolescents, and youth to adopt and promote environmentally sustainable and health-friendly practices.

The initiative aimed to create awareness and build skills among young people to become active contributors in addressing the effects of climate change. Through a series of education and demonstration sessions held at both community spaces and educational institutions, participants were introduced to practical climate-resilient practices. These included organic farming, kitchen gardening, rainwater harvesting, plantation on non-forest land, fruit crop cultivation, and climate-friendly agricultural techniques such as crop diversification. The programme also focused on encouraging behavioural changes, such as reducing the use of plastic items and limiting the consumption of packaged and junk food, steps that contribute to both better health and a healthier environment.

VHAI provided ongoing guidance and handholding support to help them plan and implement these actions. This initiative played an important role in nurturing a generation of young leaders committed to creating positive environmental and health outcomes at the local level.



Over 6,500 youth and adolescents were engaged in climate awareness and action initiatives.

Technical Dialogue: Climate Change and Public Health

As part of VHAI's 50th Annual General Body Meeting, a focused technical session on "Climate Change and Health" was organised to deepen collective understanding and strengthen programmatic strategies addressing this urgent issue. The session drew participation from 45 representatives, including Executive Directors from State VHAs, senior public health professionals, and programme staff from across the country.



Strengthening cross-sector dialogue on climate change and health

Chaired by Dr. Rajni Kant Srivastava, Former Director, ICMR-RMRC, the session explored the growing intersections between climate change and health. Experts presented on the emerging risks posed by climate change to public health systems and vulnerable populations. Dr. Aakash Shrivastava (NCDC) shared the structure and progress of India's National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health (NPCCHH), highlighting the importance of inter-sectoral convergence and localised resilience planning.

Dr. R.C. Dhiman, National Technical Lead, TCI Foundation, elaborated on the evolving dynamics of vector-borne diseases under changing climatic conditions, while Dr. Harshal Salve, AIIMS and CAPHER India, presented evidence on the health implications of air pollution. He emphasised the need for collective behavioural change, community engagement, and policy-level interventions over short-term mitigation tools.

The session concluded with actionable insights, reinforcing the need for early warning systems, cross-sector collaboration, and continuous public engagement. It reaffirmed VHAI's commitment to mainstreaming climate-health considerations into public health strategies and catalysing multisectoral dialogue for equitable, climate-resilient health systems.



V4HEALTH- ADVANCING HOLISTIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING



V4Health, an initiative under VHA's "Health, Wellbeing, and Equity" program, promotes holistic health by integrating traditional knowledge with evidence-based modern science. It highlights the body's natural healing abilities and advocates for sustainable well-being. In an era where online health information is often misleading, V4Health serves as a trusted source of accurate, well-researched content. Our team is dedicated to debunking common myths with scientific facts and addressing both the physical and emotional dimensions of health. Through accessible content, V4Health empowers social media users of all ages to make informed health choices. The initiative bridges the gap between ancient wisdom and modern practices, ensuring reliable advice is always within reach. Committed to transforming health-seeking behavior, V4Health is building a more informed, health-conscious society.



CONNECT

Facilitating a deeper understanding of health by integrating traditional Ayurvedic principles with contemporary scientific advancements.



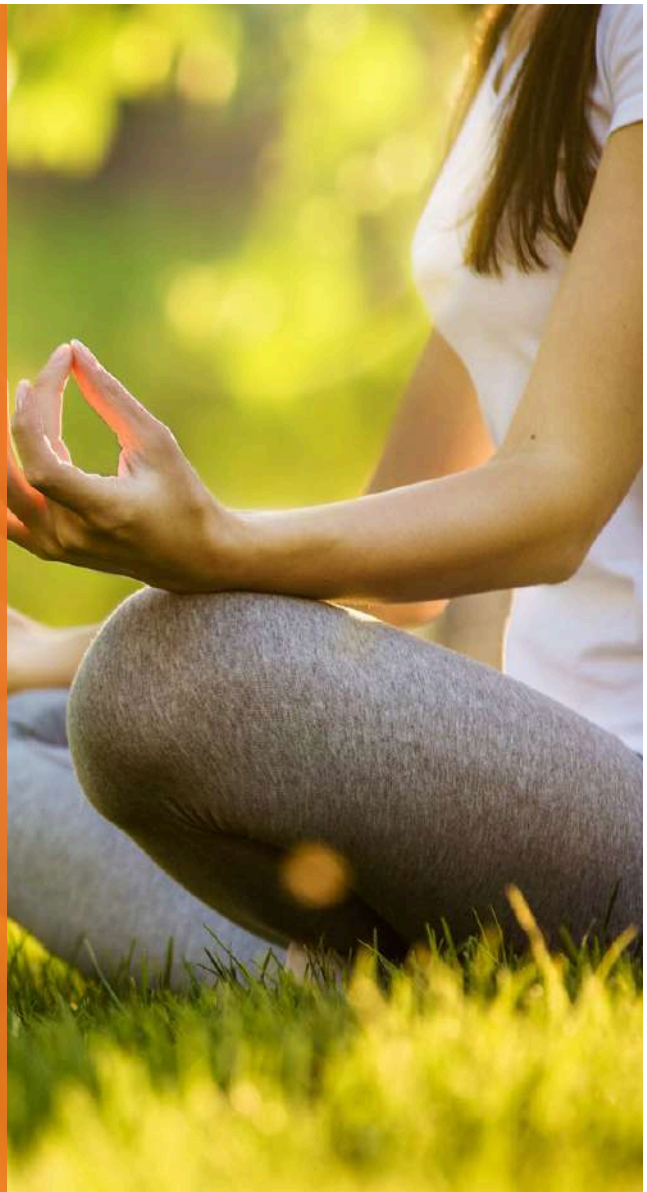
TRANSFORM

Equipping individuals with the necessary knowledge and tools to make informed health choices and adopt preventive health practices.



HEAL

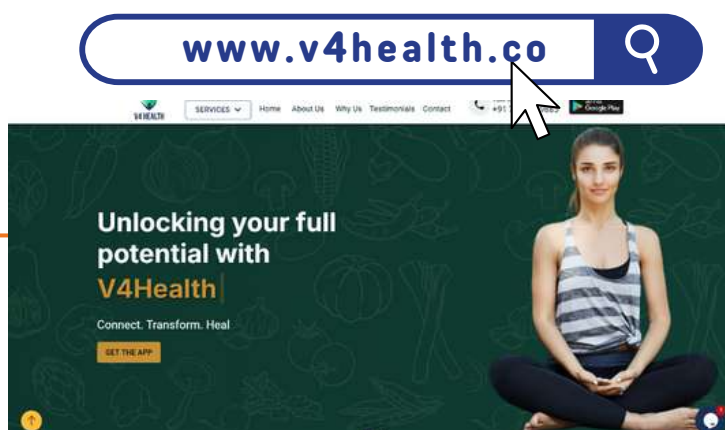
Encouraging natural healing by addressing the root causes of health concerns, fostering long-term well-being through sustainable lifestyle modifications.



V4Health is a logical progression of VHA's mission to enhance health literacy and public awareness. Leveraging digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, the initiative disseminates scientifically validated and well-researched health content to empower individuals with accurate and actionable health information. V4Health offers personalized wellbeing advice through an app-based platform and V4Health website.

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC HEALTH LITERACY

ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE IS THE FOUNDATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH



Expanding Reach Through Digital Engagement

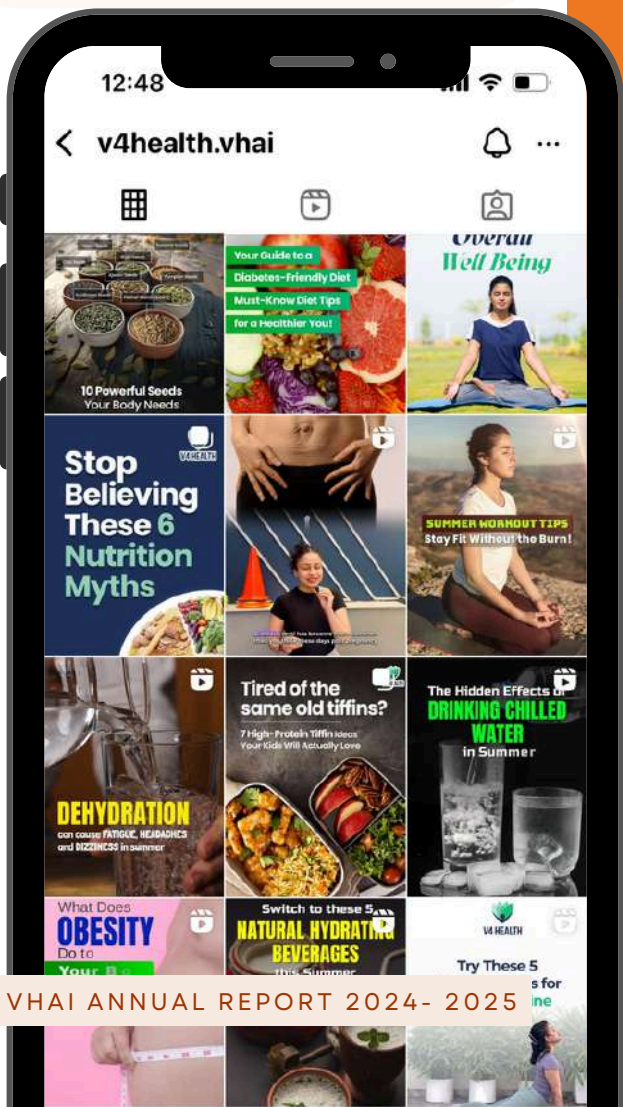
As a key pillar of its outreach strategy, V4Health has focused on leveraging digital platforms to broaden its impact. In the reporting year, the initiative successfully reached over 1 million individuals across Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. This impressive engagement underscores the growing public interest in holistic and preventive health, and highlights the increasing relevance of V4Health's approach, which blends traditional wisdom with evidence-based modern practices.

Through this expanding digital footprint, V4Health continues to cultivate a vibrant community committed to holistic health and informed lifestyle choices. This outreach effort complements VHA's overarching commitment to advancing health equity, enhancing public health literacy, and empowering individuals with the knowledge necessary for healthier lives.

DRIVING WIDESPREAD CHANGE ACROSS COMMUNITIES

Building Healthier Communities through Digital Conversations

The V4Health Instagram community now comprises approximately 6,000 dedicated followers, with organic growth driven by consistent delivery of accessible, well-researched content. Through short videos, infographics, expert-backed posts, and interactive formats, V4Health has created a trusted space for individuals seeking credible health information. The focus on user-friendly and visually engaging formats ensures that health knowledge is not only disseminated but also understood and acted upon.



+1 MILLION
POPULATION
REACHED



+25K
ACCOUNTS
ENGAGED



+6K
FOLLOWERS



+150
POSTS GENERATED

Looking ahead, V4Health aims to further diversify its content formats and strengthen engagement by collaborating with experts and communities, ensuring that reliable health information becomes even more accessible and actionable for all.



VHAI PUBLICATIONS 2024-25

PROTECT WOMEN FROM TOBACCO USE TO CREATE A HEALTHY WORLD

PROTECT WOMEN FROM TOBACCO USE TO CREATE A HEALTHY WORLD

Tobacco Use Among Women - Global Scenario

- Tobacco consumption is a growing concern among the globe for many decades and has been reported as one of the most common causes of morbidity and mortality.
- Tobacco use among women is associated with health complications among different socio-economic strata between genders.
- Tobacco-based occupational applications are likely to promote tobacco without an intention and changing tobacco advertising strategy across the world includes various, taking advantage of the changing position of women in the society and their increasing socio-economic independence.

Tobacco Use Among Women - India 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 12.7% 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 23.9%. The average prevalence was 40% among men and 8.7% among women [2].
- Second-hand smoke causes the death of 800,000 women every year globally and 6% of annual second-hand smoke related deaths are of women [3].

Tobacco Use Among Women - India Scenario

- Tobacco use among women is prevalent in all regions of India and among all sections of the society.
- There have been a tremendous increase in the tobacco consumption among women in India. The trend of tobacco use among women, particularly smokeless tobacco (ST) [2], shows the increasing use per 1000 adult females living (GATS) in 2016-17 among 15 years and older women aged 15 years and older in India and across tobacco use cases or states [4].
- As per GATS-2, the prevalence of tobacco use among women in north eastern states of India is high. It is highest in Mizoram at 85.8% followed by Manipur at 52.7% and Tripura at 50.2% [4].
- As per Global Health Tobacco Survey (GHTS), the median age at initiation of cigarette use was 12.11 years (10.8 years and 18.9 years respectively) for regular use of tobacco products among men and women [5].
- The prevalence of current use of any tobacco product among girls aged 11-14 years has increased by 6% between 1990-2010 [6].

SECOND HAND SMOKE EXPOSURE AMONG WOMEN

- The consequences of tobacco use extend beyond the individual smoker and often adversely affect people around them.
- Second-hand smoke exposure among women has caused severe complications, which are caused by second-hand smoke. It can have adverse reproductive health outcomes such as pregnancy loss, low birth weight, preterm delivery, stillbirths, and sudden death [6].
- As per GATS-2, over 65% of non-smokers, disproportionately women, were exposed to second-hand smoke at home, about 27% at work and 20.7% at city public place.

This factsheet highlights the rising tobacco use among women, its health risks, and policy measures. While 6.6% of women globally use tobacco, India sees a growing trend, especially in smokeless tobacco, with 14.2% of women aged 15+ consuming tobacco (GATS-2, 2016-17). Second-hand smoke also severely affects women, increasing risks of pregnancy complications and stillbirths.

It sheds light on women in the bidi industry, who face severe occupational health hazards, and examines gender-targeted tobacco marketing. The document calls for stronger policies, including raising the legal age for tobacco sales, banning single-stick cigarettes, increasing taxation, and restricting tobacco portrayals in media.

THE ALCOHOL LANDSCAPE IN INDIA-HEALTH POLICY AND SOCIAL IMPACT

THE ALCOHOL LANDSCAPE IN INDIA-HEALTH POLICY AND SOCIAL IMPACT

Global Prevalence

- As per WHO Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2018 report, approximately 28.4% of adults aged 15 years and older had consumed alcohol in the past year.
- The WHO report indicates that alcohol use is responsible for approximately 2.5 million deaths globally each year, accounting for about 5.9% of all deaths.
- This includes deaths from various causes, such as alcohol poisoning, liver disease, and accidents.
- The report revealed about 208,000 alcohol-related road crash deaths reported in 2015, of which 156,000 deaths were due to someone else's drinking.

Background

Alcohol consumption in India has emerged as a significant public health concern with far-reaching implications for individuals and society at large. Historically, alcohol has been consumed in India in various forms, influenced by cultural, religious, and social practices. However, the pattern of alcohol use has evolved with increasing consumption across different demographic groups, leading to a growing concern for adverse health consequences. Increased availability, changing social norms, and aggressive marketing have contributed to rising alcohol consumption. The impact of alcohol consumption is not limited to individual health; it extends to social and economic spheres as well. Alcohol-related incidents, such as domestic violence, road traffic accidents, and criminal activities, have contributed to a growing social burden. Additionally, the economic cost of alcohol use, which includes healthcare expenses, loss of productivity, and the strain on law enforcement, are substantial. Addressing the issue of alcohol use in India requires a multifaceted approach that involves public health interventions, policy reforms, and community engagement [1].

In 2015, alcohol consumption led to an estimated 474,000 deaths from cardiovascular diseases and was responsible for 401,000 cancer deaths globally [1].

This factsheet examines the rising alcohol consumption in India, its health risks, and policy measures. It highlights the increasing prevalence of alcohol use, with 19% of men and 1% of women aged 15+ reporting consumption (NFHS-5). Binge drinking, road accidents, liver disease, and cancer risks are among the major concerns.

It also explores state-wise variations, taxation policies, and advertising loopholes like surrogate marketing. Government initiatives, including prohibition laws in some states and the National Alcohol Policy (2023), aim to curb alcohol-related harm. Stronger policies, public awareness, and better access to treatment are essential for reducing alcohol-related health and social issues in India.

YOUTH AND TOBACCO USE-INDIA

OVERVIEW

Tobacco is one of the most harmful, highly available, and easily accessible substances. Tobacco use is considered a leading preventable cause of morbidity and mortality in India. Tobacco use among youth and adolescents is a significant public health concern, with alarming statistics for the nation's future health and economic stability. Early initiation of tobacco use leads to addiction, increasing the risk of chronic diseases, contributing to the nation's high burden of tobacco-related morbidity and mortality. Addiction is highly addictive, and early exposure increases the likelihood of developing a dependence. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable due to their developing brains.

HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF EARLY TOBACCO USE AMONG YOUTH

- Increased susceptibility to addiction due to the developing brain. Tobacco use also interferes with learning, affecting cognitive function [1].
- Reduced lung function, increased risk of chronic respiratory conditions such as bronchitis and asthma [2].
- Higher susceptibility to infections and diseases [2].
- Heightened risk of cardiovascular diseases, including heart disease and stroke, and increased risk of developing hypertension [3].
- Higher risk of lung cancer, oral cancer, and other forms of cancer due to exposure to carcinogenic chemicals [3].
- Interference with brain development, affecting cognitive functions and academic performance [4].
- Greater likelihood of engaging in other risky behaviors, such as alcohol and drug use [5].

The Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) study, based on data from the study, reveals that nearly one-third of the students aged 11-14 years are consuming tobacco to some extent. The survey also highlights the alarming rise in tobacco use among youth in India, with an increase in use among 10-year-olds.

YOUTH AND TOBACCO USE-INDIA

This factsheet covers the rising tobacco use among Indian youth, its severe health risks, and the alarming ease of access despite legal restrictions like COTPA, 2003. It highlights key findings from GYTS-2019, the role of media and peer pressure, and government efforts like the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP). Prevention strategies include stricter enforcement, awareness programs, and community action.

POLICY BRIEF ADDRESSING THE GROWING BURDEN OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCDs) IN INDIA

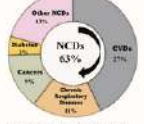
INTRODUCTION
Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) have become a significant public health concern in India, accounting for an increasing proportion of mortality and morbidity over the past few decades. In 2019, NCDs were responsible for 71.7% of all deaths in the country, with 25.1 million people living with NCDs. The primary NCDs prevalent in India include cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes, which collectively contribute to a substantial portion of the nation's disease burden.

The epidemiological shift from communicable to non-communicable diseases can be attributed to several factors. These factors include demographic transitions, India's population is aging, with projections indicating that the proportion of individuals aged 65 and above will rise from 6% in 2019 to 12.5% by 2030. [1] Older populations are more susceptible to NCDs, leading to an increase in NCD-related morbidity. Rapid urbanization has led to lifestyle modifications, including reduced physical activity and increased consumption of unhealthy diets. These changes have contributed to the rise in NCDs. Other factors such as obesity, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia. An another important factor is environmental stressors such as air pollution and occupational hazards, which act as potential triggers for NCDs, further exacerbating the burden.

The economic and social impacts of NCDs are profound. They impose significant financial burdens on individuals and households, leading to increased out-of-pocket healthcare expenditures and loss of income, which can exacerbate poverty and inequality. Additionally, NCDs result in productivity losses due to premature mortality, absenteeism, and reduced work capacity, posing substantial challenges to socioeconomic development. Recognizing the urgency of this public health challenge, the Government of India has implemented several initiatives aimed at preventing and controlling NCDs. These efforts underscore the need for a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to effectively address the growing NCD burden and its associated risk factors. [2]

BURDEN OF NCDs IN INDIA

As per the WHO - NCD India profile - 2019, NCDs are estimated to account for 71% of all deaths in country, of which the non-communicable diseases lead to 27% overall mortality causes followed by chronic respiratory diseases (11%), cancer (9%), diabetes (3%) and others (13%). [3]



As per India State-level Disease Burden Collaborators - 2019, there were 5.6 million cases of cardiovascular diseases, 2.2 million cases of ischemic heart diseases, 6.5 million cases of stroke, 16 million cases of COPD, 28 million cases of asthma and 52 million cases of diabetes. [3]

Fig 1 Mortality due to Non-Communicable Diseases in India

ADDRESSING THE GROWING BURDEN OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES IN INDIA

This policy brief highlights the rising burden of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in India and the need for a strengthened, multisectoral response. It outlines key government initiatives, identifies priority risk factors, and recommends strategic actions including early detection, health promotion, fiscal and policy measures, and enhanced collaboration. The brief emphasizes the importance of increased investment and multi-stakeholder partnerships to ensure a healthier, more resilient population.

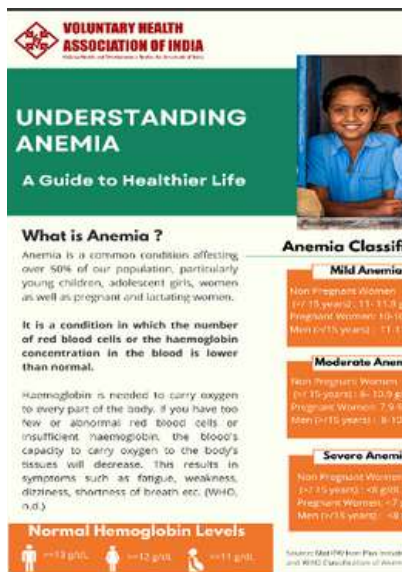
JUNK OUT-HEALTHY IN

This brochure highlights the impact of junk food (ultra-processed and packaged foods) on children's health and the importance of eating nutritious meals. It explains how excessive consumption of high-fat, high-sugar, and high-salt foods can lead to obesity, diabetes, and other lifestyle diseases. With tips on reading food labels, building a balanced plate, and making healthier choices, this guide empowers children to develop lifelong healthy eating habits.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN INDIA

This brochure highlights the impact of junk food (ultra-processed and packaged foods) on children's health and the importance of eating nutritious meals. It explains how excessive consumption of high-fat, high-sugar, and high-salt foods can lead to obesity, diabetes, and other lifestyle diseases. With tips on reading food labels, building a balanced plate, and making healthier choices, this guide empowers children to develop lifelong healthy eating habits.

VHAI PUBLICATIONS 2024-25



UNDERSTANDING ANEMIA- A GUIDE TO HEALTHIER LIFE

This brochure serves as an educational tool to raise awareness about anemia, a widespread public health concern, particularly among women, children, and pregnant individuals. It outlines the types, causes, symptoms, and severity classifications of anemia, while emphasizing the importance of nutritional interventions, iron supplementation, and routine screening. The brochure also provides practical guidance on improving iron absorption and encourages timely consultation with healthcare providers for effective prevention and management.



RESPONDING TO MAJOR HEALTH CHALLENGES OF INDIA

The monograph Responding to the Major Health Challenges in India, developed by the Independent Commission on Development and Health in India, presents a comprehensive analysis of the country's health landscape. It is structured around three key themes: comparative health challenges in India and similar countries, the economic and public health impact of non-communicable diseases, and trends in health expenditure. The document offers evidence-based recommendations to inform policy, enhance investment, and strengthen the health system, and has been shared widely with national and state-level stakeholders.



ENHANCING IMMUNIZATION THROUGH COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

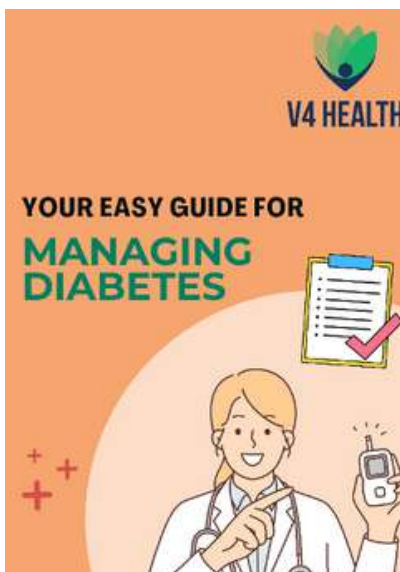
This brochure highlights VHAI's community-led immunisation initiative across 26 districts in seven low-performing states. Using a human-centred approach, the programme tackles vaccine hesitancy through local partnerships, outreach, and awareness. Supported by GAVI and UNICEF, it underscores the role of community ownership in reaching zero-dose children.

VHAI PUBLICATIONS 2024-25



SOWING THE SEEDS OF WELLNESS: MILLETS FOR HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

This brochure outlines VHA's millet promotion initiative, Sowing the Seeds of Wellness – Millets for Health and Sustainability, to support the Government of India's millet mission. Through the national campaign Millets Pe Charcha, VHA engages with experts and communities to raise awareness about the nutritional and ecological benefits of millets. Activities include capacity building of "Millet Champions," community outreach, promotion of millet-based diets in Anganwadi and school meals, and collaboration with FSSAI and Odisha Millets Mission to promote farm-to-plate adoption of millets across tribal and non-tribal regions.



YOUR EASY GUIDE FOR MANAGING DIABETES

This e-book serves as a comprehensive and practical guide for diabetes management, integrating diet, physical activity, stress reduction, and regular monitoring. It offers insights into the causes, symptoms, and types of diabetes, along with actionable tips on nutrition, lifestyle changes, and Ayurvedic approaches for holistic care. Designed to empower individuals living with diabetes, the guide promotes self-care, informed decision-making, and a balanced lifestyle to prevent complications and improve overall well-being.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS 2024-25

FUNDS		
PARTICULARS	As on 31.03.2025	As on 31.03.2024
Capital Fund	7,15,95,659	7,19,80,408
Other Funds & Reserves	6,77,75,974	6,99,46,219
Unutilised Grant Balances	86,70,000	8,78,097
Bank Loan for Vehicle (Secured by Vehicle)	17,45,999	21,92,441
Capital Advance	30,00,000	
Income & Expenditure Account	(38,36,368)	(18,25,574)
Total	14,89,51,264	14,31,71,591

APPLICATION OF FUNDS				
		As on 31.03.2025		As on 31.03.2024
Fixed Assets (at Cost)		7,06,20,660		7,10,05,409
Investments		6,42,20,855		6,27,44,685
Current Assets, Loans, Advances	1,35,36,820		1,00,62,861	
Less: Current Liabilities	35,13,347	1,00,23,473	29,81,588	70,81,273
Grants Awaiting Reimbursement		40,86,276		23,40,224
Total		14,89,51,264		14,31,71,591

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31.03.2025

EXPENDITURE	AMOUNT (Rs.)	INCOME	AMOUNT (Rs.)
Immunization Programmes	2,03,84,114	Opening Balance of Grant Funds (Net)	(14,62,127)
Tobacco Control Programmes	22,65,819	Add: Grants Received for Specific Projects:	
Community Health & Communicable Diseases control	8,56,862	UNICEF	2,80,62,343
Policy Research work for better development - ICHI	12,25,897	Subtotal	2,66,00,216
Health Promotion & Non communicable diseases control	36,00,312	Less : Closing Balance of Grant Funds (Net)	45,83,724
Health Programmes in Aspirational Distt	32,06,805		2,20,16,492
Children Welfare Programme	25,61,876	Membership Fee	85,000
Support to SVHAs	11,27,676	Rent Income	70,48,983
Information, Publications & Website	1,03,170	Consultancy Income	19,788
Finance Services	8,72,684	Collection from Distribution of Material	1,10,751
Administrative Expenses	47,36,730	Collection from Gallery Freedom	1,12,925
Support Staff costs	20,18,289	Interest on Investments & Savings account	49,35,019
Gratuity paid to outgoing staff	3,73,663	Maintenance Charges	48,10,740
Loss in sale of Assets	6,72,334	Misc Income	3,00,745
Transfer to Land Equipment & Furniture Fund	2,20,485	Transfer from Land Equipment & Furniture Fund	6,05,234
Transfer to Gratuity Reserves	7,03,418	Transfer from Gratuity Reserve - Paid during the year	3,73,663
Excess of Expenditure over Income	(20,10,794)	Transfer from General Reserve	25,00,000
TOTAL	4,29,19,340	TOTAL	4,29,19,340



Executive Board Members (2023-25)

Dr. B.S. Garg

President

Dr Sushila Nayar School of Public Health
Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences,
Sewagram-442102, Wardha, Maharashtra

Dr. Harshaben Shah

Vice-President

Gram Seva Trust,
Kharel,
Gujarat

Ms. Andamma Mani

Secretary

Administrator, Mitraniketan Hospital, Vagamon - 685 503
Kottayam Dist., Kerala

Mr. K. Pradipkumar

Treasurer

Ayang Palli Road, Wangkhei, Ningthem Pukhri Mamang, Porompat Sub-Division, Imphal East, Manipur-795005

Sr. Michael L. Mary

Member

St. Joseph Health Centre Vardhaman Nagar, P.O. Marwa, Gulni, Nawada - 805 124, Bihar

Mr. P.S. Debnath

Member

P.O. Dhaleswar, Road No. 1 Agartala - 799007, Tripura

Ms. Ezabir Ali

Member

Mir Manzil, Pandrethan Srinagar - 191101, Jammu & Kashmir

Mr. Satyen Chaturvedi

Member

70/170 Mansarovar Jaipur - 302020, Rajasthan

Mr. Shaik Ismail

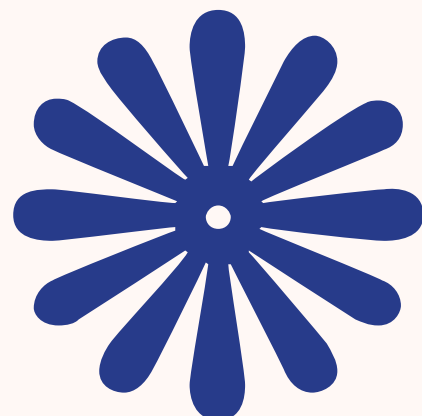
Member

Flat No: 403, Royal Luxury Apartment Nr. Bharatmatha Statue Tadepalli 522 502, GUNTUR DISTRICT, Andhra Pradesh

Ms. Bhavna Mukhopadhyay

Ex-officio Member

Chief Executive
Voluntary Health Association of India
B-40, Qutab Institutional Area,
New Delhi-110016



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

Dr. L.M. Nath
Former Director, AIIMS, New Delhi

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

Dr. Amit Shovon Ray
Professor of Economics, Centre for International
Trade and Development, JNU

Mr. Darshan Shankar
Vice Chancellor, The University of Trans-
Disciplinary Health Sciences and Technology

Mr. Deepak Gupta
Former Additional Secretary (Health),
Government of India
Former Chairman, UPSC

Dr Anand Krishnan
Professor, Centre for Community Medicine,
AIIMS- New Delhi

Alok Mukhopadhyay
Chairman (Advisory Committee)

Bhavna B. Mukhopadhyay
Chief Executive

Dr. P.C. Bhatnagar
Senior Technical Consultant

Dr. Rajni Kant Srivastava
Senior Technical Advisor

Programme Team

Dr. Nancepreet Kaur
Programme Manager

Binoy Mathew
Programme Manager
(Communications)

Dr. Swapnil Jain
Senior Programme Officer

Akanksha Bangwal
Programme Officer

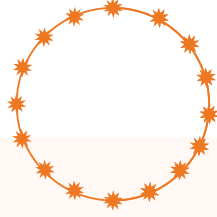
Dr Phalguni Chaturvedi
Programme Officer

Debananda Mohanta
State Programme Officer,
Odisha

Shisira Kumar Biswal
Field Supervisor, Odisha

VHAI Team





Project Team-Arunachal Pradesh

Hemanta Borah
State Coordinator

Miyaseng Manwai
State M&E Officer

District Coordinators

Litro Sumnyan, Riku Naik, Tongam Suyang, Techhi Tasino, Mr. Ajit Taron, Tadar Hari, Bamang Para, Pura Rinya, Tanium Riddi, Kaustav Saikia, Binpu Yomgam, Nomi Sakrinsow

Finance and Administration

Noshina Rizvi
Senior Manager (Finance)

Vinay Sharma
Finance & Accounts Officer

Sushil Kumar Vasan
Senior Manager (Administration & Personnel)

Subhash Bhaskar
Junior Programme Officer

Support Team

Virender Kumar, Sanjay Kumar, Bhola Nath, Rakesh KumarJha
Hari Jena, Puneet Manjih

State Voluntary Health Associations

Mr R. Manmohan

Coordinator
Andhra Pradesh VHA
Flat No: 403, ROYAL LUXURY
APARTMENT
Bharatmatha Statue , Tadepalli Post
and Mandal
Guntur District - 522 501
Andhra Pradesh

Dr. Biman Natung

Executive Director
VHA of Arunachal Pradesh
Post Box No. 185
Polo Hospital Complex
Ganga Market, P.O. Itanagar – 791 111
ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Ms. Ruchira Neog

Executive Director
VHA of Assam
East Jyotinagar, Guwahati College
Road, Bamunimaidam P.O
Near Haldi Mill, Guwahati - 781021,
ASSAM

Mr Swapan Mazumder

Executive Director
Bihar Voluntary Health Association
West of Ganga Apartment, LCT Ghat,
Mainpura, Patna – 800 001, BIHAR

Dr. Gyanendra Kumar

President
Voluntary Health Association of Delhi
CB-64A, Naraina
New Delhi - 110 028

Mr Raj Vaidya

President
Voluntary Health Association of Goa
Models Residency, Bldg. no. 3,
Flat no. T-1,
Opp. St. Inez Church, St. Inez,
Panaji - 403001, GOA

Mr Vishnubhai Upadhyay

Secretary
Gujarat Voluntary Health
Association
F-1, Sterling City, Bopal
Ahmedabad – 380022, GUJARAT

Mr. K.R. Siranta

Secretary
Himachal Pradesh VHA
B-37, Phase I, Sector II
New Shimla - 171 009,
HIMACHAL PRADESH

Mr Ali Mohammed Mir

Executive Director
J & K Voluntary Health &
Development Association
Mir Manzil, Pandrethan
Srinagar - 191 101,
JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Mr Saju V. Itty

Executive Director
Kerala VHS
Mullankuzhi, Collectorate P.O.
Kottayam - 686 002, KERALA

Mr Mukesh Kumar Sinha

Executive Director
Madhya Pradesh VHA
Post Kasturbagram
Khandwa Road, (Near Bilawali
Lake)
Indore - 452 020,
MADHYA PRADESH

Dr B. S. Garg

President
VHA of Maharashtra
C/o Dept. of Community Medicine
MGIMS, Sewagram-442 102
Dist. Wardha, MAHARASHTRA

State Voluntary Health Associations

Mr. L Suranjoy Singh

Secretary
Manipur VHA
Wangkhei Ningthem Pukhri Mapal,
Imphal - 795 001 MANIPUR

**Ms. Mayfereen Lyngdoh
Ryntathiang**

VHA of Meghalaya
Adj. to Eden Bless Residential School
Umkdait, Nongmynsong
Shillong - 793 019, MEGHALAYA

Ms. Daisy Mezhur

President
Nagaland VHA
NST Building, 2nd Floor
Kohima - 797 001, NAGALAND

Mr. K.K. Swain

Secretary
Orissa Voluntary Health Association,
Lokaswashya Bhawan, Plot. No. 165,
Laxmisagar Chaka Bhubaneswar -
751 006,
ODISHA

Mr. Shamsheer Singh Rana

Programme Director
Voluntary Health Association of
Punjab
Sood Complex, Top Floor,
Near Bank of Baroda,
Opposite Committee Office,
Nayagaon, Tehsil-Kharar,
District-SAS Nagar,
Mohali- 160103, PUNJAB

Mr Satyen Chaturvedi

Executive Director
Rajasthan VHA
301 Satyam - 18
Plot 132, Vishwa Vidyalaya Nagar,
Jagatpura, Jaipur, RAJASTHAN

Dr B. B. Rai

Executive Director
VHA of Sikkim
Tadong, Gangtok - 737102
EAST SIKKIM

Dr. S. Moorthi

Secretary
VHA of Tamil Nadu
Plot No. 47 & 48, Sri Balaji Nagar,
Katankulathur, Post-Potheri - 603 203,
Kancheepuram District, TAMIL NADU

Mr Sujit Ghosh

Executive Director
Tripura VHA
Circuit House Area
Opp. Bangladesh Visa Office
P.O. Kunjaban, Agartala - 799 006,
TRIPURA

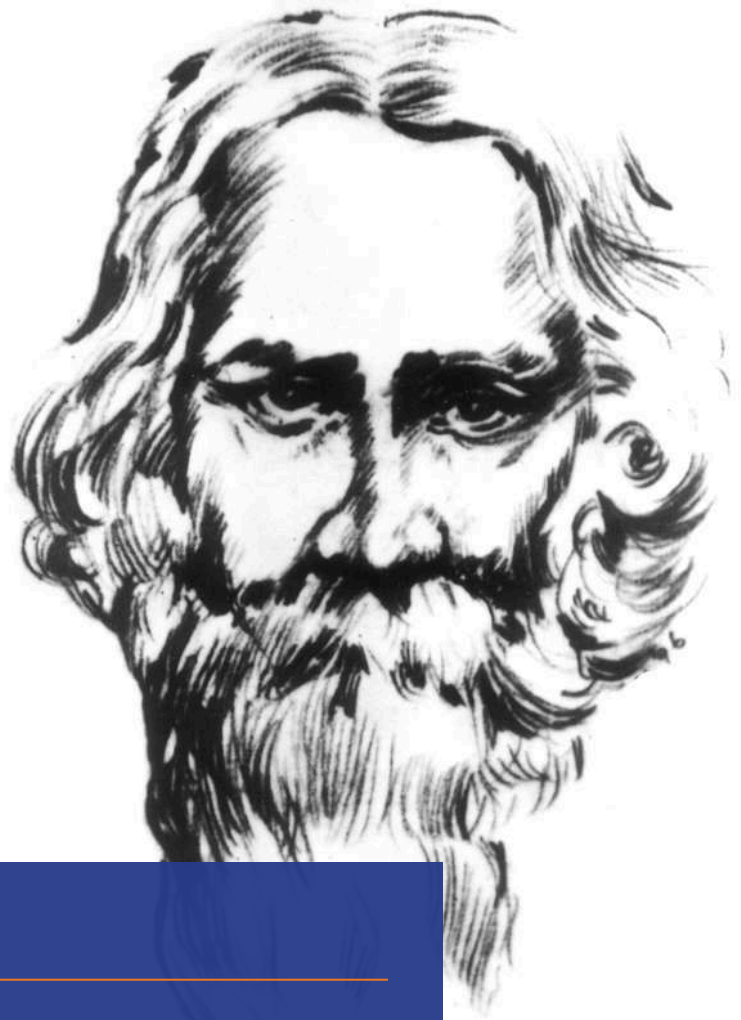
Mr Vivek Awasthi

Executive Director,
Uttar Pradesh VHA
5/459, ViramKhand,
Gomti Nagar
Lucknow - 226 010, UTTAR PRADESH

Mr Biswanath Basu

Office Incharge
West Bengal Voluntary Health Association
WBVHA Tower, 3rd Floor
580, Anandapur
Kolkata - 700 107
WEST BENGAL

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



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Email: admin@vhai.org

Phone: 011-45622447

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