

WIDE BASE OF RESPONSIBLE, ACTION-ORIENTED NGOs NEEDED

# 'Sacrifice soul of voluntary bodies'

PANKAJ SHUKLA/DNA

PARAS K JHA

"There are about 1,50,000 registered trusts in the country for taking up work in the fields of education, health, social security, legal aid etc, but only about 40,000 are active. Out of them, about 30,000 are directly dependent on government grants for day-to-day activities. Some agencies spring up at the time of flood, drought etc," said P K Laheri, ex-state chief secretary, in his inaugural address of a Consultation Meet on the National policy on Voluntary Sector.

The two-day consultation has been organised at the Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI), which started on Tuesday. The objective is to realise the state-level voluntary sector policy and to discuss the path for the implementation of the national voluntary sector policy, approved by the Union cabinet on May 17, 2007. The meet has been organised by the EDI and Voluntary Action Network India (Vani) in association with Unnati, Janpath and Sajjata Sangh.

Dinesh Awasthi, director, EDI, Paresh Tewary, CEO, Vani, and Binoy Acharya, director, Unnati were among those present on the occasion.

Speaking further about the voluntary sector scenario, Laheri said that a large number of trusts had set up schools and colleges to impart education. But they invested capital only

PK Laheri

Former state chief secretary



"Dependence on foreign aid for looking after the needy in India is not proper. We should not bank on that. We have progressed well and have our own resources."



CAMPUS TALK: Students interact on the EDI campus

once. Their operations were subsidised by the government, with teachers being paid directly by the government with facilities like pension and other benefits. Thus, education sector, instead of becoming a charity, became an activity to earn livelihood for so many managements. They were not giving back to society but taking something from it."

Listing the crucial characteristics of a voluntary agency, Laheri said, "Voluntary agency will be distinguished by three things. The first one is sensitivity. If there is no sensitivity, there is no possibility of charity. Without sensitivity, it is business or merely a formality. Second is sacrifice. People should make sacrifice of their career, income etc, rather than making money out of it. The third attribute is that a voluntary agency should be a voice of civil society."

He termed the initiative to formulate a policy for the state as immensely useful as this would help make a legal framework, ensure tangible benefits to people and demand transparency and accountability from NGOs. He further said, "The policy should also consider the misuse of government schemes by voluntary organisations."

He called for a wide base of accountable, responsible, action-oriented NGOs, which should be standing on the pillars of sensitivity, sacrifice, voice of the civil society, accountability and innovation. He stressed that the voluntary sector must work in such a way that the society remains empowered and capable of generating benefits even after they have with-

drawn themselves from a certain area.

Paresh Tewary, CEO, Vani, spoke on the need to formulate and finalise the state policy draft and its subsequent approval by the state government as State Policy on Voluntary Sector in Gujarat. He termed the national policy as immensely useful as this recognised the existence of voluntary sector. He highlighted four distinct advantages of the policy: Its promise to provide an enabling environment and promote the spirit of voluntarism; promise to focus on resource mobilisation; promise to focus on Voluntary Sector's partnership with all sectors, and promise to promote governance and capacity building within the voluntary sector.

Paresh Tewary

CEO, Vani



"Accountability is vital, but handcuffing would not allow the sector to prosper. The FCRA has provisions which make the going difficult for NGOs — like the need to re-register after one year et al."

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# Only 40,000 out of 150,000 registered trusts active: PK Laheri

BS REPORTER

Ahmedabad, 10 February

In order to involve the voluntary sector for accelerated and inclusive development in Gujarat, the voluntary sector has approached the state government to formulate a policy on the lines of the national policy for the voluntary sector.

Gujarat has 2.37 lakhs registered voluntary organisations and the state policy would give a voice to the voluntary sector and promote a feeling of solidarity within

the sector. There is a need to finalise the state policy draft and its subsequent approval by the state government. The national policy is immensely useful as it recognises the existence of the sector. It talks about partnership in all segments of the society and imparts an independent and an autonomous status to the voluntary sector. This needs to be implemented at the state level to build up a sustained relationship between civil society organisations (CSOs) and the state government. So far Uttar Pradesh, Andra



(From left): PK Laheri, former chief secretary, government of Gujarat addresses the audience as Paresw Tiwary, chief executive officer of VANI and Dinesh Awasthi, director of EDI look on

Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh are in the final stages of drafting the policy," said Paresw Tiwary, chief executive officer of Voluntary Action Network India (VANI), which has organised a state consultation on national policy on the voluntary sector at the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDI), in association with Unnati, Janpath and Sajjata Sangh.

The national policy on the voluntary sector, which was approved by the Union government on May 17, 2007, promises to create an enabling environment for voluntary organisations and facilitate their partnership with the government. The government was urged to set up task forces to operationalise different sections of the policy, and include members of the voluntary sector in the same.

There are about 1,50,000 registered trusts, working on different issues but out of these only about 40,000 are active and out of these 40,000 about 30,000 depend on government grants to carry out activities. There is a need for a wider

base of accountable, responsible, action-oriented NGOs, which stand on the pillars of sensitivity, sacrifice, voice of the civil society, accountability that involve people and innovation to benefit people. The voluntary sector must work in such a way that the society remains empowered and capable of generating benefits even after they have withdrawn themselves from a certain area. The initiative of formulating policy for the state would be immensely useful as this would help make a legal framework, ensure tangible benefits to people and demand transparency and accountability from NGOs," said PK Laheri, former chief secretary, government of Gujarat.

The state consultation aims at influencing policies related to voluntary sector; promoting good governance amongst CSOs, promoting dialogue with policy makers on issues related to the sector; engaging with media and political representative in debating on these issues and building and strengthening state level network.

## Meet discusses ways to draft policy on voluntary sector

AHMEDABAD MIRROR BUREAU

Voluntary organisations across the state met at the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India to discuss the national policy for voluntary sector and also to form a task force to draft the policy.

Faresh Tiwari of VANI (Voluntary Action Network India) said, "It is high time that we form a group to draft a policy for the voluntary sector. The national policy recognises the existence of the voluntary sector and promises autonomy. However, we need some rationalisation in structure of foreign funds." P K Laheri, former chief secretary of Gujarat, in his inaugural address said that there are 1.50 lakh trusts in the state, of which only 40,000 are active. The charity commissioner's office is overburdened with work and the monitoring mechanism needs amendments.

Laheri said some NGOs prospered by taking unfair advantage of governmental schemes for development. So people associated with voluntary sector should ensure sensitivity, sacrifice and innovative spirit to achieve the goals. The two-day meet will end on Wednesday.

## 'State has 1.5 lakh trusts, but only 40K active'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Ahmedabad:** There are around 1.5 lakh registered trusts in the state, but only 40,000 are active. Moreover, most depend on government grants for their projects. This was revealed on Tuesday by former chief secretary of the state, PK Laheri, at a two-day workshop on state policy on voluntary sector held at Entrepreneurship Development Institute, India (EDI).

The workshop aimed at sharing and debating aspects of national policy on voluntary sector formulated in 2007, with NGOs and the voluntary sector in the state.

After formulation of the policy, Central government asked state governments to come up with their own policies. Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have taken a lead, whereas Gujarat is still to make a move in this direction.

Speaking on 'Strengthening Partnership between Government and the Voluntary Sector', Laheri said, "Voluntary sector should be standing on the pillars of sensitivity, sacrifice, voice of civil society and accountability and should involve people and innovations that benefit them."

It's extremely useful if a state formulates a policy, as this will help put in place a legal framework, ensure tangible benefits for people and demand transparency and accountability from NGOs, he added.

However, Laheri admitted that the charity commissioner in the state was overburdened having to deal with a huge number of trusts and that upgradation of data on NGOs was urgently needed.

## EDİમાં आजથી 'सेक्टर पोलिसी' पर वर्कशोप

अमदावाद : गांधीनगरना व्याट ग्राम स्थित ईडीआरगां आजधी 'स्टेट लेवल कोन्सुलेशन ऑन नेशनल वोलन्टरी सेक्टर पोलिसी' विषय पर वर्कशोपनु आयोजन करामुं छे, जेनु उद्घाटन सवारे १० वाग्मे राज्पना पूर्व चीफ सेक्टर डी.के. लोरीना हस्ते घसे. वर्कशोपमां ईडीआरना डिरिक्टर प्रो. दिनेश अवस्थी, उन्नतिना डिरिक्टर मिनॉय आचार्य, वागीना सीईओ परेश तिवारी माबिली आपसे. वर्कशोपना पहला दिवसे राज्पना पूर्व अेरिशनल चीफ सेक्टर डी तथा सीईआरसीना मेनेजिंग ड्रस्टी

पी.के. घोष, वागीना सीईओ परेश तिवारी, सद्गुरु बोटर अेन्ड डेवलपमेन्ट कांन्सेशनना हरनाथ ज्जावत, प्थानिन कमिशनना जोरुन्ट ओडुवारुंजर प्रो. लखितकुमार, वास्मोना प्रोजेक्ट डिरिक्टर आर.के. शामा, अछानी कांन्सेशनना डुरेल डेवलपमेन्ट प्रोजेक्शनना सीईओ सुष्मा अोजा, ईडीआरना असोसियेट सिनियर केकल्टी मनीष मिश्रा, जनविज्ञान संस्थापक मंगल शैली, नूजरात विद्यापीठना कुलपति प्रो. सुदर्शन आपंगर वगैरे पीताना विषयादी रजु करसे.

## **EDI, VANI to organise state-level consultation**

**AHMEDABAD:**The city-based Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDI) and New Delhi-based Voluntary Action Network India (VANI) are jointly organising a two-day State Level Consultation in association with Unnat, Janpath and Sajjata Sangh on February 10 and 11 at the EDI campus. The consultation is aimed at bringing together various stakeholders from all levels of society at one platform to understand the various aspects of the policy, its implications for the voluntary sector and promote formulation of a policy for the state.