NATIONAL CENTRE FOR ADVOCACY STUDIES

ANNUAL REPORT
2022-2023
The vision of NCAS is create a just and equitable society in India by empowering individuals and organizations with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to advocate concerns and well-being of marginalized communities.

At the crucial juncture of the completion of 30 meaningful years of people-centered advocacy in South East Asia, NCAS takes a moment to look back at the interventions and legacy it has built, and to look around at the new and dynamic social environment in which we are called to engage. The nature of the Indian State has evolved over the years and at this point in the history of India, new models of advocacy initiatives need to be developed around the challenges that are currently faced by Indian democracy and the institutions that are meant to uphold the values of the Indian Constitution.

In the light of this vision, the mission of NCAS is to promote transformative social change through research, advocacy, capacity building, and policy interventions that will work towards empowering marginalized communities and fostering their active participation in shaping policies and practices that affect their own lives.

In order to carry out this mission, NCAS has focused on the following three Goals:

• *Mainstreaming Public Policy Advocacy Education*
• *Enhancing the skills of professionals to develop creative innovations in the social sector*
• *Creating a market for social sector change makers.*
Consequently, over the past year, April 2022 to March 2023, we have focussed on:

- Promoting efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in relation to improving the quality of public services;
- Strengthening accountability in governance, through enhanced participation and capacity of civil society and local governance bodies;
- Nurturing professional knowledge leadership among young people in the area of public policy advocacy, SDGs and governance Training and capacity building of communities and people from grassroots organizations.
- Getting involved in training, capacity building and documentation needs of diverse networks and national campaigns.

Our work has focused on issues related to education, health and food security, among marginalised and natural resource dependent communities. We engaged in these areas using the cross cutting lenses of gender (including the non-binary gender), and the perspectives of tribals dalits, the differently abled, and other marginalised groups.
Executive Committee

Mr. Jagadananda (President)
Mr. Josantony Joseph (Secretary)
Ms. Keerti (Treasurer)
Ms. Aasha Ramesh
Mr. Amitabh Behar
Mr. Bhanwar Singh Chadana
Mr. Sampat Kale
Ms. Manjula Pradeep
Mr. Yogesh Kumar
Foreword

It is indeed with humility and joy, that we present the Annual Report of the National Centre for Advocacy Studies (NCAS) for the financial year 2022-23. This report provides a brief overview of our engagements during this period.

The year 2022-23 has been a challenging one for NCAS, as we are in a phase of transition. Capacity building, of course, remains a core focus of our work, and so we have conducted training programs and workshops that helped to enhance the skills and knowledge of grassroots activists, social workers, those working in various CBOs/NGOs, and community leaders. Through these efforts, besides equipping them with the tools and resources necessary for effective advocacy and social change, we aimed to continue to build a strong network of change agents who can create a lasting impact at the grassroots level.

As we reflect on the accomplishments of the past year, we acknowledge that there is still much work to be done. The challenges facing marginalized communities are complex and multifaceted, requiring sustained efforts and collective action. NCAS remains steadfast in its commitment to driving social change and will continue to adapt, innovate, and collaborate to address the evolving needs of the communities we serve.

We extend our gratitude to the communities who are involved in our work as well as other civil society organizations, including our dedicated team and the funders we are associated with. All of their unwavering support and commitment have been crucial in our journey towards a more just and equitable society.

We hope this Annual Report provides valuable insights into our work and achievements during the year 2022-23. Together, let us strive for a future where every individual’s rights are respected, and social justice prevails.

In Solidarity,

Anil Tharayath Varghese
Executive Director
National Centre for Advocacy Studies have been engaging with the communities in promoting and nurturing responsive governance especially at the village and the block levels in Sundarbans. Since the last two years NCAS has been part of an initiative known as Amplifying Community Voices that has worked closely with five community organizations working in the Patharprathima Block (Sundarbans, West Bengal). NCAS has been investing its energies along with a consortium of eight organizations in engaging and accompanying the marginalized communities in Sundarbans to understand/diagnose specific vulnerabilities of the communities and assist them in developing a strategic avenue of intervention along with specific action and roles.

The interventions of NCAS have been largely inspired on the basis of the learnings from the ‘Community Learning Movement’ initiated by NCAS in the year 2007. As part of this initiative NCAS has conducted both online and offline sessions to enhance the understanding of the rights-based approach, tools of advocacy and the different stages of advocacy. In the year under review that comprised a period post the pandemic, NCAS was able to conduct more offline workshops with the communities. The communities were encouraged to identify the vulnerabilities to which they are most exposed and participatory sessions were initiated to help them further analyse and understand the sources of their vulnerability and which could be the avenues they had options to reach out to in order to find ways to overcome such vulnerabilities. This was the primary focus over the year apart from training the community mobilisers on the systems of governance. A review of these
initiatives has confirmed that our efforts have indeed led to a process of building the confidence of the communities to understand and articulate their issues slowly. There is more work still to be done to bring these communities to a position of being able to influence their environments more effectively so that their entitlements and rights can be claimed, and hence the initiative has been extended for two more years.

NCAS was also invited by the Maharashtra to work with the fishing communities in Maharashtra, and was able to engage with them closely in helping them understand the policies related to the fishing community. There were two rounds of meeting with the fishing community leaders across Maharashtra.

Meetings with the fishing communities in Maharashtra

CAPACITY BUILDING
INTIATIVES IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER CIVIL SOCIETY ORGNIZATIONS

National Centre for Advocacy Studies has been engaging in capacity building initiatives on various components of advocacy and its praxis. In the current year there have been various collaborative efforts that worked towards strengthening of the organizations and communities on the various issues in the domain of Governance, Policy and Research. NCAS has played its role in being a facilitator and joining hands with various civil society actors to reach out effectively as well as to build an environment that encouraged the creation of learning spaces in this regard.  

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a. NCAS in collaboration with the National Centre for Promotion of Employment For Disabled People was instrumental in training 26 youth fellows with disabilities to be introduced to the world of advocacy, so that they could engage effectively in the different places where they are situated. These training programs helped them understand the different nuances of advocacy, and its application in different contexts, which it was hoped would help them as they worked in their respective locations to ensure a more inclusive, accessible and empowering world for persons with disabilities. Through this initiative, NCAS attempted to join hands with NCPDP in nurturing future leadership for the Indian disability movement. In a reciprocal arrangement, through this engagement NCAS had access to grassroot knowledge and hands-on experience of the issues and concerns of persons with disabilities - and this will help NCAS to conduct data driven and evidence-based policy analysis on issues related to disability in future.

b. In order to facilitate public involvement in the budgetary process and looking at generating evidence on the gaps in transparency and accountability mechanisms in budgets, and in collaboration with the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, NCAS was engaged in understanding the budgets on agriculture and especially with the fishing community in Maharashtra.

c. NCAS collaborated with the Youth for the Coast Initiative in a training programme for early to mid-career practitioners from various fields who intend to work on the various aspects of the ocean and coast in India. The aim was to bring together young people to develop their understanding and extend solidarity to civic action initiatives and organisations around the issues of the coast and the communities. It is specifically designed for the fishworkers, youth from coastal communities, researchers, media practitioners, interested in engaging with the issues of coast primarily from the nine coastal states from the Western and Eastern Coasts. NCAS was part of the facilitation group in Kerala and in Maharashtra.

d. NCAS facilitated three sessions with the students of Family and Child Welfare Department and the Urban and Rural Community Department of Karve Institute of Social Services, Pune, in order for them to get a comprehensive understanding.
about the work of NCAS and build a perspective that visualises the connection between advocacy and the discipline the students are engaged in. In this context the sessions helped them better understand the concept of advocacy. The efforts were fruitful and the Karve Institute has expressed interest in collaborating with NCAS on specialised topics related to advocacy in the coming days.

e. National Centre for Advocacy Studies anchored and facilitated a three-day conference on Ocean Commons in collaboration with a host of civil society organizations at the Indian Institute for Science, Education and Research, Pune. Coastal areas and oceans are one of the most contested commons. In addition to the lack of clear laws that secure peoples’ rights in this space; the ground-level machinery to uphold the accountability of officials and public representatives towards the coastal communities is heavily compromised. Further on, coastal areas and oceans, as commons are also under unprecedented pressure from constant diversion for developmental pursuits under blue economy or deep-sea mining, conservation mandates through state’s custodianship, where rights and interests of coastal communities are being constantly diluted through regulatory revisions, or simply non-compliance with the law. Amid these grave challenges, this dialogue was a humble attempt to flesh out some practical elements of an accountability framework for coastal and ocean commons, which would not only address these contestations but would also try to establish norms of community recognition, access, monitoring and management of these spaces as commons.

f. NCAS facilitated a two-day field immersion programme for the students of the Department of Humanities, IISER, together with the fishing communities of Uththan Maharashtra. The main intention of this programme was to give the students a first-hand understanding of the life of the communities and understand the environment as well as linking these learnings with the policy level mechanisms too.
ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS

There has been regular communication with the Board Members and they have been giving timely advice to shape up the organization and making it relevant in the current times. The former interns of NCAS have been of great source of inspiration and support and they have also been very keen to engage with the organization more deeply.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

SUMMARY OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

INCOME

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NCAS Team [2022-23]
Kshitija
Anil T Varghese
Gopal Dubey
Venkat Balsure