



FEAT

Forum for Ethics, Accountability and Transparency



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Background

The voluntary sector by definition is very dynamic. It is ever changing and ever evolving. One of the primary reasons for it is because of the challenge that it faces in its work for the poor and marginalized which is dynamic in nature. Therefore, the sector is continuously evolving to face the reality of the changing times.

On the other hand the whole area of accountability and transparency demands are also gaining more importance. Non-Government Organisations(NGOs) being public institutions dealing with public funds are open to scrutiny on a continuous basis.

All the above challenges need to be addressed by voluntary organizations. The ways to overcome these challenges has been to go for capacity building and to external input and support.

It has been the experience of FMSF that there are not many finance consultants who focus on the voluntary sector. The reasons are many. The primary reason being that it calls for a lot of social commitment and the field realities are quite challenging. Therefore, FMSF has taken the initiative to bring these consultants together at a national level by organizing a consultation in 2001.

The aim of this consultation was to build a forum of consultants who can render consultancies to NGOs to enable them to strengthen accountability and transparency.

A follow up of the consultation of 2001 was held in the year 2002, to carry forward the discussion from the previous one and also take up issues like ethics, accountability and transparency in the field of Financial Management and to formally establish the forum of consultants. In this consultation there was also the representation from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.

After the follow up consultation the **“Forum for Ethics, Accountability and Transparency (FEAT)”** was evolved. FEAT is a network of Finance Consultants engaged in the voluntary sector in providing necessary consultancy in the areas of Financial Management and Related Governance.

Through this network the expertise available within the group could be used more effectively to address the existing problems faced by the NGOs in the areas of Financial Management and Related Governance. The forum is also a platform for mutual learning from one another to be better equipped to respond to these issues. It is also a forum for sensitization about the field realities and ethical accountability.

Role of FMSF

FMSF works as a facilitator to the Network.

Structure

At the central level there is a National Core Group consisting of four members who are the apex body for decision making. In addition there are three regional representatives (South, East and North regions) who are responsible for coordinating FEAT in the respective regions. The core group and regional representatives are elected in the national level meetings.

Role and Functions of FEAT

- To act as a group of resource persons having required skills and expertise.
- To provide consultancy and capacity building to the voluntary sector as and when required.
- To do lobby and advocacy with various financial and legal policy making bodies to evolve policies which are sensitive to the reality of the development/ voluntary sector and also promotes accountability.
- To evolve procedures and practices which are simple to follow, having taken into consideration the voluntary sector requirements and enhancing transparency and accountability of the sector.
- To function within the ethical framework which would ensure credibility.
- To work closely with a forum of practitioners consisting of NGO Accountants to understand better the ground realities existing in compliance with the legal provisions and to suggest suitable remedies for the same.

Membership

Membership is open to professionals like Chartered Accountants, Finance Consultants providing Financial Management and Governance support to Voluntary Organisations. The final decision to enroll as member rests with the core group.



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