



Dr. Vasanti Rao is the Director General of the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) – a renowned think tank based in India
www.cmsindia.org

She also leads Asia's largest green festival: CMSVATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum on Environment & Wildlife
www.cmsvatavarana.org

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

- Research & Policy Analysis on Development and Communication programs
- Media & Communication Strategies and Policy Advisory
- Issues related to Gender, Children & Conservation

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 32

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- PhD, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. 2018
- MBA from Faculty of Management Studies (FMS) University of Delhi 2002
- M. A. (Social & Environmental Psychology), Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. 1994
- B.A. (Psychology), Kamala Nehru College, Delhi University, New Delhi 1992

LANGUAGES KNOWN

English, Hindi, Telugu

DR. VASANTI RAO

M: 91 98999 79170 E: pnvasanti@cmsindia.org

[pncvms](#) [in](#) [pncvms](#) [pnvasanti](#) [vasanti.rao](#)

Vasanti is a reputed researcher, communication expert and proactive advocate on gender & child rights and environment conservation. With keen interest in contributing to informed policy making and responsive governance in India, Vasanti started doing applied research in her under graduation. Her interest and passion led her to be **one of the founding members** of the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) in 1991. She started her career at CMS as a Researcher and has successfully ascended to be the Director General in 2012. As Director General and also **Board Member of the CMS Managing Committee**, Vasanti have played a critical role in its development and achievements. Though CMS's original thrust was to focus on media strategies, motivation and communication (IEC) trends, she was responsible for expanding its horizon of activities to include social, environmental and developmental issues. CMS clientele today includes major International agencies, civil society groups and Governments.

EXPERTISE & EXPERIENCE

- Vasanti's specialization is in **research, evaluation and policy analysis**, in the areas of **behaviour & norm change, media studies and communication strategies for development endeavours**. She has been involved in **developing the research agenda, design, methodologies and actually conducting the exhaustive research** across the country. She has been closely involved in most of the development communication initiatives in India especially the ones relating to experimentation with 'entertainment education' strategy. She has lead and managed large teams and multiple organisations, including for developing systems and designing processes, to successfully complete large scale projects and missions.
- Vasanti has also planned, led and implemented innovative program initiatives like **CMS VATAVARAN** -International film festival and forum on environment and wild life – in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Forests and with the support of agencies like Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), National Geographic Channel, Embassy of Switzerland and United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). **Harnessing the power of films, forums and other creative expressions for environmental conservation and sustainable lifestyles**, this unique movement is today Asia's largest green film festival. Since its inception in 2001, this festival and forum has become a critical platform for raising awareness on number of contemporary environmental issues and is today an important international forum engaging wide range of stakeholders – including youth, children, policy & program makers, media, scientists and film makers. Its wide range of efforts, activities, engagements, outcomes and impact can be seen on its website and publications - <http://cmsvatavarana.org/files/Impact-and-legacy.pdf>
- Other recent advocacy project (2023-24) she has led was on Wetlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Protection project, a collaborative effort by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) Government of India, International Climate Initiative (IKI), and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ India), implemented by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS). It aimed to enhance the **capacity of media professionals and journalism students** to effectively communicate the significance of wetlands in addressing biodiversity, water security, and climate resilience challenges. This program included organizing various workshops (4) with media students, consultations (3) with media professionals and film festivals (3) on the theme "**Wetlands for LiFE**" in various locations of India.
- Vasanti also head the program to **promote accurate reporting of climate change science and adaptation measures in the Indian Himalayas**, for the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) and the Indian Himalayas Climate Adaptation Program (IHCAP) of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Under this program a series of Workshops (12) and Fellowships (9) were undertaken in a three year period, starting September 2016.

MEMBERSHIPS & ASSOCIATIONS

- Regional Vice Chair for S & S E Asia and Steering Committee Member of IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC). 2021 onwards
- Founder Member, CMS www.cmsindia.org
- Chairperson, CMS Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- Board Member, Green Film Network (GFN) – 2000-2024
- Member, Consumer Complaints Council (CCC) of the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI). 2013 – 2023 & **Council Member, ASCI Academy**. 2023 onwards
- Director- **Social Marketing and Development Research Associates (MDRA)** a leading social marketing and development research organization in India – www.mdraonline.com
- Member -**Basic Research in Education and Development (BREAD)**, - breadocietyindia.org
- Advisory Board Member, Advit Foundation - www.advit.org
- Member, International Advisory Board, PSO, Netherlands. 2009 -12
- Member, Indian Women's Press Corp
- Member – UNESCO Media Freedom Committee
- Member, Ad-hoc Task Force (ATF) constituted by the Cabinet Secretariat (Prime Minister's Office) to review the performance targets for various Government departments. (2010 - 14)
- Member, Sub Group on Content, for the Sam Pitroda Committee on Prasar Bharati. (Feb 2013)
- Member, Euro-India SPIRIT Working Group euroindia-ict.org/ (2008 - 10)
- Member, Scrutiny Committee of Electronic Media Monitoring Centre, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, GOI. 2010 onwards..
- Knowledge Partner, Wetlands Division of Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, Government of India, 2024 onwards
- Member, Media Advisory Committee, Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, Government of India. 2004 - 10

She was part of the **European Union Appraisal and Support Mission to the Government of Rajasthan** for developing and implementing their water sector reforms and communication campaign. In 2021 for EU in India, she designed and managed **Biodiversity Outreach and Advocacy Campaign** to engage diverse stakeholders on the potential and appeal of biodiversity conservation and restoration – www.leadthegreenchanges.in

Vasanti has initiated and coordinating a multi stakeholder initiative – The Change Narrative Alliance – **a unique forum for entertainment media to engage with diverse stakeholders to make their stories more impactful**. The partners in this Alliance include Foundations (BMGF, UNICEF), NGO's (Population First, Population Foundation of India, BBC Media Action), Research and Evaluation partners (World Bank DIME unit, CMS), Academic Institutions (Ashoka University), Audience Research Council (BARC India), Networks, Studios (ZEE, Star), Producers (Sesame Street, ACEE), Digital Platforms (Indian Television.Com, ACEE –The Daily Eye) and Associations that govern the Industries of Media and Entertainment like the Producers Guild of India, CINTAA and Screenwriters Association.

Vasanti has played an active role in creating a debate and bringing concerns to highlight by **organizing seminars, workshops, press conferences, press briefs, events, printing monographs**, etc. On various issues of interest like children and television, Broadcast Policies, Social Marketing, Managing and Marketing for Non Profits, Public Service Broadcasting, Transparency in Governance, and **Communication for Conservation**, she is well known for her stand and advocacy role. She is an active voice in media policy issues in India, specially related to media content regulations. Her efforts with UNESCO to create Guidelines & Advocacy on Promoting **Online Safety of Women Journalists**, has been effective. Vasanti designed and created **Guidelines for Gender Sensitive Programming** for Doordarshan, which was formally accepted by the national broadcaster on March 8, 2019. She also did a series of follow-up workshops (8) across various Doordarshan Kendras on how to use these guidelines and develop gender transformative content. As ASCI CCC member and on number of government committees, she has been contributing in both industry and government discourse on the same. Her recent support to **Green Washing Advertising Guidelines** by ASCI has garnered good corporate feedback.

SIGNIFICANT ASSIGNMENTS

◆ **The Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum** took place from October 3-5, 2024, at the Ganga Auditorium, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi. This festival was organized by CMS in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), GIZ, WWF India, National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), All India Radio (AIR), and the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC)

◆ **'Green Frames: VATAVARAN Short Film Competition and Festival 2023.'** Film Competition, Workshops and Film Festival, for youth on environment sustainability issues. American Consulate, Mumbai, India

◆ The **Nepal Festival and Forum on Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Action 2023**, held from December 15th to 17th at the Nepal Tourism Board Auditorium (NTB) and National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) in Kathmandu, marked a significant milestone in environmental discourse and awareness in the region. This festival was a collaborative effort spearheaded by CMS VATAVARAN in partnership with the 15 different stakeholders working for the conservation at local and global levels including the Ministry of Forests and Environment of the Government of Nepal, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC), Canadian High Commission in Nepal, IUCN Nepal National Committee (NNC), WWF Nepal, ZSL Nepal, National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ), Environmental Rights Network-Nepal, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) India, Human Rights Film Centre Nepal, Nepal Tourism Board, Kathmandu University, Nepal Youth Network for Sustainable Development (NYN) and the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN).

◆ **Understanding Communication Approaches for Engaging Youth on Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability** (CCES), IUCN, UNICEF 2023

<https://www.iucn.org/story/202405/new-unicef-supported-study-illuminates-key-role-youth-sustainability-efforts>

◆ **Capacity Building Program for Mass Communication and Environment Journalism students on low carbon sustainable development and climate resilience**. Australian High Commission-DAP 2023

PUBLICATIONS

- 'Unaware Of Lutyens Media, Delhi Still Trusts Press' in Outlook India Magazine by Dr. P. N. Vasanti, 2020
- "Balance of innovation, accountability needed" published in VIDURA, July-September 2018, Volume 10 Issue 3
- TV NEWS Channels in India-Business, Content & Regulation – edited by PN Vasanti & Prabhakar Kumar, Academic Foundation Publication 2016
- The Role of Popular Narratives in Stimulating the Public Discourse on HIV and AIDS: Bollywood's Answer to Hollywood's Philadelphia, *Paper published in South Asian Popular Culture, Spring 2005 Issue, by Dr Arvind Singhal and Ms. P N Vasanti*
- Vision, Mission for India' Public Broadcasting: Prasar Bharati Corporation, CMS Report
- A Missing link in India's Social Development Endeavors – The Communication Perspective in the case of RCH). CMS Report
- Balance of innovation, accountability needed, July- Sept. 2018 , Volume 10 Issue 3, VIDURA
- Why newsrooms need to step up their everyday reportage on child rights, Newslaundry, Sept. 03, 2018
- Fortnightly column in MINT (2009-2013) – www.livemenint.com/fineprint
- The Diffusion of E-choupal in India: Information Technology Meets Commercial and Social Interests by Ketan Chitnis, Ami Sengupta, Do Kyun Kim, Arvind Singhal and P. N. Vasanti presented at IAMCR, 2006 at Cairo
- Preventive Health Programs In India: Breaking The Glass Ceiling, by S Narendra & P N Vasanti presented at IAMCR, 2006 Cairo.
- The Role of Popular Narratives in Stimulating the Public Discourse on HIV and AIDS: Bollywood's Answer to Hollywood's Philadelphia by Arvind Singhal and P.N Vasanti presented at ICA, 2005 New York
- Media Scene as India Globalizes, 2005 CMS Publication
- Nav Vika La Sabjan Padbo, Anita Rampal, Manimala (2002). NLRC, Mussoorie.
- ◆ **Curator for organising the Urban Climate Film Festival under the CITIIS Program** (Delhi, Kolkata. Bangalore and Mumbai), National Institute of Urban Affairs. 2022-2023
- ◆ **Goa CMS VATAVARAN Film Festival & Forum on LiFE** (Lifestyle For Environment) 2023
- ◆ CMS VATAVARAN in collaboration with the Canadian High Commission of India and Bhutan, IUCN CEC, Royal Thimphu College (RTC), Thimphu and Norbuling Rigter College (NRC), Paro organised **Bhutan's first-ever film festival and forum on Climate Action and Biodiversity Conservation** at Royal Thimphu College (RTC) Thimphu from 2nd to 4th November and at the Norbuling Rigter College (NRC) Paro on 7th November, 2022.
- ◆ **Study on Impact of Digital Learning on Mental Health of Students during COVID**, UNICEF 2022
- ◆ **COVAX Vaccine formative study**, UNICEF Partnership 2020-22
- ◆ **Punjab CMS VATAVARAN Film Festival & Forum on LiFE** (Lifestyle for Environment), Punjab State Council for Science & Technology. 2022
- ◆ **EU Biodiversity Campaign Design & Implementation**, 2021
www.LeadtheGreenChanges.in
- ◆ Developing a **Model Guideline for Media Organisations on the Safety of Women Journalists** in India, UNESCO (Apr 2021 – June 2021)
- ◆ Conduct **Travelling film festival and stakeholder engagement activities in SECURE Himalaya** in Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim, UNDP (Dec 2019 – Nov 2021)
- ◆ Road Safety Media Fellowship; WHO 2019-20
- ◆ Study on Safety of Women in Indian Media Sector, UNESCO, 2020
- ◆ **Short Film Competition & Festival on Pollution** for the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC). The Hon'ble minister Shri Prakash Javadekar announced the 'Call for Entry' of the competition on the World Environment Day conference at hotel Ashok on June 06, 2019. It was an initiative to highlight the sensitive issue of Pollution and indulge young and talented filmmakers to create films that could help spread and sensitize audience about the hazardous effects of pollution on human beings and on nature. Films up to 3 Minutes were invited on the given theme "Pollution" from the Students (School & College), Amateur and Professional Filmmakers for the Short Film Competition & Festival, 2019.
- ◆ International Colloquium on Ethics & Governance of Autonomous AI system For Better world - Facebook, TCIL, ECIL, CDOT, 2019
- ◆ **10th CMS VATAVARAN International Environment and Wildlife Film Festival & Forum**, organized at Dr Ambedkar International Centre, Janpath, New Delhi on the theme of Celebrating Himalayas. It was held with support from the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Environment Forests and Climate Change (MOEFCC), Discovery India, Amity University, WWF India, IUCN CEC, FLEDGE, NMNH, UNDP India, Doordarshan, AIR and Down to Earth magazine. November 2019
- ◆ Developing an EE Alliance and Gender Sensitive Program Guidelines for Doordarshan – UNICEF, 2018-2019
- ◆ Study on '**Seeing is Believing: Is Video Modality more powerful in Spreading Fake News ?**', Penn State University 2019
- ◆ **Media engagement programme on climate change adaption in the Indian Himalayan Region** (IHR), Embassy of Switzerland, 2016- 2018
- ◆ CMS ENVIS Centre on Media and Environment, [1999-2018] Ministry of Environment and Forests, GoI - <http://cmsenvis.nic.in/>
- ◆ Mainstreaming Entertainment Education & Pro-social Content in Public and Private Broadcasting in India, UNICEF, Delhi 2018
- ◆ LAADLI Media & Advertising Awards for gender sensitivity, Population First, 2018
- ◆ Project Vrikshdaan, ONGC, 2017
- ◆ **Capacity Building Orientation Programs for Media on Climate Change & Sustainable Development**, GIZ, 2017
- ◆ 9th CMS VATAVARAN International Environment and Wildlife Film Festival & Forum, organized at GSDS, New Delhi, with support from Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change, National Geographic, UNESCO, GSDS, Doordarshan, IHCAP, Down to Earth, National Museum of Natural History, UNDP, CEE, HDFC Bank, NABARD, Wildlife Conservation Trust, CSE, Sony, WWF, WTI, Amity University, TERI University, India Climate Dialogue, The Third Pole and Delhi Greens. 2017
- ◆ **Situational Analysis and Communications Needs Assessment of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBM)**, for Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India, 2016
- ◆ Unicef Media Awards for Children related programs in Telugu TV Channels and Media Orientation on Child Rights. UNICEF 2008-15
- ◆ **Towards Organizing of the on-ground environmental education activity titled "Disney Friends for Change" in Delhi and NCR-2015**, The Walt Disney Company (India) Pvt. Ltd and United Home Entertainment Pvt. Ltd.
- ◆ Qualitative Assessment on Public Diplomacy and Communication Strategy for the European Delegation to India, 2014

- Pros and Cons of Television. Parenting (2002, May)
- CMS Round Table on Children & Television: A Report, P. N. Vasanti (1998, Nov 21)
- Vision, Mission for India' Public Broadcasting: Prasar Bharati Corporation, (2000).
- Sensitisation Meet for Media Professionals on issues concerning children, NIPCCD, New Delhi & Bangalore.
- Why I admire Justice Katju, *Vidura (A Journal of the Press Institute of India)*, October – December 2012, Vol 4, Issue 4; P. 11-12
- Television Scenario calls for a regulatory mechanism, *Press Council of India, Souvenir, Nov 2006; P.32-37; (Dr N Bhaskara Rao & Ms. P N Vasanti)*
- Media Ethics sustain and enhance very scope of freedom; *Press Council of India, Souvenir, Nov 2005; P. 21-26; (Dr N Bhaskara Rao & Ms. P N Vasanti)*
- DTH at what cost?. And for whose interests?; *Bitcom India, Nov 2004, Vol V, No. 11; P. 37-38(Dr N Bhaskara Rao & Ms. P N Vasanti)*
- Mass media-cause and effect of democratic processes, *Press Council of India, Souvenir, Nov 2004; P.125-132; (Dr N Bhaskara Rao & Ms. P N Vasanti)*
- Why do TV news bulletins have to be always cluttered?, Monograph by *Dr. N Bhaskara Rao & P N Vasanti, 2010*
- Pros and Cons of Television. Parenting (2002, May)
- CMS Round Table on Children & Television: A Report, P. N. Vasanti (1998, Nov 21)
- Communication & Rural Development, IIC, New Delhi
- Recent Trends in Media & Market Research Methodologies
- Violence & Vulgarly in Mass Media, New Delhi, Vijaywada, Pune, Lucknow, Bangalore, 1994-95
- Children and Television, 1998

- ◆ Road Safety Journalism Fellowship India, WHO 2014
- ◆ Committee Member to Evaluate the Software Schemes of Doordarshan, for Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, GOI 2013
- ◆ Developing an Monitoring & Evaluation framework for UNICEF's Advocacy & Partnership team 2013
- ◆ Faculty Development Programme – to support research and innovation in media institutions in India and UK, UKIERI 2013
- ◆ **Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of common people about Biodiversity and CoP 11 to the CBD** in 10 Indian cities, 2012 National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), MoEF
- ◆ **Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) on Global Warming and Climate Change**, 2008-2009 WWF India
- ◆ **Greening Young Minds... Towards A Better Future-A Package of TEN Green Films** distributed to 10,000 schools (2009) [Coverage: 30 states/ UTs and 488 districts]. Ministry of Environment and Forests, GoI
- ◆ Elector Behaviour Study in Jharkhand, Election Commission of India, 2009
- ◆ Evaluation of the SCALE® Demonstration Project In Jharkhand, India: Addressing Youth, Health & Fertility (2008-2009)
- ◆ **Audio-Visual Resource Centre** of all the audio visual spots, documentaries, and television serials produced by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, established in 2007 Ministry of Environment and Forests, GoI
- ◆ Intervening with the indigenous: An action-based folk media pilot campaign and research project on HIV/AIDS in rural Bihar for UNAIDS, India, 2007
- ◆ European Commission Mission for Govt. of Rajasthan on Water Sector Reforms and Water campaign. 2006
- ◆ **Mid-term evaluation of National Green Corps. (Eco Clubs)**, 2005 Partner: Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF),
- ◆ Moving Ahead to Next Generation Communication Approaches: Assessment of Current Communication Efforts & Strategies for HIV/AIDS for NACP III Planning Team. 2005
- ◆ AP Media Summit, Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Control Society, Hyderabad UNICEF, 2005
- ◆ Diffusion processes of ITC run e-chaupal in Madhya Pradesh, Ohio University /CMS 2005.
- ◆ Strengthening Consumer & Stakeholder Communication for Madhya Pradesh Power Sector Reforms 2003-04
- ◆ Consulting Services to Plan, Develop, Monitor National communication Campaign for National Anti-Malaria Programme (NAMP) 2002-2004
- ◆ Moving Ahead to Next Generation Communication Approaches: Assessment of Current Communication Efforts & Review of IEC initiatives of the State AIDS Control Societies, UNAIDS & NACO, 2004
- ◆ Feasibility of Print Cast Technology among Opinion Makers, for HP Lab, 2004.
- ◆ Strategic Communication, Design, Management and response, A workshop organized by CMS and NACO, at Jaipur. December 2004
- ◆ Evaluation of Meena Communication Initiative (MCI) in India, ROSA, UNICEF, 2004
- ◆ Tying Entertainment-Education Media Messages with Ground Based Action: Evaluating the Effects of 'Taru', an Entertainment-Education Radio Soap Opera in Bihar, India 2002-2003
- ◆ Identifying key concerns of stakeholders regarding the privatization of power utilities, evaluation of functioning of Delhi Vidyut Board (DVB). (Power Utility) 2001-02
- ◆ Communication strategy on power sector reforms, 2001
- ◆ Baseline study in Marihan Block of Mirzapur District, Uttar Pradesh - United National Development Program (UNDP), New Delhi, 2000
- ◆ Tracking social mobilisation activities in 6 states during 1st phase of Intensified Pulse Polio Program - World Health Organisation (WHO), 1999
- ◆ A study on perception and knowledge of adolescent women about sexual health and hygiene and consequences of unsafe sex. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, 1998
- ◆ Content analysis and Impact Study of AIR soap "Tinka Tinka Sukh", (Ohio University, USA, September 1995 to June 1997)
- ◆ Evaluation of NCLP Scheme in North Arcot Ambedkar and Kamarajar Districts of Tamil Nadu (Ministry of Labour, GOI, 1997)
- ◆ Study of the Impact of Structural Adjustment Programme on Women's Employment in the Unorganized Sector of Delhi's Garment Export Industry, (Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of HRD, May 1997)
- ◆ Evaluation of 1996-97 IEC Pulse Polio Campaign in India, Department for International Development (DFID), 1997
- ◆ Impact of Poverty Alleviation Programmes on the Incidence of Child Labour, (International Labour Organisation, New Delhi, 1996).
- ◆ Social Impact of Television, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, 1995