



Bengali American director and choreographer Ishita Mili (image courtesy: <https://www.imgedance.com/ishita-mili>)

India**Currents**

2025 IMPACT REPORT

# Letter from Publisher

Dear Readers,

As I look back at 2025, I find myself reflecting on how much the last year asked of us—and how much we accomplished together.

This was not an easy year for local journalism. Philanthropic support remained uncertain, and the pressures facing independent newsrooms only intensified. And yet, India Currents grew—in reach, in relevance, and in resolve.

Through expanded syndication, most notably with MSN, our stories reached nearly **2 million page views**, engaging **635,000 readers** across the country. These numbers matter, not because they signal scale alone, but because they reflect trust—trust in journalism that centers the Indian American experience with care, nuance, and integrity.

One of the most powerful expressions of that trust was “**We Belong**,” our traveling exhibit chronicling South Asian American stories in Silicon Valley. Presented across eight **San José Public Library** locations, the exhibit welcomed **more than 75,000 visitors**, turning libraries into spaces of shared memory, reflection, and belonging. Watching people pause, read, recognize themselves—or their neighbors—was a reminder that storytelling, at its best, creates connection.

2025 also brought meaningful recognition from peers. Our reporters earned multiple awards from the **California News Publishers Association**, the **San Francisco Press Club**, and **American Community Media**, affirming the rigor and heart of our newsroom. We received institutional support from **Press Forward**, **LION**, **URL Media**, **Silicon Valley Community Foundation**, the **City of San José**, and **UC Berkeley**, which placed a Local News Fellow in our newsroom—allowing us to report more deeply on the issues that shape our lives.

Just as important was our investment in people. Members of our team were selected for competitive fellowships and leadership programs focused on health reporting, AI and audience engagement, multilingual journalism, and nonprofit sustainability. These opportunities are not just professional milestones; they are how we ensure India Currents remains future-facing while staying rooted in community values.

We also took some thoughtful risks this year.



Vandana Kumar

In 2025, we made a deliberate effort to engage next-generation readers, using AI as a tool—not a replacement—to inform our work. We experimented with audience personas and tailored content to better meet younger readers where they are. Early signs are promising, and we are committed to building this into a sustainable, human-centered approach to growth.

Yet sustaining this work remains an ongoing challenge. More than **175 readers contributed nearly \$70,000** this year to support our journalism, and for that, I am deeply grateful. At the same time, growing a culture of reader support within the Indian diaspora continues to be essential. Community journalism survives not because it is easy, but because it is necessary.

On a personal note, I was genuinely tickled to receive an unexpected email this year—from Radio Zindagi and Building Women Empowered—informing me that I would be honored with the **Femfest 2025 Shakti Award**. After nearly four decades of building India Currents, often quietly and behind the scenes, the recognition felt less like a personal accolade and more like a shared acknowledgment of the work we have all poured into this community.

To our readers, donors, partners, and collaborators: thank you. Your belief in India Currents allows us to preserve our stories, challenge silence, and create spaces where our community sees itself reflected with dignity and depth.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to being a trusted, independent voice for Indian Americans—and to building a future where our stories continue to matter.

With gratitude and hope,



CEO & Publisher  
India Currents

### We've been in the News!



India Currents' reporting was **republished nationally** via **American Community Media, URL Media, and INN** newsletters, extending our reach and impact.



**Vandana Kumar** was featured in **Nieman Reports**, showcasing the role of immigrant-led newsrooms in advancing equity in journalism.



**Vandana Kumar** contributed expertise to a **peer-reviewed study on nonprofit news revenue models** published in Digital Journalism.



**Vandana Kumar** appeared on **Sharon Richmond's podcast, To Lead Is Human**, sharing insights on leadership, community-building, and sustaining mission-driven journalism.



We were **media partners** for 9 Community Organizations / Media Houses / Film festivals.



**Indiaspora** spotlighted the final version of the story on remittance tax in the Big Beautiful Bill by Anjana Nagarajan-Butaney in their newsletter.

# IndiaCurrents IMPACT

## Peer Recognition & Leadership



- ◆ Invited by **San José State University leadership** to explore a long-term partnership to preserve the legacy of India Currents and co-build the South Asians in Silicon Valley initiative.



- ◆ Presented “**We Belong**” at the **Silicon Valley Community Foundation Journalism Retreat** on the invitation of **Renaissance Journalism**.

- ◆ Recognized by peers, including a testimonial from **Sasha Khokha (KQED)**.



“

The very first article I ever wrote as a journalist was for India Currents way back in 2000... and used it as a calling card to get into journalism at UC Berkeley. It changed the course of my life and today I’m a radio host and a reporter and I do stories about immigrant communities all across California. I’m so thankful for India Currents because it gave me my start as a journalist and is still providing incredible resources to the South Asian community.

- **Sasha Khokha, Host, The California Report Magazine, KQED**

# Impact

## Awards & Excellence in Journalism



California Journalism Awards from California News Publishers Association



San Francisco Press Club Awards



American Community Media Award

## Community & Network Impact

✦ **“We Belong” Traveling Exhibit** showcased across the San José Public Library system, engaging tens of thousands of visitors.

✦ Media partnerships with **USC, Growing Up Asian in America, and KQED**, amplifying Indian American voices through collaborative storytelling.

✦ Alka Joshi, an Indian-American author and novelist and the New York Times bestselling author of *The Henna Artist*, found Meher Jammi’s article [Teen & Brown In The Midwest: ‘No One Could See Beyond My Color, & It Crushed Me.’](#) relatable, offering her books to the youth writer.



“

The difference is that all that happened to me in the 60s and 70s when my family came to the United States, and she just recently went through it. I can’t believe it’s still happening to brown girls. I’d love to send her a copy of *THE HENNA ARTIST*, *THE SECRET KEEPER OF JAIPUR* and *THE PERFUMIST OF PARIS* because I wrote this trilogy to give myself and others the pride and appreciation I’d lost in my birth country. The need to fit in had taken precedence and I’d felt ashamed and embarrassed to be from India, a place no one except unwashed hippies wanted to go in the 60-70s :) It wasn’t until I found my writer’s voice that I researched India’s history and culture and gained that pride again.

- Alka Joshi

# Training & Professional Development



- **Vandana Kumar** was selected as a **Knight Fellow** for the Media Transformation Challenge (MTC), a national leadership program focused on innovation and sustainability in journalism.
- **Vandana Kumar** was named a **June & Simon Li Leadership Transformation Fellow** by the Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA).

## Leadership Development



## Staff Fellowships & Specialized Training

- **Prachi Singh** was selected for **CUNY's AI Community Engagement Lab**, exploring responsible AI tools to deepen audience connection resulting in the launch of Career Clarity Compass, a reflective tool to help young Indian Americans think through personal and cultural dimensions of career decisions.
- **Tanay Gokhale** was selected as a **2025 California Health Equity Fellow and Engagement Grantee** by the **USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism**; reported on the health needs of Sikh immigrant communities in California.
- **Meera Kymal and Prachi Singh** were accepted into the **2025 INN Audience Studio**, a national cohort experimenting with ways to increase engagement via better metrics, newsletter engagement, and social video
- **Vijay Rajvaidya and Priya Lava** were selected for **Newspack's Revenue Development Program (RDP)**, strengthening organizational capacity for reader revenue and sustainability.
- **Meera Kymal** accepted into the **2025 LION Peer Learning Group for Immigrant News Leaders**, a national cohort supporting leadership in ethnic and immigrant media.

# Training & Professional Development

- **Prachi Singh** was invited to the **API Local News Summit** on Civic Discourse Across Generations and the **New Product Alliance Summit** on Redefining journalism for democratic resilience in the age of AI and platform fragmentation.
- **Vandana Kumar** was invited to participate in the **Lenfest News Philanthropy Network** convening in Philadelphia, focused on sustainable funding models for local news.
- **Priya Lavakumar** attended **INN Days**, engaging with nonprofit newsroom leaders from across the country.
- **Meera Kymal** attended a **URL Media convening in Washington, DC**, strengthening national partnerships.



## Industry Convenings & Thought Leadership



## Leadership in Media & Journalism

- **Prachi Singh and Vandana Kumar** moderated two panels at the **California News Publishers Association (CNPA) Gala**, contributing to statewide conversations on the future of journalism:
  - Can a Nonprofit Model Save Local Journalism? — moderated by Vandana Kumar, featuring leaders from Newswell, Stocktonia, and Ben Romo & Associates.
  - Newsletters: How We Did It — moderated by Prachi Singh, sharing practical strategies for audience engagement.
- **Vandana Kumar** was invited by the **American Press Institute** to share India Currents' experiments in engaging next-generation audiences, highlighting frameworks for reaching younger readers.
- **Vandana Kumar** served as a speaker at the **INN panel in Minneapolis**, Breaking Barriers to Serve Multilingual Audiences, sharing insights from India Currents' community-centered reporting.
- **Tanay Gokhale** was featured on **KQED Forum and The California Report**, discussing his reporting on Sikh communities in California and elevating immigrant voices in statewide media.
- **Vandana Kumar** was invited to the **AAJA Nonprofit Leaders Summit**, contributing to national discussions on sustainability, leadership, and community journalism.

# Popular stories of 2025



## Citizenship Verification Requirement To Send Money Home Raises Alarm Among Indian Americans

A 3.5% tax on remittances sent abroad by foreign workers, green card, and temporary H1B visa holders could get costly for the Indian diaspora.



## Practice Your Handwriting

How good is your handwriting, and what connections could that have with your brain health? A lot, say neuroscientists. IC columnist, Mukund Acharya writes how practicing handwriting positively affects cognition.



## Attention, US Citizens: Yes, You Can Now Be Deported

The Justice Department last month issued a memo outlining priorities for deportation, including naturalized citizens. One vague clause in the memo puts many thousands at risk.



## Trump Administration Retreats From 100% Withholding On Social Security Clawbacks

Going without half a Social Security check would make it harder for many people to afford basic needs.



## A Day In Shimla, Chasing The Phantom Rickshaw

Deepanwita Gita Niyogi was in Shimla to see where a Kipling story went down and discovered a modern city rich in history.

# You engaged with us

## 2M



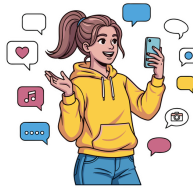
**Page views** on website and syndications

## 263.64%



**Growth** of our Consistent returners over 2024

## 245.K



**Views** and a reach of 86.7K since we **launched *Rooted***, a space for young Indian Americans to share their voice and find belonging, in April 2025 across TikTok and Instagram.

## 5.2



**Minutes** spent by readers on **IMMIGRATION** category

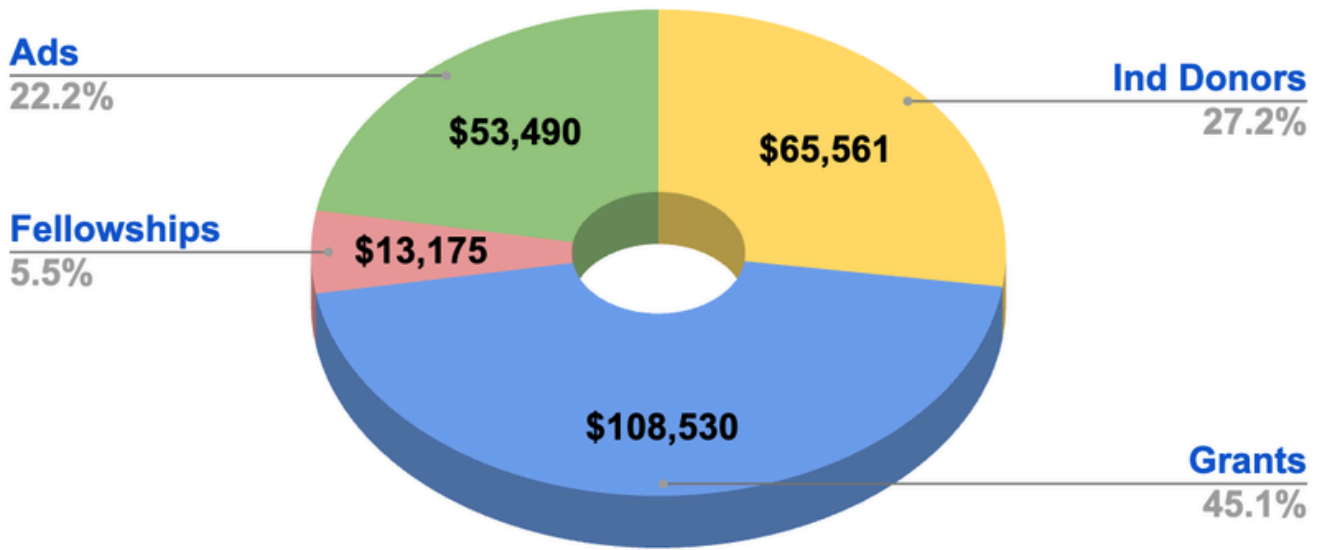
- ◆ Our instagram post about Indian Immigrants Growing Old in Florida was **shared 2.2K times**, has 649 saves and brought us 418 followers.
- ◆ We have 580 members in our WhatsApp Community
- ◆ **Engagement rate** of younger audience on India Currents grew from 69.25% in July of 2025 to 91.62% by December 2025.
- ◆ For one segment of our returning audience, we saw **7.2 visits per reader** with 2.9 views per visit spending an average time of 5 mins 7 seconds.
- ◆ Based on audience response to our coverage of “Brown Heart” Documentary, we held a **Chai & Chat** with the Drs. Nirmal and Renu Joshi, one of our best performing episodes with >750 impressions.

# Institutional Support And Investments in Our Work

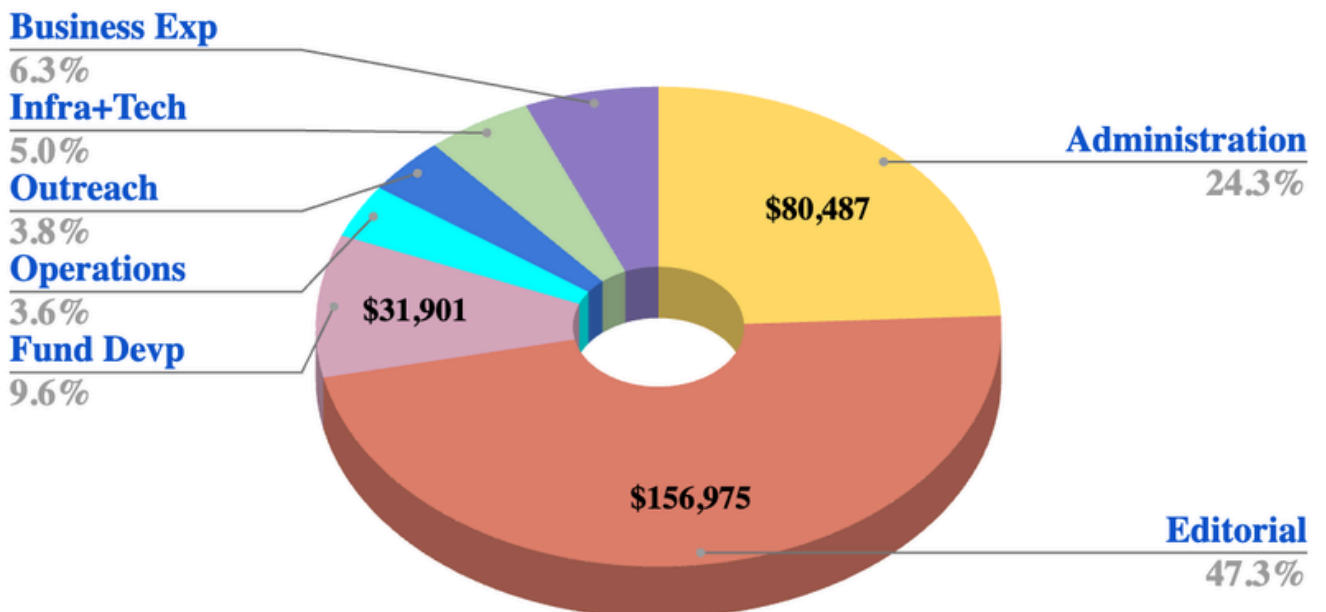
- ✦ **UC Berkeley** placed a Local News Fellow in the India Currents newsroom, expanding our reporting capacity and strengthening community-centered journalism.
- ✦ **Silicon Valley Community Foundation** awarded \$20,000 in support of our local reporting and community engagement efforts.
- ✦ **URL Media** provided \$11,000 to advance collaboration and amplification of our journalism within a national network of BIPOC-led newsrooms.
- ✦ **Press Forward** invested \$50,000 to support India Currents' mission to deliver high-quality, independent journalism serving the Indian American community.
- ✦ **LION Publishers** awarded \$20,000 to strengthen newsroom sustainability and leadership within immigrant-led media.

# Financial Highlights

## INCOME - 2025



## Expenses - 2025



# THANK YOU!



India Currents celebrates 38 years of storytelling on July 10, 2025. (Photo by Prachi Singh/ India Currents)

## IndiaCurrents