Compilation of Papers on Volunteering

INDIA VOLUNTEERING CONCLAVE 2019

UN VOLUNTEERS India

MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS

Empowered lives. Resilient nations.
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Technical session 1:

Creating Data and Evidence and Measuring Economic Values of Volunteer’s Work
Need for national level data base and evidence on Volunteerism: a case of India

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Introduction

Volunteerism² in India is a growing phenomenon, after the international year of volunteers in 2001 government of India brought in few policy changes to involve volunteers in their flagship programs³. In the past 18 years government has improved participation of volunteers in its flagship programs⁴. As we all know the volunteers are working not only in government programs but also in volunteer involving organizations, non-profit organizations, corporate social responsibility programs and youths through colleges and schools. A unified data and evidences of volunteers of these organisations at the national level is not available hence exact statistics are hard to come by, a survey report from the Ministry of Statistics conducted in March 2012 indicates that only 1.5 percent of India’s population are volunteers⁵. A recent study titled State of Youth Volunteering in India: 2017 conducted by UN Volunteering (UNV) states that there is evidence for growing interest in young people for volunteering in the non-profit sector⁶.

Fragmented Data base and evidence:

At present the data and evidence relating to the volunteer programs of different stakeholders (corporates, government programs like Swatch Bharath and non-profit organizations) are maintained for individual programs. The data of individual programs are not collated to produce a national level data. At present we have fragmented data or program level data of different individual programs which are not consolidated at National level. This paper is an attempt to establish a case for creating a data base and evidences of volunteerism at national level.

Use of National Level Data & Evidences

1. The national level data base and evidence creation has many uses. Let us look at some of the important usage at the national level. They are as follow us:

Quantification of volunteers participation at national level will help in estimating the actual economic value contributed by the volunteers at national level. This economic quantification at national level will show how much volunteers contributed to GDP of India. For example, in U.S “Volunteering at the state and city level is detailed on the Corporation for National and Community Service website (https://www.nationalservice.gov) . Their website has Indianapolis ranked #10 out of the 51 largest cities in the U.S. ……………. Nearly a third (30.3 percent) of Indianapolis residents donated 38.9 million hours of service in 2015. The annual economic value of their time: $795 million. That’s the size of the entire economy of the sovereign state of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, an island in the
Caribbean Sea! (GDP equivalent based on data from the International Monetary Fund).

Eight hundred million dollars can go a long way in Indianapolis, too. For perspective, that’s close to the initial cost estimates of the Indiana Highway 31 Corridor Project (Policy Analytics, LLC listed a cost of between $870 and $900 million). Ideally, volunteer contributions improve the efficiency of our non-profit institutions and allow more of the city’s dollars to be allocated to local projects like road improvements. At the state level, Indiana comes in at 25th. Overall, 26.7 percent of us Hoosiers (1.474 million) volunteer in one form or another. That’s better than the national average, which is slightly less than 25 percent. The annual economic value of Indiana’s volunteer contributions is $3.1 billion. That amount can practically pay for three Indianapolis International airports!

If you’re wondering about the size of volunteering in the United States, it compares to the economy of Greece!

The above case of Indianapolis in the United States clearly demonstrates the use of data base to quantify the economic value of the volunteer’s participation to the social good of the country. This is one of the important usages of creating the data base which will help in nurturing and sustaining the volunteers at national level.

2. Second usage of capturing evidences of the impact volunteering had created on the personal lives and personality of volunteers themselves is an another important aspect in volunteering. “There are a few Indian studies ………… examined youth civic engagement in the Indian context. In-depth interviews were conducted with purposively sampled 19 civically engaged youth. Findings revealed that increased perspective-taking, identification with and feeling responsible for the in-group led to a broadening of focus on social issues. Changed perspective/ideological transformation, skill building, and comfort with identity were some of the positive changes reported in this study. In an evaluative study conducted by Tata Institute of Social Sciences (2008–2009) on the National Service Scheme (NSS for the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India), 723 NSS volunteers were sampled from different parts of India. Increased confidence, communication skills and awareness of social issues were reported by the participants as some of the outcomes of volunteering “

We have demonstrated two important usage of the data base and evidence creation on volunteerism at national level. In India at national level very few studies are available on the impact of volunteering hence it is difficult to empirically highlight other uses data and evidences on volunteering could create at the national level. Hence there is a need for systematic and scientific surveys and case studies at national level on yearly basis is need of the hour. In the next section we can discuss elaborately on this aspect.

Need for periodic surveys and studies on volunteerism

3. Major changes are occurring within the Indian economy, changes that require increased volunteer activity. As a consequence of the reduction in expenditures of all levels of government, increasing demands are being placed on the voluntary sector to meet both immediate and long-term social needs. Furthermore, the aging of the population will lead to an increasing need for health care and other volunteer services for the elderly. The ways in which volunteers and volunteer organizations can, and will, respond to these changes are not really known. Currently, little is understood about the extent and nature of volunteerism: the reasons why people volunteer, how they volunteer, and for what kind of activities they volunteer. Because of this gap in the data, it is not possible to suggest
either ways to stimulate volunteerism in general or areas in which it is most likely to arise on its own. Hence quantification of the annual demand for volunteers with in the priority sectors at national level will be useful in recruiting new volunteers for those sectors which is in need for more volunteers.

4. In the Indian context three ways people volunteer—donations of time, money, and goods—there is a need for conducting survey of all the three forms of volunteering to understand its nature, quality and its effectiveness. The survey will help in finding number of hours people spend in volunteering, which issues or sector people are volunteering the most, the demographic profiling of the volunteers, demand supply mechanisms in volunteering and other aspects of volunteers donating time. Similarly need for conducting surveys to get trends in other two volunteering - donating money and goods will be useful to understand the volume and time span in which volunteers donate for social good. It is in this direction there is a need for more studies and surveys. As India is moving towards digitalisation the data and evidence creation is possible through digital volunteering.

Data and Evidences through Digital volunteering

5. The digital India has brought out a digital platform (created by Ministry of Electronics and Informational Technology, Government of India) "Digi Sevak…. is an online volunteering platform for interested citizens who want to contribute to the success of Digital India program. Various government department and agencies can create volunteering tasks and volunteers can choose tasks based on their skills and interest areas. The platform provides means for end-to-end execution of a volunteering task, right from registration of volunteers to creation of tasks, evaluation of tasks and rewards & recognition of contribution by volunteers".

The Platform is a national level platform according to the digital Sevak platform 240166 volunteers are there in the data base but in the past three years - tasks advertised by different government department is only 16. There is a need for review of this initiative because it is a good initiative by Government of India. This also brings us to the question of need for sustainable digital volunteering programs with proper investments so that volunteerism could be nurtured at national level. In the next section let us discuss about the challenges and issues to create a national level data base and evidences for volunteering.

Challenges and Issues

6. There is no national level policy on volunteering: If we have a national level policy the systems and mechanism would have been put in place for collating a national level data and evidences of volunteerism at a national level.

7. There is no laws and codes governing the volunteerism which could have provided much needed systems and mechanisms to capture the data and evidences of the contribution made through volunteers in India.

8. At present Ministry of Youth Affairs deals with volunteerism which focusses mainly on youth and national social service. There is no proper ministry which could be in charge of the volunteerism.

9. Awareness about volunteerism with policy makers is another major problem in getting the entire system in place.
10. Another challenge is at present volunteerism is not based on national requirement and it is based on individual/organisation/program-based requirement for volunteering. Different organisations have their own agenda on the social issues, the demand and supply of volunteers is centred around these agendas. Because of these individual approaches of the programs and organisations the data is fragmented. The issue is how to reconcile these differences and consolidate data and evidences at national level.

11. Moreover, In the past five years volunteerism has moved out of the ambit of nonprofit organisations to corporate sector (The development of corporate social responsibility and ethical business which has brought in new dimensions to the participation of volunteers from corporate sector for social, cultural, environmental and economic development of the country), government departments (Total literacy Campaign and Swatch Bharath ..etc), volunteers involving organisations like academic/research organisations and various other international organisations from different countries have changed the landscape of volunteerism in India. It is in this context there is need for new look at the policies and laws relating to volunteerism. Also, this will provide way forward in understanding the need and use of collating the data and evidences at the national level.

12. Yet another major issue is who wants these data and evidences, is it government, nonprofit organisations or for show casing internationally that volunteers are contributing in great way to the social cause in India. Hence the stakeholders in the country need to decide and have clarity on the objective and goals for sustaining and nurturing volunteers’ program in India.

13. One uniting objective could be the sustainable development goals which India has agreed with United Nations. It is in this direction government of India and other organisations are working towards. If this is the guiding force it will be easy to draw a policy on volunteering in India by all the stakeholders which is the first priority. Data and evidence creation will fall in place from the national level policy framework.

14. In this direction there is a need for bringing in wider debate and discussion at national level on the policy on volunteering is need of the hour. United Nations Volunteers Conclave 2019 is one such Initiative to bring in such debate and discussions to bring in overall understanding on volunteerism and make data and evidence available for policy makers and quantification of impact made by volunteers on community and society at large.

Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to say that around 70 + countries around the world have their policies and laws enacted for facilitating volunteering in their countries. These laws have helped these countries to help in augmenting the participation of volunteers in promoting sustainable development goals to a greater extent. Streamlining volunteerism through policies and laws help in better utilisation and quantification both qualitatively and quantitatively of the contribution made by volunteers at the national level. India is not lacking behind and there were several initiatives by government of India in promoting sustainable development goals. One missing link in this initiative is to review the policies and laws relating to volunteerism and bring out a unified policy on volunteerism so that better quantification of the contributions made by volunteers is available to various stakeholders. I wish through this
paper that soon a strong policy frame work for volunteerism in India for nurturing volunteerism for the countries socio-economic development.

1 Society for Community Action Network-India (SCAN-INDIA) is a registered non-profit humanitarian organisation working for the empowerment and development of the poor and underprivileged communities since the year 1995 in Chittoor district in the south Indian State of Andhra Pradesh. The magnitude of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, drought and the declining health status of people in the region was the major driving force behind establishing this organization by the founder. SCAN INDIA involves volunteers both from community, interstate as well as international in its endeavor to achieve its vision and mission.

2 Volunteerism is defined for the purpose of this paper is as follows “Unpaid, non-compulsory work; that is, time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organization or directly for others outside their own household”. This includes formal and informal volunteering. The former is done through groups, clubs or civil society organizations, and it’s easier to measure and identify than informal volunteering. It also includes volunteering by donating money and goods for social, cultural, environmental and economic good of the country.

3 National Youth Policy 2014 is one of the important policy document on improving youth participation in Government of India programs http://www.rgniyd.gov.in/sites/default/files/pdfs/scheme/nyp_2014.pdf

4 Swach Bharat volunteers have changed lakhs of villages into becoming ODF in 4 years, Financial Express Retrieved on 15th July 2019, https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/swachh-bharat-500000-volunteers-have-changed-lakhs-of-villages-into-becoming-odf-in-4-years/1439000/

5 A report on Volunteers in India, livemint, Retrieved on 15th July, 2019 from https://www.livemint.com/Politics/LShJJ5EgFsFmjqwyB2cpOM/Volunteers-in-India.html


Singapore International Volunteers
Economic Value Contribution

Rebecca Boon

Abstract

The Singapore International Foundation (SIF) makes friends for a better world. The SIF builds enduring relationships between Singaporeans and world communities and harnesses these friendships to enrich lives and effect positive change. The SIF’s programmes bring people together to share ideas, skills and experiences in areas such as healthcare, education, the environment, arts and culture, as well as livelihood and business.

Through SIF’s Volunteer Cooperation (VC) programmes, Singapore International Volunteers (SIVs) work alongside their counterparts to share expertise, effect change and contribute to positive and sustainable development in Asia. The SIVs provide their time and expertise to a suite of healthcare, education and environment projects across eight countries in Asia (India, Indonesia, China, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam and Malaysia). More than 300 SIVs are engaged annually.

The aim of this paper is to share the SIF’s model for the calculation of the economic value of our volunteers. The rationale, considerations framework, process, requirements and challenges in determining the fair value will be presented in this paper as well.

Introduction

Many of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) call for long-term attitude and behaviour changes. Volunteers facilitate changes in mindsets by raising awareness or championing those changes and inspiring others. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly recognises volunteer groups as stakeholders to achieve the 17 SDGs (UNDP, 2018).

The contribution of volunteering to our societies is manifold. Volunteering can be relevant in any number of policy areas. These include social inclusion, the provision of life-long learning opportunities for all, policies affecting young people, inter-generational dialogue, active ageing, integration of migrants, intercultural dialogue, civil protection, humanitarian aid, sustainable development and environmental protection, human rights, social service delivery, increasing employability, the promotion of active citizenship, fighting the digital gap, and is an important component of corporate social responsibility. Yet the involvement of volunteers and the contribution they make is often taken for granted by policy-makers (CEV, 2008).

Community engagement through volunteerism and charitable giving in Singapore has continued to grow over the years. A recent study by the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC, 2019) showed that volunteerism rate in Singapore has grown, with 1 in 10 individuals (9%) volunteering
in 2000 to 1 in 3.5 (29%) volunteering in 2018. Total volunteer hours have almost doubled from 66 million hours in 2014 to 122 million hours in 2018. Value of volunteering has also doubled from S$1.1 billion to S$2.43 billion in 2018.

The Singapore International Volunteers (SIV) programme provides Singapore International Volunteers with the opportunity to work with overseas partners to build capacity through Specialist and Direct Service projects.

Specialist projects are skills-transfer initiatives aimed at enhancing the skills and capacity of local partners in developing countries. Working with overseas partners in the areas of Healthcare and Education, our Specialist Volunteer programmes seek to improve the well-being and quality of life in overseas communities in alignment with their respective national goals, as well as the UN SDGs.

Highly-skilled Specialist volunteers facilitate workshops for local trainees through a “Training-of-trainers” (TOT) approach that focuses on long-term, sustainable improvements. For example, healthcare professionals teach local doctors, nurses and allied healthcare professionals new knowledge and skills for treating and caring for their patients, with the goal of improving the quality of healthcare services in the country as a whole. Specialist volunteers carry out the project feasibility study, conduct training workshops, symposia and leaders' dialogues, host a study visit to Singapore for selected trainees and evaluate the outcomes of the project.

For Direct Service projects, generalist volunteers work to produce immediate and tangible results in the communities they serve. The SIF currently has two signature programmes under the Direct Service volunteer programme. In the Words on Wheels (WOW) project, Direct Service volunteers engage students from public schools in classroom teaching, with aid from a mobile library. In the Water for Life (WFL) project, Direct Service volunteers construct and install bio-sand water filters to provide rural communities with access to clean drinking water. Direct Service volunteers are volunteers from all walks of life. They could be students, working professionals or retirees.

In fiscal year 2018 (FY18), a total of 304 Specialist and Direct Service SIVs were engaged to support our work in Asia.

**Rationale**

Contributions by volunteers are usually under-recognised and are typically considered as an in-kind contribution. However, when volunteers contribute their time and expertise to support organisations’ goals, their work do carry an economic value.

By defining a framework and method to determine a fair value of their economic value contribution, funders and donors are able to see the real and true cost and value of the projects instead of just the project cost. The economic figures help the public and the volunteer sector itself to develop understanding of the enormous extent of volunteering and to achieve better visibility and recognition. Demonstrating to funders the real value of the project can potentially increase philanthropy and matched funding. Donors are more likely to give when they can clearly see the real cost or impact of their investment and how much the volunteer sector contributes as ‘in-kind’ in proportion to the project cost.

Using a structured framework to account and calculate the fair value of our volunteers’ economic value contribution, we hope to demonstrate to our funders the true cost of our projects and include
the value of volunteers’ work as a revenue in-kind contribution on our audited financial statement.

Singapore International Volunteers Economic Value Contribution By calculating the economic value of our volunteers’ contribution, sufficient resources can then be put in to compensate or recognise the volunteers for the time and expertise that they have contributed, in accordance to its value. This is with the assumption that it is difficult to appreciate volunteers if no economic value if placed on their contribution.

**Considerations**

Three possible methods, adapted from a study by Salamon, Sokolowski and Haddock (2011) were considered for the calculation of the economic value for non-compensated volunteerism. They are summarised below.

1) Opportunity Cost Approach
The benefit that is missed or given up as a result of the lack of service of the volunteers.

2) Value-Added Approach
The value of assets created as a result of the service of the volunteers.

3) Replacement Cost Approach
How much it would cost if an organisation had to pay for the service provided by volunteers.

The study also listed five criteria, namely suitability, breadth, conceptual clarity, objectivity, and feasibility, in selecting the most appropriate approach to calculate the value of volunteer work. Based on these five criteria, the Replacement Cost approach was deemed to be the most suitable, practical and fairest approach in determining the economic value of volunteers for the SIF.

To regulate the framework and method for the economic value calculation, auditors’ requirements such as having a conservative, auditable and defensible process and data were also considered.

The SIV economic value contribution is defined as the measurement of collective contributions of a diverse community of volunteers towards sustainable development. It does not consider the added value of volunteering such as relational equity, trust and social capital that have been built.

**Framework**

To calculate the fair estimation of the SIV economic value contribution, the SIF used four parameters, namely

1) Preparation Time, 2) Travel Time, 3) Service Duration, and 4) Average Wage/Hour.

The formula to calculate the economic value of each volunteer is

\[(\text{Preparation time} + \text{travel time} + \text{service duration}) \times \text{average wage/hour}\]

The formula to calculate the economic value of all volunteers in a year is

\[\text{Summation of \{Economic Value of each Volunteer\}}\]
Preparation Time

For the Direct Service projects, a standard preparation time is allocated (i.e. 8 hours for Words on Wheels and 4 hours for Water for Life) as the trip format and activities do not change for every trip. Through the many years of running the programmes and declaration from the team leaders of the Direct Service trips, a realistic and conservative preparation time was thus recommended. This standard preparation time is applied to all volunteers who are engaged for Direct Service projects.

For Specialist projects, it is difficult to establish a standard preparation time as each trip undertaken by volunteers is different. They could be engaged to conduct a feasibility study, training workshop, participate in a leaders’ dialogue or symposia, or conduct a project evaluation. Preparation time for each of these activities would thus be different. The approach for now is to let the Specialist volunteers to self-declare how much time was used to prepare for the trip. The preparation time is captured in a postworkshop form which the volunteers need to submit after each trip.

In general, preparation time may include time taken for pre-departure trip briefing, meetings with SIF project managers to plan for the workshop and time taken to prepare the training materials (including slides) required for the workshop.

Travel Time

Travel time is computed based on the average time taken to fly from Singapore to the host country and back i.e. return journey. Only flight time is included in the computation. Travel time by land and any travel delays are not taken into consideration, as they are subjective. Flight time can be checked against their flight itinerary.

The table below shows the travel time used for the calculation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination Country</th>
<th>Flight Travel Time (Hours)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China 8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India 10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia 4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos 10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia 3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar 6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Service Duration

For example, a volunteer is engaged to conduct a 4-day training workshop. The service duration is 4 days x 8h/day = 32 hours. The volunteer is likely to arrive a day before the workshop and return the next day. The travel time is taken from the pre- and post-workshop days. The service duration can be checked against their trip programme itinerary.

Service duration = Number of active service days x 8h/day
Average Wage/Hour

As the SIF’s volunteers come from all walks of life and different professions, grouping them according to their salary bands is done not only to allow for easier calculation of their value, but also obtain a more conservative figure, in accordance to our auditors’ requirements. The median hourly rate for that band is then derived. The division of the salary bands are as follows.
1) Group A: Monthly median gross wage >$20,000
2) Group B: Monthly median gross wage >$10,000 - $20,000
3) Group C: Monthly median gross wage < $10,000

However, for the Direct Service volunteers, the computation of the average hourly occupational wage is based on the nature of volunteer work while on assignment, regardless of their profession as Direct Service volunteers come from all walks of life and have different professions. They all contribute to the same outcome during the trip. This is still in alignment with the Replacement Cost approach mentioned earlier.

In other words, volunteer hours for the WOW Direct Service projects are valued based on the median hourly wage for a Teachers’ Aide. For the WFL Direct Service projects, volunteer hours are valued based on the median hourly wage for a Building Construction Labourer.

The table below details the groupings based on the salary bands and average group hourly wage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>MOM SSOC Code</th>
<th>Median Monthly Gross Wage: MOM Data</th>
<th>Hourly Gross Wage (189hrs/month)</th>
<th>Average Group Hourly Wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical professional/ Specialist</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2212</td>
<td>$21,729</td>
<td>$114.97</td>
<td>$114.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director / Managing director / Chief executive officer</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>11201</td>
<td>$13,619</td>
<td>$72.06</td>
<td>$68.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer/ Senior lecturer</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>23101</td>
<td>$12,142</td>
<td>$64.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality assurance manager</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>13292</td>
<td>$6,300</td>
<td>$33.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2262</td>
<td>$4,633</td>
<td>$24.51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>26221</td>
<td>$4,400</td>
<td>$23.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>23300</td>
<td>$4,481</td>
<td>$23.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>22200</td>
<td>$4,354</td>
<td>$23.04</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physiotherapist</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>22641</td>
<td>$4,031</td>
<td>$21.33</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupational therapist</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>22680</td>
<td>$4,003</td>
<td>$21.18</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech therapist</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>22662</td>
<td>$3,965</td>
<td>$20.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>26340</td>
<td>$3,905</td>
<td>$20.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher (Special education)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2362</td>
<td>$3,750</td>
<td>$19.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2635</td>
<td>$3,679</td>
<td>$19.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher (Pre-primary education)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>36100</td>
<td>$2,450</td>
<td>$12.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (not specified in CRM)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>AME</td>
<td>$5,229</td>
<td>$27.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS SIV (WOW)</td>
<td>D1</td>
<td>5312</td>
<td>$1,850</td>
<td>$9.79</td>
<td>$9.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS SIV (WFL)</td>
<td>D2</td>
<td>93100</td>
<td>$1,100</td>
<td>$5.82</td>
<td>$5.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract

The paper calls for exploring facets of inputs approach and outputs approach regarding focus of valuation while measuring the economic value of volunteer work. The approaches discussed in this paper after a comparative analysis of both approaches shall advocate for a methodology to measure economic value of volunteer work which is done on an individual level and as well as on organizational level. The methodology advocated also incorporates the principle and guidelines mentioned in the International Labor Organization Manual on Measurement of Volunteer Work. Methodology advocated in this paper, of replacement cost method in the paper, requires for accurate data to be available on volunteer work not just in developed countries but also in least developed countries, as more volunteer work is carried in countries which are less developed. Based on a few criteria, the replacement cost method using observed market wages at the same point of time when volunteering took place is recommended. The paper shall advocate for developing new mechanisms which will generate a much more robust and coherent body of data on volunteer work than has ever been available both globally and nationally.

Introduction

Volunteerism is a global practice based originally on the concept of altruism, where an individual or a group of individuals willingly donate their time to work towards social developmental challenges without any coercion and monetary benefit. Lately, the concept has evolved where many a times a volunteer is compensated for the hours of work, he/she put in while volunteering their time with an organization. The true nature of volunteerism still calls for altruistic intentions to volunteer. According to the 19th International Conference of Labor Statisticians (ICLS) of 2013, adopted a resolution which called for identifying ‘volunteerism’ as a form of unpaid ‘work’. The term ‘work’ mentioned along with volunteer in this paper shall not imply that the activity is paid or that it is absent of it’s voluntary and altruistic nature, unless explicitly mentioned so. Rather, the usage of ‘work’ alongside volunteerism should lead us to the belief of volunteering as a subset of work which adds tangible and invaluable contributions to the society, and as a force it should be tracked and measured so that it can be better supported and fostered. In modern history, the first reference about recognizing volunteerism and the benefits it adds on to society was given out as, in democratic countries the science of association is the mother of science (de Tocqueville, 1845). The call for formally measuring volunteerism came to world stage around early 2000’s when the United Nations released resolution to measure the non-profit sector by creating satellite accounts based on System of National Accounts (SAN). On the forefront of measuring volunteerism is the, Volunteer Measurement Project of The Centre for Civil Society Studies from John Hopkins University. The project is a coalition of volunteer promotion
organizations, the authors of International Labour Organization’s Manual on the Measurement of Volunteering, and statistical agencies which aim to disseminate this Manual and promote its implementation across the world. The project has measured volunteerism on global level to present set of arguments which shall be relied upon in this paper as well.

− The need to measure volunteerism arises from reasons such as the failed effort of international community to collect data to measure volunteerism, where volunteers make contributions to their beneficiaries of their generosity. The lack of data impedes policymaking and our general understanding of changing labor dynamics. Volunteer work across the globe is significant to the extent when 37 countries were studied by John Hopkins University’s Comparative Non-Profit Project in 2004, approximately 140 million people were engaged in some form of volunteer activity on annual basis. Since early 2000’s after UN’s call for measuring the non-profit sector, many national statistical agencies have created satellite account for measuring the non-profit sector, volunteer’s make up for sizable component of the workforce of Non-Profit Institutions (NPI) in the Satellite Account of Non-Profit Institutions and Volunteering, 2007 by Canadian Government was one of the first national agencies to measure and count in volunteer force in the report as part of core non-profit sector.

− Latest set of guidelines to formally measure volunteer work were given out in the 19th session of ICLS, following which there has been increased efforts across borders to create better data of volunteer work hours which are put in an economy every year. The call for better data management of volunteer work is one of the essential points raised in this paper. Considering, the measures mentioned in the Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work, create valuation based on replacement cost method, which requires for one to use the observed market wages at the point of time volunteer work was carried out.3 The paper advocates for better management of data regarding hours put in by volunteers while working with any non-profit. Absence of internationally known and accepted standards result in wide divergence in reported extent of volunteer work even in countries like the United Kingdom, which has well-established structures for volunteering and data collection (UNV, 2015).

Methodology

The research was conducted majorly with the help of research published by John Hopkins University. Points advocated in this paper to better measure volunteer work across globe was based on the manual presented by 19th session of ICLS and Handbook of Non-Profit Institutions System of National Accounts. Special emphasis was laid on researching regarding lack of availability of accurate data to better measure economic value added by volunteers annually in an economy. United Nations Volunteer’s regular reports regarding current standing of adoption of Manual on the Measurement of Volunteering were used to create better understanding of what volunteer practices are yet to be recognized in the larger scheme of plans to better measure volunteerism while creating annual satellites accounts of non-profit sector.

Literature Review

Measuring volunteer work is the first step in line towards creating better understanding of labor market dynamics, to better understand the same and the policy implications and policy planning, the need of the hour would be to further devolve into analyzing the data recorded of volunteer activity carried out in an economy. Converting the recorded hours of volunteer work into the economic benefits generated leads us to develop better understanding of labor market in an economy. In most simplistic terms, when volunteers give up their time to paint a building or feed the homeless, what
is the value of the output they are producing, how much would we need to pay for these jobs to be
done, if there were no volunteers (Haldane, 2014). The need to record observed market wages of a
time period during the time period in which the volunteer work was done is a must to measure if
not accurate but at least approximate economic benefit generated in an economy.4 In the United
Kingdom, according to The Office of National Statistics reckons that an average in a typical year,
approximately £24 Billion of economic output is generated (Note: The value mentioned is calculated
based on replacement cost method. Moreover, the value calculated factors in not only the value of
input put in by the volunteer but also the value of output generated, which if not done by a volunteer,
would have been paid for in a typical capital market).

Measuring the economic output generated in an economy is a complex task, considering limited
availability of data. Recording volunteer work data in an economy in the near future, at this point of
time looks like achieving a unrealistic target considering only a handful of countries have adopted
the Manual on Measurement of Volunteer Work as of 2019. Given the current uptake on achieving
2030 targets of the UN, increases the pressure on national governments across the globe to start
adopting the manual, which will generate better recorded data on volunteer work carried out. The
question of valuation arises at this point of time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Value (Billions of 1992 Can$)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unpaid work estimates - input approach (statistics Canada 1995)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity cost before tax</td>
<td>374.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity cost after tax</td>
<td>221.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement cost - specialist</td>
<td>296.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement cost - generalist</td>
<td>234.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unpaid work estimates - output approach (Harvey and Mukhopadhyay, 2005)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output basis - meal preparation, housekeeping, clothing care, child care</td>
<td>289.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output basis - same activities as above, plus voluneer work and eduation</td>
<td>326.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Carrying forward the example of the UK, the value estimated of £24 Billion, used the both the
inputs approach and the outputs approach. At the first glance, this data looks accurate and the best
possible approach to go about calculating economic output of volunteering. But it’s the approach,
which is most unrealistic in nature to use, estimating both the volume and the value of the outputs
generated requires defining and dividing activities into categories with substantively different
outputs. The level of disaggregation performed at this stage is frequently limited by data availability
and will end up heavily influence the results (Eurostat, 2003). Simply, creating less categories of
outputs generated and calculated would result in estimates that heavily depend upon the output
value and lack realistic comparability with services in market. This would be the case if we end up
finding a representative output to each activity, which is a very difficult task.

Take for example, cooking a meal to feed the homeless, aggregation of activities should also consider
the difficulties related to finding the cost of the nearest market equivalent, most people cooking
a meal would not produce the same quality of product as a Michelin-starred chef. Another issue
emerges when picking between various similar alternatives, for example, contracting a babysitter
or utilizing a day care service. Either option could be similarly reasonable however would include
various prices on the market, bringing about different estimates that could heavily impact the last
outcome.5 Also, the estimation of value of the services can then be taken at either basic prices -
before taxes and subsidies - or market prices. Most studies utilize the latter approach (Harvey and Mukhopadhyay, 2005).

Even though the inputs approach has been used more often than the output approaches while calculating unpaid service work, the output approach has been preferred by many statisticians across the globe. Till date, one of the largest studies conducted to calculate unpaid services was done in Finland by Ministry of Social Affairs and Health during the years 1980-1986. Due to a series of question later raised by statisticians while advocating for input approach changed the trend (Abraham & Mackie, 2005). The replacement cost, which is based on input approach for instance, raises the necessity of choosing between using the wages of a specialised service producer or the wages of a general housekeeper for babysitting. Some would argue that it is unrealistic to assume that the quality and productivity of the household worker matches that of the specialist (Jackson, 1996; Statistics Canada, 1995). Because of relative simplicity of input approach, the most generic form of the input approach just thinks about labour and overlooks other inputs. Some practical examples of this method in practice Statistics New Zealand (2001) and Statistics Canada (1995).

However, just considering labour input constrains the relevance of this approach to mostly labour market issues rather than more general economic issues (Eurostat, 2003). Moreover, such estimates underestimate of the true value of household labour working in non-market service activities.

Conclusion

Both approaches lead to a set of pro's and con's which weighed in from different perspective lead us to decide which approach best calculates economic benefits generated from volunteer work. The choice remains dependent on the factor of availability of data. At the current rate of development in the field of recording volunteer work, where only a handful of countries are using the manual on measurement of volunteer work, it seems highly unlikely that national statistics agency would choose to calculate economic output of volunteer work not from inputs approach. Considering how more than just lack of availability of data effects output approach but also the complexity of decision making over representative output to each activity.


Aggregate and Monetize Volunteering Output and Outcome in terms of Economic Value Added (EVA)

Kabir Krishna

Abstract

Volunteering is fast becoming a common practice around the globe, and therefore a uniform monetization system is required for companies to measure their volunteering (both activities and skill based). This requires reliable information on the size, scope, distribution and impact of volunteering, and in case of pro bono volunteering, a reliable and precise measurement metrics is necessary. The main aim of measurement is to assess the true contribution of volunteer work in order to better enforce decisions that aim to encourage and manage it. India@75 realized the need of reliable EVA tool, and in consultation with domain experts from across the spectrum, ranging from civil society, economists, corporate leaders, academia, Volunteering Organizations, a measurement metrics was developed to measure the impact of Pro Bono volunteering. The present paper covers

- the value of corporate volunteering
- India@75 impetus on Pro Bono volunteering,
- the development of the EVA tool by India@75 and
- how companies can use this tool for calculating their pro bono volunteering.

We have also enrolled professionals who volunteer, and the same measurements can have been used for them.

Introduction

Approximately 140 million people around the world engage in volunteering and thereby contribute 400 billion US dollars to the global economy annually (Wu, 2011).

Manual on the Measurement of Volunteering Work, released by the International Labour Organization defines Volunteering as an ‘Unpaid non-compulsory work; that is, time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organization or directly for others outside their own household’. In the recent years, employee volunteering in India has increased rapidly, due to the simple fact that it has a lot of benefits, not only to the society but to the employers and the employees/ professionals. As more and more companies adopt skills-based volunteer and pro bono programs as part of their corporate giving and community investment strategies, the challenge of measuring the impact of those efforts has gotten considerable attention within the sector.

India@75, understood this need of an EVA to measure Pro Bono volunteering work, and initiated a sub-group to design a measurement tool to measure impact of pro bono volunteering. This Measurement
Metrics’ sub group, after rigorous deliberations and studies, developed a tool to monetize pro bono volunteering, that would enable companies to prove and improve, and to quantify their volunteering activities, and measure its impact.

Corporate Volunteering

In the recent years, corporate volunteering has evolved from stand alone, high visibility low impact events, like painting walls, donating articles at an orphanage etc to high impact – extended duration activities, that but which ensures deeper satisfaction to the volunteers. And with time, more and more companies are starting to rally their employees and not only organize volunteering activities but actively encourage their volunteers to be a part of such programs.

According to a study conducted by the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy, or CECP, 32 million LinkedIn members, indicated an interest in skilled volunteering and 97% of MBA graduates were willing to forego up to 14% of their expected income in order to work for a socially responsible organization.

Employee volunteerism can be defined in a manner consistent with McGlone, Spain, and McGlone (2011): giving of one’s time, energy, skills, or talents to a charitable organization without receiving payment in return. It is now an organized effort somewhat being a charity (Clary & Snyder, 1999). The exact benefits of Volunteering, be it skill based or activity based, are too large but may not be fully visible. This impact measurement of volunteering, particularly monetized value of Pro Bono volunteering was considered essential by India@75, in order to be measured and showcased by companies. These benefits range from employee leadership development, to retention and satisfaction

Employee Volunteerism can be considered as an exclusive feature of CSR. It may help in developing external aspects like brand image and reputation of the organization. The international and domestic customers in their audits ask the questions on sustainability measures and the efforts/programmes of the organization which are related to social responsibility. The companies which have clear policies and procedures on sustainability and social responsibility get a good score in the audits which may help them to get new orders or continue the present business (Deshpande, 2018). Infact companies affiliated with India@75 have vouched for improvement value, brand image and goodwill, due to volunteering.

Deshpande, 2018 observed that ‘though the corporates in India are promoting Employee Volunteerism in CSR, they have not yet started measuring the impact of Employee Volunteerism on Employee Engagement in percentage/in numbers (Deshpande, 2018).

Pro Bono Volunteering and India@75

Pro bono has the potential to build capacity which enables non-profits to function better, manage themselves better, create strategic intent, train employees, prepare leaders and build efficient systems of delivery; all in the endeavor that non-profits will be better equipped to take on the most intractable social challenges. Noteworthy is the fact that not only will this benefit the society but will also have benefits for employees and companies that engage in pro bono. With ‘social good’ becoming a mandate for Indian companies through legislative measures, pro bono is truly the way forward.

Corporate Volunteerism is now a priority for the younger generation workforce that seeks to support
causes that can bring positive social change. Companies are making volunteering an integral part of their employee induction programmes. Volunteering is being used as a tool to boost employee morale and increase job satisfaction (Joint Study by Taproot and India@75).

India@75, with its participative and collaborative approach through the convergence of all stakeholders has been working towards inclusively developed India by 2022 (as suggested by Prof CK Prahalad) and identified volunteerism and technology as the enablers and drivers of India@75 vision to achieve the reach and scales outlined in the vision document (India@75: Peoples Agenda - National Vision Document, 2013).

Prof Prahalad had specifically emphasized on creation of ‘National Volunteer Corps’ as main channels of connect for citizens with the vision as vision ambassadors and also the force multipliers in execution of initiatives aimed at achieving vision objectives. Hence, volunteerism has been leveraged as an enabler and a common thread weaving all the vision elements of India@75.

Two major pillars of National Volunteering Grid are:

- Pro Bono - leveraging livelihood generating skills of corporate volunteers / professionals
- Count Me In or activity based generic volunteering for individuals as cause & effect

India@75 believes that Non-profits are ideal last mile connect for delivery of social initiatives and corporates can help build their capabilities, in effect bringing about social development. It utilizes the skills, experience, talents and education of corporate volunteers, to bring their skills and knowledge to affect change in their communities.

In 2012, a Task Force was constituted under Dr. MukundRajan to kick start the initiative of Pro Bono as it was seen as the tangible contribution of industry, besides providing an opportunity for long term sustainable relationship between the corporates and non-profits; thus, moving beyond mere funding.

One of the sub group ‘Measurement Metrics’ was formed in order to study, deliberate and develop a metrics or an EVA tool that can monetize an employee’s pro bono volunteering.

**Monetization value of Pro Bono Volunteering**

The potential of corporate volunteering in India was calculated on the assumption that 0.8 percent of the GDP (USD 100 Billion) is the total volunteering effort in 2008; this was extrapolated to be about USD 430 Billion by 2022 and assuming that by then the volunteering will become 2 percent of the GDP of which 25 percent would be Pro Bono. Through these assumptions India’s Pro Bono potential was estimated to be about USD 10 Billion by 2022 (Joint study by India@75 and Taproot, 2013).

The Metrics and Digital Enablement group, part of India@75 Pro Bono initiative envisages an ecosystem for volunteering metrics benchmarking by creating a self-sustaining IT platform that will aggregate and monetize the volunteering output and outcome in terms of Economic Value Added (EVA).

The objectives of the group were:

- Designing a measurement tool to measure impact of probono.
- Create an impact measurement framework to assess the qualitative and quantitative value of pro
  bono. Design tools to grade companies and non profits engaging in pro bono.
• Design institutional and individual tools to report volunteering hours and impact

In order to understand the value delivered by an employee, the following steps were taken in order to build the metric

• Identify the area of consult within the 10 broad buckets (HR, Tech, Legal, Finance etc)
• Develop an exhaustive list of assignments under each of the areas of assist.
• Identify the department /functional area in the organisation that the volunteer employee belongs to
• Identify the level /designation of the volunteer – employee ( eg: SVP/GM/ Senior Partner etc )
• Define the nature of engagement on the project/assignment with the NPO
• Define the term of engagement based on timelines (long term/medium/short term )
• Define the CTC (annualised) of the employee- volunteer
• Derive the per hour value of consult

EVA calculation has been derived after a deep dive study of benchmarked salaries across industry / sector / management levels and has been highly subsidized. Even though the metrics or EVA was developed after considerable deliberations and discussions among technical and domain experts, this measurement needs to be adopted and validated by more and more companies, in order to bring this evaluation methodology in the mainstream.

We at India@75 believe that this EVA would lead to uniform measurement index by companies, who either organize volunteering on their own or even through intermediary organizations. Initially, brainstorming on all probable functional areas in which NGO’s could be looking for help for eg. Financial Management, HR, Financial advice, Strategy development etc. Each of the functional areas further bucketed into ‘Project types’, indicating the kind of work done under any given functional area for eg. Cost Analysis. We at India@75 evaluate what kind of economic value is added through each volunteering activity. Is it physical capital? Economic capital? Human capital? Or Social capital? Each of these will have different valuation methodologies, multiplier effect and hence valuations will be different. Each of these will also impact the corporate, beneficiaries, non profits, volunteers and communities differently. This will be captured by our Social Impact metrics, which have to be studied in conjunction with EVA.

As a subset of EVA, we are also calculating the Value of Volunteer Personal Growth and Development, - an EVA metric using a qualitative study of feedback from beneficiaries and non profits. This is important considering the impetus given to skill development in the country today, as volunteers can take this experience when they go back to their corporate workforce. Based on compensation data received for Consumer and Manufacturing, IT-ITES industries as samples, per hour rate at 25th Percentile was used to calculate the total value of pro bono effort by multiplying the rate with the hours spent by volunteers.

Originally the metrics and KPI that India@75 had envisioned, was later refined and key metrics and KPIs were identified that we had focused on, and thus the present EVA model for calculation was developed. As recommended by DrMukundRajan, the first Chairman of India@75 Task Force on Pro Bono, in the first phase, average and conservative numbers have been used.

**Using EVA and Social Impact metrics:**

1. We would like to act as a catalyst to further awareness creation, unearth latent volunteering
potential, and help corporates benchmark against one another. For eg, we would like to publish, which corporate is doing well on EVA on Energy savings vs Education. This will build positive competition

2. Likewise benchmark non profits that are best leveraging volunteering
3. Likewise benchmark volunteers who are doing exceptional work!

Since the calculations were based on the hours spent by a volunteer / employee on a project for an NGO, it was critical to get the salary details of that employee, which the companies were not eager to share. Therefore, it was decided that the volunteers will be divided into sectors, like IT, HR, Communications and then further divided into junior-level, mid-level and higher-level employees. Thus, average of all sectors was taken, along the lines of their management levels. The metrics incorporated these inputs in the calculations.

In order for the metrics to calculate the monetize value, Pro Bono Service must meet three criteria:

1. Formal Commitment;
2. Employee is performing their professional function; and
3. The Commitment is made to an end-recipient that is formally organized, has a charitable purpose, and never distributes profits.

During the last couple of years, the metrics group has been calculating the EVA of projects delivered through India@75 and has calculated the EVA of 524 Pro Pono (Skill-based) projects. After several research studies, we have arrived at a standard benchmark of $16 per volunteering hour. As of date, the total EVA stands at Rs.2.4 Crore, assuming exchange rate of INR 68 per USD.

When we break down the EVA, we will be able to derive metrics for non-profits, corporates and volunteers, which can individually guide these constituents towards areas where more emphasis and support is required. This will particularly be useful when we align our target groups along the lines of 17 UN SDGs. All volunteering effort can then be channelized towards prioritized areas and contribute towards nation building. The EVA metrics are likely to be complemented by other forward-looking metrics such as social value, happiness / doing good indices and outcome metrics such as change in (beneficiary) behaviour, reduction in carbon footprint, increase in awareness (say, Swachh Bharat), improvement in skill levels etc...

Over the next few years, we would like the metrics group to go beyond the data and help the other groups within India@75 and outside with stories hidden behind the EVA data. This is expected to create awareness about volunteering and also inspire more Indians to volunteer, thus bringing objectively driven volunteerism to centre stage of public discourse and creating a nationwide dominos effect. As a by-product, we foresee the metrics to create a healthy competition amongst corporates and volunteers. In the medium to long term, we envision the metrics group to become a global benchmark and reference point for volunteering in India.

Using the EVA and other metrics, we would like to administer a rewards and recognition program for all the stakeholders - one that will be truly metrics driven, transparent and inclusive. Using the EVA and other metrics, we would like to get deeper into the stories that lie hidden beneath hard numbers. This will help the branding and communications team to use it for weaving positive stories and promote volunteering awareness. Over a period of time we would like to be considered as the reference platform for national volunteering metrics and build a sustainable volunteer aggregation platform that builds a collaborative atmosphere in India.
Pro Bono Volunteering and SDGs

Study by Colaco & Pandey (2017) stated that Volunteering offers opportunities to mobilize a segment of motivated individuals to engage with communities that are often difficult to reach, thus facilitating the vital linkage between volunteerism and achievement of the SDGs for the nation. Additionally, with India’s expected demographic dividend, the promise of solving developmental challenges, while also enhancing individual skills, social participation and inclusion, have unsurprisingly made volunteering a very attractive tool for governments, civil society actors and corporate.

India@75, through its pro Bono initiative delivered 524 pro bono projects of various NGOs/non-profits. Based on their primary intervention area, these NGOs were then classified according to which SDG they are working on, based on their primary intervention area. The monetized value according to each SDG is placed at Annexure 2.

Aggregation of Corporate Volunteering

Volunteers and volunteering activities are currently happening in pockets. There is no visibility to the impact and scale, making it impossible to measure and assess the contributions being made today. This limit attempts to organise and scale efforts. It also limits the projection of the magnitude of the success and thus doesn’t work great to motivate corporates and other entities to scale the volunteering efforts.

A number of corporates and other organisations are engaged in volunteering activities but there is no singular platform to showcase their volunteering efforts. Also, volunteers do not have visibility to all non-profits and their work. Thereby limiting their options to volunteer. Everywhere else there is a place for bigger organizations to highlight their volunteering initiatives and data but the smaller organizations are left behind.

India@75 is also developing a platform which would act as an aggregator for impactful projects, volunteers, corporates, small organisations, all engaging together for the social welfare of the country.

This platform would:

1. Showcase total volunteering hours
2. Enable corporates to showcase their contributions to social welfare by adding their volunteering data
3. Enable organisations who are not big corporates and smaller in size to showcase their contributions (with valid proof) to NGOs.
4. Also allow organizations to upload their photos, videos and also link to their social media feed.

This platform will be launched by end of September 2019.

Lessons Learnt

Volunteers and volunteering activities are currently happening in pockets. There is no visibility to the impact and scale, making it impossible to measure and assess the contributions being made today. This limit attempts to organise and scale efforts. It also limits the projection of the magnitude
of the success and thus doesn’t work great to motivate corporates and other entities to scale the volunteering efforts.

**Roadmap to the future**

What will India look like if each of its 3.3 million NGOs were employing the best organizational development practices to effectively attain their vision and mission? India’s social challenges would be met with an army of nonprofits relentlessly rooting out social issues.

Pro bono is a powerful solution and presents an enormous opportunity to fulfil this dream. If fully realized, it can boost the operating effectiveness, functioning and build capacity of nonprofits so they can play their development roles to their full potential.

The case for pro bono in India is strengthened by the alignment between the skills of professionals and the needs of nonprofits. Further, the willingness of professionals to volunteer and the willingness of nonprofits to integrate pro bono to power their missions is another factor. The geographic match between the location of nonprofits and professionals will also add to the pro bono program. Most importantly, the case for pro bono is strengthened by the dynamic social and legislative context in India.

In the present scenario, it is extremely critical to generate meaningful and accurate estimates of the economic contribution of volunteer work done by an employee. The metrics created by India@75, tries to bridge this gap, and provide an EVA to the companies, to calculate this crucial data and provide them an opportunity to calculate volunteering efforts of the employees.

In the social context, India is yearning for change. A stronger civil society will fasten the pace of development, root out pressing social challenges and persistently forward India’s developmental mission. If pursued dedicatedly and scaled schematically, pro bono in India can be a testament of what the skills of Indian professionals and the will of Indian companies can accomplish.

In creating a pro bono movement in India, India@75 sees itself as an enabler – a body which will bring together and create pro bono leaders to work with companies and nonprofits to realize the power of pro bono. It is our mission to lead a campaign that will touch India’s 3.3 million NGOs and transform how they operate, create pro bono value of $10 Billion and engage all business sectors by the year 2022.

This is where the metrics developed by India@75 can be effectively leveraged by companies, to calculate and monetize their pro bono volunteering, which enables the company to quantify the volunteers’ time and efforts, and thus scale those efforts.

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2. Clary E & Snyder M. The motivations to volunteer: Theoretical and practical considerations. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 8, 156-159.1999
### Annexure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>UN SDGs</th>
<th>Monetized Value (INR)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>GOAL 1: No Poverty</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>GOAL 2: Zero Hunger</td>
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<td>GOAL 13: Climate Action</td>
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<td>GOAL 14: Life Below Water</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>GOAL 15: Life on Land</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>GOAL 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>GOAL 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal</td>
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Technical session 2:
Social Impact of Volunteering
Volunteerism, a natural resource

Debmallya Sinha

Abstract

A natural resource, though has a characteristic of no economic value, but is of utmost importance to everyone. Earth would die in fraction of seconds if water, air and sunlight comes to naught. Therefore, it is absolutely justifiable to claim volunteers as powerful as water, as helpful as air to a sailor and as fierce as sunlight. Everything can't be measured in terms of economic value but can make great effect in terms of social values. Volunteers prioritize social impact rather than economic gain, and that’s what make their contribution significant.

To understand the social impact of volunteerism, we should understand the word “volunteer”, which is as defined by the International Labour Organisation(ILO) defines: “Unpaid, non-compulsory work; that is, the time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organisation or directly for others outside their own household”. Social impact of volunteerism means the social value rendered by volunteering activities, as societal gains, or development of the society as a whole or a particular section of it. Monetising the goodwill of volunteering is not a good deed, as it can’t be captured only in economic figure and would hurt the core values of freewill and good faith of volunteers as well as social impact can also get a back seat if the volunteering system becomes economy-centric. As noted in PAVE( Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe), volunteering is one of the most visible expressions of solidarity, promoting social inclusion, building social capital and transforming society. The objective of my paper is to identity the specific social effects of volunteerism, such as on economy, social welfare and the volunteers as individuals.

Introduction

Volunteerism has it birth around 19th Century in America, during Great Awakening where younger people started helping the needy in their community. The most remarkable and cherished step was foundation of American Red Cross Society in 1881, by Clarissa Harlowe Barton, known as Clara, is one of the most honoured women in American history. The main reason behind the foundation was to render service to soldiers of Civil War. In 20th and 21st centuries the ideology of volunteerism expanded due to tension and problems between and within different sections of society. Salvation Army, a charity organization, is one of the oldest and largest organization helping and uplifting less fortunate people. It has remarkable success in organising a number of volunteering programs since its inception. Two major causes which promoted the idea and need of volunteerism are- The World War II and The Great Depression. During these period inflation was high, income gap was increasing, Poverty rate was increasing, India and China together accounting for 40% of the world’s population...
and both were formerly extremely poor. Literacy rate was low and health conditions miserable in war suffered countries. All theses resulted in shift of focus of people from narcissist to altruistic, resulting in helping the poor and volunteering overseas. The world-wide crisis led to the foundation of several volunteering organisation like Rotary International, Kiwanis International, Development of Peace Corps in United State in 1960, Association of Junior Leagues International, and several Lions Clubs International.

Hindu culture from its very beginning belives in ideology of “Seva”. As quoted from ancient literature “Iswarah Sarva Bhutanam Itruddeshar Arjuna Tishtati”, which means that the same God who is present in me is also present in other human beings, therefore serving or doing “Seva” is a method of worshipping God. “Seva” as defined is a form of selfless service, and perhaps is one of the cherished action in Hinduism, “Seva” in form of any action, ask us to help others with no expectations of outcome or fruit. As quoted and translated from Bhagavad Gita the nature of work done in the form of “Seva” is defined as ‘Work done with anxiety about results is far inferior to work done without such anxiety, in the calm of self-surrender. Seek refuge in the knowledge of Brahma. They who work selfishly for results are miserable’.

Volunteering is a unique human Characteristic. It is a exchange of core to core values. It teaches how to be selfless yet helpful. It not only makes a person better directly but also makes a uplifted society indirectly with concerned and helpful citizen. On one side it is a free will of an individuals, while on the other hand it teaches some brilliant values by which a individual can locate her or himself in relation with others.

We can identify social impact of volunteering by three main approaches:

- Impact on economy
- Impact on volunteers
- Impact on society

**Impact Of Volunteerism On Economy**

Economy deals with the monetary terms, and that’s where its drawback is. There are many perspective and values of life which cannot be measured in term of monetary terms. Volunteerism is such a area where benefit is huge and significant but may not be economically visible or measurable. It is important to ensure these non-market benefits are accounted for and not implicitly given a zero value. There are number of people who are skilful and volunteering to teach the same skill free of cost. Lets say a woman is skilled in weaving and teaches the same to four different poor women. These four can earn something from themselves and can directly contribute towards National Income of Country. With increasing in retired no of people world-wide, if each of them can contribute their time or teach their talent through different ways of volunteerism, it can make a significant impact on economy. Ernesto Che Guevara, after the so called revolutionary war in Cuba ended in 1960 came up with the concept of volunteering work. With the intention that workers across the country if volunteer a few hours of work in their work centre can make a great positive effect on the economy of the Country. A study shows based on around 2 billion volunteer hours - estimated that the value of volunteering was worth about £23 billion in 2014; that’s equivalent to 1.3% GDP. But this reflects only one part of the value; taking into account the wider societal benefits the magnitudes are considerably larger. Another study shows, Nearly a third (30.3 percent) of Indianapolis residents donated 38.9 million hours of service in 2015. The annual economic value of their time: $795 million. That’s the size of the entire economy of the sovereign state of St. Vincent
and the Grenadines, an island in the Caribbean Sea. That’s the power of Volunteerism, it can upsurge economy into another level.

**Impact Of Volunteerism On Volunteers**

To make a deep dive into this sub-topic we must understand who is a volunteer. Volunteer is a person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task, a person who works for an organization without being paid. As quoted “Volunteers are not paid, not because they are worthless, but they are priceless” In today’s busy schedule it is not a subject of oblivion that it’s very difficult to find time to volunteer, but as said “Volunteers don’t necessarily have the time, they just have the heart to do it”, therefore if we devote at least few hours it can make a great mark. Volunteers are the torch bearer of the characteristic like compassion, patience, unselfish caring and loving nature. Volunteering has a positive influence on mental health and physical health. It helps in reducing stress, fight depression, keep you mentally stimulated, and makes life purposeful. Volunteering help us to connect with others to make a better community and a better place to live in. It helps us to make new friends, develop socials skills and to make new network. It’s a great opportunity for shy people to develop themselves by sharing common idea and interest with a group of people. Children learns by seeing, how to give back to community. A volunteer can make them understand how good it feel to help others and what difference can be made by giving back to community. Volunteering makes volunteer self-confident by providing a natural sense of accomplishment. Studies have found that those who volunteer have a lower mortality age than those who do not. Volunteering doesn’t only make a person better but can also advance his/her career. Volunteering gives you the opportunity to experience the area of interest and interact with the people in that field. At workplaces it teaches us skills such a communication, teamwork, problem solving, project planning, task management, and organization. Volunteering is a easy way to have fun and benefit while exploring interest and passions. Positivity and willingness are main ingredients for a good volunteer.

**Impact Of Volunteerism On Society**

The potential volunteers have to fight against key Global Issue was recognized by the United Nations’ (UN) General Assembly in 1997 by the designation of 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers(IVY). Volunteering was seen (by the UN Commission for Social Development, quoted in Hodgkinson) to offer skills, energy, expertise and local knowledge. Volunteers have the potential to help governments in delivering better public programmes and policies. According to the Secretary-General’s report on the follow-up to IYV, it was a powerful force for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals ( UN General Assembly, 2005). Volunteerism makes volunteer a upgraded version of themselves. Volunteers plays a important role in development of worldwide economy, they are often successful in developing different sections of societies and binding different groups of people. A good social network is always good as it provides both emotional benefit and financial support in the times of need. It invokes the characteristic of community cohesion, a vital component for a society. In recent days, often free medical camps in needed area, legal aid to needed person, free counselling etc have undoubtedly contributed to develop the nation. Different NGOs providing free educations and taking care of unprivileged children have given them a chance and hope of bright rays. Volunteer gets a scope to work for less fortunate people, and help them to make a difference. On one of common problem of today’s world is loneliness and isolation, and easy solution to that is Volunteer, interact and help others. Volunteers can also help prisoner who make up the largest demographic of mental illness. Unchecked Population is one most of common problem in India, Government with help of different volunteerism groups can create regular awareness. Pollution in today’s world possess a serious threat, volunteers from all over the world is fighting against it, by cleaning places and organising campaigns. Earth Day is celebrated on 22 April
every year to make us remember that we have certain duties to perform and our planet needs our help. Volunteers undoubtedly is a better person with a greater sense of humanity and love for others. They are what our society is made up of, they are one of the reason which keeps hope in humanity awake, peace restored and communities bonded.

Conclusion

Volunteers have from the very beginning made positive impact on the society and they continue to do so. There is still a scope for improvement and need of funding and government intervention. Current Scenario demands responsible citizen and charismatic leader, with qualities a volunteer have. Humans being a social animal have some responsibility towards the society, and it would be an amazing place to live in, if we self-volunteered ourselves. We make a living by what we do to earn, we make our life purposeful by what we do to others. Volunteering means people helping other people, and for a society to exist such kind of bonding is needed. Volunteering is such a beautiful experience which cannot be brought by gems. Love is itself meaningless until it is offered to someone else, volunteerism gives us a stage to do that. In today’s world, a good volunteer is more needed than any superhero or angel.

“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in”

-Marjorie Moore
Being a Catalyst of Change for the Marginalized Community of Irumbai, Tamil Nadu

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Executive Summary

While social impact of volunteering has been diverse and distinct across geographies, beneficiary profiles and focus areas, Project Irumbai remains a watershed project in the history of Outreach.

Since 2014, Project Irumbai is an initiative with a far-reaching impact on the lives of people. This project pertains to a marginalized tribal community near Irumbai, Pondicherry-India that had no sense of belonging or a steady source of income for a respectful living.

Being a marginalized community, the tribal families of Irumbai found it hard to gain acceptance in the neighborhood, as they were still struggling with medieval caste-norms. Even attempts at seeking employment met with unfavorable results. This led most of them to seek alms for survival. Alcoholism was rampant among the male members of the community and there was very little awareness on health and hygiene. Though their children were enrolled in nearby schools, the obvious discrimination made it a struggle to keep them there.

Through this white paper, Cognizant Outreach will share how a team of 100+ volunteers is working over the last five years in empowering 22+ households to become self-sustainable and literate, through their voluntary contribution of time, morale support and expertise.

Describing the Irumbai Community

Location and identity are closely associated with each other, as they determine a community’s socio-economic condition. These factors have also contributed in determining the social opportunities for the 22 families residing near the village of Irumbai in Tamil Nadu, India.

A short distance away from the pristine beaches of Pondicherry, lies the Irumbai village. A tribal community comprising of 22 families live in a government-owned land aka the Akasampattu tribal settlement.

The community lived in appalling conditions—rudimentary huts with no doors, no electricity or water facility, and even no proof of citizenship like a government ration card or Aadhaar card. They seemed to be non-existent for the society. Their condition was only further aggravated because of them belonging to a marginalized community. They lived in a constant fear of assaults by the nearby villagers.
These tribal families of Akasampattu settlement found it hard to gain acceptance in the neighborhood. Attempts at seeking employment met with unfavorable results. This led to most of the community members to seek alms for survival, while very few found employment in a factory nearby.

Though their children were enrolled in nearby schools, it was a struggle for them to continue because of the outright discrimination. This led to significant dropouts from schools, as the children wanted to accompany their parents in begging for livelihoods.

The financial and social distress, led to many male members of the community to get addicted to alcohol, and there was little awareness on health and hygiene among these families.

**Outreach’s Initial Introduction to the Community**

The alarming conditions of Irumbai were brought to our notice through an employee’s relative who worked for the development of the community. After multiple visits, our Cognizant Outreach volunteers understood that a gradual transformation on many fronts, within all sections of this community was the need of the hour. They aspired to generate a sense of belonging and build an identity through quality education, healthy living, safer housing and sustainable means of livelihood. These families in Irumbai were apprehensive about the presence of our volunteers when they met them for the first time. Our volunteers broke the ice by organizing a celebration for Women’s Day, a first of its kind celebration for the women in the community. They distributed clothes, rice, cereals, pulses and spices through some engaging games so that the people understood the importance of it. These small steps helped volunteers to gradually build a rapport with them and gain their trust. Soon, they started visiting the community every weekend.

**Focusing on the Education Opportunities of the Irumbai Children**

Education is key for progress and every child’s right. Unfortunately, in this community, children went to school only to discontinue very quickly because of the caste discrimination. Interacting with them gave our volunteers a bigger picture of the social conditions prevalent in the community.

The volunteers struck a friendship with the children of the community, and leveraged their trust to instill the power of education for a brighter future in them. With the support from a couple residing nearby, the children started taking English and improvement classes. With the intention to make children aware of the opportunities that education can bring about, the volunteers were successfully able to mitigate the school dropout rates.

A significant moment for both the children and the Outreach volunteers was when they gave the children, a first-of-its-kind opportunity to display their talent and hobbies for an extra-curricular contest. Shining Stars - an Outreach volunteering initiative, wherein Outreach volunteers train children from Outreach-supported orphanages in extracurricular activities: sports, dancing, painting etc. Participating in this contest boosted the children's confidence levels and the icing on the cake was when these children won medals in the Carrom Championship.

Another breakthrough was when the first child from the community joined college. Volunteers pooled money in their personal capacity, to fund his graduation. Such deep-rooted connections had begun to build, bringing in greater trust in the minds of the parents who understood the importance of education and started appreciating the efforts of our volunteers.
Educating the Community on the Adverse Effects of Alcoholism

Sustaining livelihood on daily wages can be a daunting task, especially, with the added pressures of looking after a family and sending children to school. Many men in the community resort to alcohol, and end up succumbing to it for long term. This caused tremendous tension, and led to frequent deaths in the community.

With the help of the same local supporter who helped with the children’s tuition, Outreach volunteers started conducting awareness sessions on the perils of alcoholism with the hope of helping the male members overcome their addiction. Our volunteers also conducted a medical camp where doctors counselled the men of the community, which has led small changes in their habits. Even though there is a long way to go, we are hoping that consistent counseling will play a major role to eradicate alcoholism from this community.

Finding a Solution to Address Their Basic Needs

All of us experience sunsets where we visualize them as nature’s most beautiful painting. However, for the 22 families of Irumbai, sunsets are nothing more than a dark pit-hole with nowhere to go, and nothing to do. Dinner had to be completed before dusk and children had to complete their homework well before the sunset. These 22 families lived in darkness from sunset to sunrise, with no basic electricity. Volunteers decided that they needed to first address this basic need, for which they raised funds to provide solar lamps that marked the dawn of a new light.

The next basic need was health and hygiene. They conducted a free examination for the community people on general health and wellbeing. Critical illnesses were diagnosed and medicines were provided, free of cost.

Supporting Their Struggle for Citizenship Rights

Citizenship is every individual’s birth right. Having a government body to recognize and validate that citizenship through government identification proofs, opens up a flood of opportunities for those individuals. This is what our Outreach volunteers realized; and started focusing their efforts on writing applications and enabling submissions for identity proofs such as voter Ids and Aadhaar cards. Once the id proofs were received, our volunteers also educated the community on the benefits of casting their vote during elections, because of which many adults got the opportunity to exercise their vote. The community’s fear of being evacuated from their huts by various authorities were reduced significantly when Outreach volunteers facilitated conversations with a local NGO -TYCL and local government offices in trying to ensure that the community could live on their own land.

Tapping a New Source of Livelihood Opportunity for the Community

Along with all the efforts to help the community change their lifestyle, volunteers realized that the greatest need was to teach them to have a sustainable livelihood. So far, the community had little exposure to earn a stable and respectable living. They continued to depend on charity in the form of alms for their daily bread. This was especially true of the women who took to the beaches of Pondicherry to beg, sometimes taking their children along with them.

Volunteers knew the integral role of the rural women in the families’ financial earnings and livelihoods. Hence, they brainstormed on the possibilities of leveraging this central idea in enabling
women to be the primary earner in their family\(^1\).

They observed how handloom & handicraft industries in many instances, have been a major source of income for rural communities in general and for rural women in particular. So, they started strategizing on introducing a livelihood source along the same lines.\(^1\)

Every weekend, the women volunteers from Chennai, with some experience in handicrafts, started teaching the women of Irumbai, the art of quilling: a nylon cloth-based art to prepare flower bouquets and other decorative items.

Volunteers encouraged these women to sell their pieces at local shops in Pondicherry. They also helped them to exhibit and sell at a Cognizant office in Chennai, by setting up a stall. The watershed moment in this quilling journey was when one of the women received her first order.

With the increasing demand from the Cognizant employees who witnessed their creations and bought them, the volunteers began to support these women further, by helping them improve their craft and also giving design references from the internet to create a diverse set of items for sale.

The quilled art pieces have also made their way as precious corporate gifts from Cognizant offices. Until date, the community has delivered 250+ frames. The quality of their work is such that that these quilling photo frames have also been gifted to clients and special guests hailing from different countries, thus taking their unique craft to places around the world.

**Teaching the Next Step to Financial Security**

While there are still few women in the Irumbai community who defer to begging as a source of living, a considerable number have now resorted to earning their livelihood through quilling. A significant milestone for these Irumbai women in the livelihood creation journey was when another technology company became the first customer to place a bulk order of their products, thanks to the unrelenting marketing support offered by the Outreach volunteers from Chennai.

This fueled their saving tendencies to an extent, and our volunteers encouraged women to get insured under the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana scheme, requiring a premium of 12/-INR per lakh, annually.

This source of savings encouraged the women to save and invest in basic smartphones. Our volunteers have offered basic digital literacy sessions for these women, enabling them to access design and new product ideas from the internet, to scale their small quilling enterprise.

This positive influence seems to have rubbed off on a few Irumbai men too, who have reduced their alcohol consumption. Volunteers have also mentored them to consider starting small-scale businesses or find employment opportunities in the construction sites in their neighborhood.

**Feedback from the Stakeholders**

This project has brought about learnings for both our volunteers and the Irumbai community. Nothing can be achieved overnight, and this project proves that. Tremendous patience, perseverance, consistent encouragement and complete transparency has enabled our volunteers to act as catalysts to make a positive difference to these 22 families and their children.
The Persisting Challenges of the Community

The work with this community is far from being over. In fact, we realize that we have just begun. Sure, our intervention has led to a few positive changes, but at the same time, we do realize that there are considerable challenges that this community continues to face. Mentioned below are a few.

• When there are no orders for quilling artifacts and sustaining production becomes a challenge, with savings getting exhausted.

• While the quilling skill gained from the support of the Cognizant Outreach volunteers have shown the community an opportunity to generate a source of income, it is still a long way away from being sustainable to generate regular, steady income. This means the community has to rely on the occasional begging and insufficient wages from the ceramic glass-making factory.

• The steady employment opportunities for men have not improved significantly, despite their heightened motivation and limited alcohol consumption.

• In large families, the source of income from quilling is not sufficient to provide for food and school expenses. Though their land disputes have improved with the intervention from volunteers, local NGOs and governments, the condition of the huts continue to be a threat, especially during monsoons.

Conclusion and Way Forward

The efforts of more than 100 volunteers have helped the Irumbai community open an avenue of livelihood generation, trickling down to interest in education, citizenship rights, digital literacy and reduced alcohol consumption. The micro-entrepreneurship opportunity created in the community holds the potential of enabling the women to take charge of their household’s financial and related conditions, while making a respectable place for themselves in the society.

While this has triggered a hope of being able to come out of the vicious cycle of poverty, there is still a long way to go, to iron out the many dependencies.

For Outreach volunteers what started as a teaching intervention with the children, quickly moved on to address many integral aspects for a community’s sustainable existence. It would be a constant endeavor of Outreach volunteers to reach out to this community, offer them mentorship, moral support and enlighten them about the opportunities of a brighter future.
Need for National Volunteering Week / Day

Sayani Banu

Abstract

Paper aims to advocate and bring forth the importance of having a dedicated day or week for volunteers in India. Considering the immense significance and potential of volunteerism in the development landscape, the paper stresses upon the need to have a dedicated time and platform which brings together volunteers from different walks of life, to celebrate, sensitize and acknowledge their contribution. Through this paper, we aim to advocate the need for a National Volunteering Day/Week.

Volunteering and its nature have evolved over the decades globally. In India, while we still value the traditional shram daan for a cause, the country has also witnessed a more evolved form of volunteering emerge due to technology and the private sector. As of today, global volunteering has 60% of people from developing countries and 187 countries engaged in online volunteering. The private sector is playing a very important role in revolutionizing volunteering in the form of employee volunteering or employee engagement in various social causes. Technology is enabling people to volunteer virtually and for causes which may not necessarily be within their community, resulting in a larger outreach and impact of volunteers. With the number of people who seek volunteering opportunities going up each year along with different platforms that are emerging to provide volunteering opportunities to people, a model for sensitization and appreciation of volunteers in an institutionalized manner has not yet been achieved. Globally, different countries have adopted different days and weeks in a year to take volunteering to the people of different age groups and socio-economic backgrounds, by celebrating and upholding the spirit of volunteering. Such events not only spark festivities and celebrations around volunteering but also encourages people to start participating or continue their contribution, as volunteers, to nation-building. India, too, needs a day/week where volunteers are not only celebrated and their contribution acknowledged but the larger impact of volunteering can be shared with the society.

Introduction

What is volunteering?

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?” - Martin Luther King, Jr.

The quote by Martin Luther King, Jr captures the very essence of volunteering and why people choose to volunteer. A volunteer is defined as a person who voluntarily or willingly undertakes or expresses the willingness to undertake service to a cause. It is about freely giving one's time, skills and service to help a community, an organization or an individual, without financial expectation or
To volunteer, or selflessly engaging in the service of a cause is a choice, driven by the desire to do good and engage in community building. The idea of devoting oneself in the service or benefit of others is not a new or unknown concept. The genesis of volunteering can be traced to different cultures in different communities, across the world and its seed can be found in deep-rooted traditions. Be it, Africa, Australia or Asia, these traditional cultural practices encourage the participation of the civic society, by large, in the development of inclusive and just societies. Volunteering is the act of taking ownership of and acting on one's responsibility and duty of a citizen and is fundamental in expressing his/her humanity through action to bring about positive change.

A volunteer’s contribution transcends race, ethnicity, social and geographical boundaries. Volunteers have engaged in a variety of causes throughout the world, such as to help eliminate poverty, improve basic education, better access to basic services, disaster relief and to promote social and economic inclusion and justice. The social and economic impact of volunteering has been tremendous and has helped catalyze change and bring government services closer to the people in general.

Volunteerism is a powerful tool for engaging the civic society in tackling developmental issues and there is historical evidence shows that volunteers have not only been critical in catalyzing change but also transforming the development landscape of the world. Not just locally, but they have reached out to remote and difficult terrains beyond national borders, significantly impacting the lives of the underserved and the marginalized.

Volunteering is driven by a sense of ownership. This ownership is a necessary condition for sustainable social change. Sustainability is further assured since volunteerism is often community-based and instead of projects and programs operating in the area, the onus of community development along with the impetus is handed over from one generation to another in a community.

**Volunteering in India**

India has seen a rich and vibrant history of social justice movements. These movements started as a voluntary action to bring about positive change in the lives of the people. Periods of a renaissance in pockets of India brought together stalwarts from different walks of life, who questioned the social order and brought about a conscious movement towards equality. Fighting caste structure and gender norms are hidden behind practice like Sati, which was led by Thinkers who were experts in their own professional fields, were some of the well-known social movement which brought not only brought people together but also, brought about significant changes in the landscape of India.

The Indian freedom movement was driven by similar community-driven movements. Till the first couple of decades, post-independence, social work in India was largely seen as a voluntary activity. It was community-driven and led by experts from different professions. The civil society was, in essence, experts from different fields coming together to make a difference. However, the notion of social work started changing in the 1990s with the rapid growth of the development sector since.

In recent times, volunteering has also evolved in the form of corporate volunteering. From being a sporadic, quarterly event of tree plantations and cleanliness drives, corporates have identified volunteering as a key component of employee engagement and improving their social return on investment.
According to a study conducted by the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy (CECP), 32 million LinkedIn members, indicated an interest in skilled volunteering and 97% of MBA graduates were willing to forego up to 14% of their expected income in order to work for a socially responsible organization. There has also been a spike in pro bono service programs as these are more outcome-based. Therefore, volunteering has seen a very interesting evolution and amalgamation in the different policies of not just the government and the civil society organizations but also corporates.

Even with volunteering and its different types becoming an accepted and necessary tool of development, there still seems to be a lack of data and platform for volunteers. There still exists a dearth of participation of the civic society in nation-building. Per a 2012 report from the Ministry of Statistics, only 1.5% of India’s population volunteers. The same report also states that students from premium institutes such as Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi, who would volunteer under the National Service Scheme (NSS), shared that people who want to volunteer, don’t know to go for volunteering or how to volunteer. This is validated by the lack of data that exists on volunteering in India. Apart from data from private companies, which primarily consists of employee volunteers, there is very little data available on the total number of volunteers, both formal and informal, in India.

**Partnership Between Government and People**

Participation of the people, in a voluntary manner, plays an important role in the development process. Not only does it enable the government to increase awareness and outreach of its policies, schemes and welfare programs to the people, but it also forms an alliance between the government and the people. The alliance, which is non-political in nature, is based on the principle of shared responsibility, ownership and service for a larger social good.

In a large and diverse country, such as India, there lie complex issues which are layered and requires intervention not just at a programmatic and strategic level, but also at a model behavior-centric awareness creation and sensitization level. These problems include poverty reduction, skill promotion, and development, gender empowerment, natural resource management, disaster relief, to name a few. These issues are addressed using multi-sectoral solutions where social and community engagement and mobilization is a prerequisite for the sustained outcome. For this to materialize, the strategic collaboration of the Government and the civic society, in general, is prudent and essential.

We have many examples which elucidate the important role that volunteers have played in making government programs a huge success. Swacch Bharat Abhiyan (SBA) or Clean India Movement, which was launched in 2014 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been a successful campaign across the nation. Experts share that the success of SBA would not have been possible had the onus of the campaign been limited to only government officials. The program urged the participation of the people and by inviting people to join in, the campaign took the shape of National Movement. We have stories where volunteers have dedicated their time on a regular basis to bring about behavioral change in communities, by sensitizing them and conducting cleanliness activities.

**Significance of volunteering around the world**

**Case Story**

Mahatma Gandhi said that the best way to lose yourself is in the service of others. Gurpreet Singh, an employee of Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL), has always been a believer of this, therefore, when
the opportunity came knocking to volunteer as Messenger of Cleanliness, he jumped at it. He volunteered in HUL's innovative programme called “Swachhata Doot” (Messenger of Cleanliness) which involved spreading awareness about the connection between cleanliness and eradicating diseases in Gurpreet’s village.

Gurpreet is one amongst millions of people who are making a difference in people's lives through voluntary action. There also remains unnamed and unsung heroes, be it an NSS volunteer or a citizen who volunteers time and skills, to ensure a better society. These truly are the champions of the society, who are not only owning the agenda of development and nation-building but also taking the larger objectives of the government to realization.

Best Practices
With the undeniable importance of volunteering in nation-building and building of resilient communities, volunteers and volunteering are hailed in different countries across the world. The institutionalization of volunteering in countries such as USA, England, Australia, Canada, to name just a few, in the form of volunteering week or day, has proved to be a great impetus to volunteering in their respective countries. Not only have these days recognized the efforts of volunteers, but it has encouraged more people to come forward to volunteer. Some examples of such days that stand out in the global map are:

- National Volunteer Week, celebrated from 7-13th April, where Canada celebrates and thanks to its 12.7 million volunteers. During this, the government of Canada awards the Prime Minister's Volunteer Awards (PMVA) each year, to recognize and encourage volunteers across the nation, during this week.
- National Volunteer Month is celebrated during the month of April in the United States of America.
- National Volunteering Week, Australia is celebrated in the month of May
- National Volunteering Week, New Zealand runs from June 16th -22nd.
- International Volunteering Day is celebrated on 5th December globally and is mandated by the United Nations.

The world has started to acknowledge volunteers and their efforts through dedicated days and weeks a long time ago. Different countries have institutionalized volunteering days at different points in time, but the efforts have led to more motivated citizens who are owning the development of their respective nations. For example, the National Volunteering Week in Australia was institutionalized 30 years ago, in 1989. When it started in 1989, the week had focused on recruitment and provided a national focus for volunteer-based organizations wanting to recruit a volunteer. Post research after NVW 2007, the focus shifted to celebrating volunteering and thanking volunteers, with recruitment as a natural by-product.

In 1974, the United States of America established National Volunteer Week which has seen exponential growth each year, with thousands of volunteer projects and special events scheduled throughout the week.

While the primary objective behind the genesis of these days/weeks may have varied from country to country, but they all have the common agenda of thanking the scores of volunteers in their countries, and recognizing their efforts. The natural byproduct has seamlessly become sensitization on volunteering, the different national and local platforms for volunteering and recruitment of volunteers.
Our proposal to drive a volunteering movement in India

India@75 National Volunteering Week
In India, India@75 has been celebrating National Volunteering Week from 18-24th January each year, since 2014. During this week, the Foundation, which is an initiative of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), mobilizes millions of Indians from different walks of life to celebrate the selfless service of volunteering and create a rippling effect in the communities around them. What started as a small initiative in 2014, has now taken the shape of a movement in the country. The week has now grown not just in terms of scale but also in terms of sensitization, awareness, and acceptance of volunteering being one of the key enablers of development.

Call for Action
The long-term benefits of service and altruism are significant, and sometimes path-breaking, and the world has started to pay attention to it. Volunteers have, in the past and continue to, bring change in a vast range of areas. There is a common belief that “volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy.” When one volunteer, one exercises a more direct and perhaps a more effective form of voting and participation of oneself in the process of development. And the examples of such volunteers are in plenty. However, at the same time, there are many unsung champions of the nation whom we don’t know about or who don’t necessarily know how to make their contribution count in a more institutionalized manner. This is where we need the government to have a platform such as the National Volunteering Week/Day which will enable volunteering to come into the public discourse.

Globally, we can see how events such as National Volunteering Weeks in Australia, New Zealand, USA, and Canada has brought about a more coherent sense of community and community service. International Volunteering Day on 5th December has been a successful platform for bringing together volunteers from across the world. In India, we have witnessed how days such as National Yoga Day, celebrated on 21st June and National Youth Day, celebrated on 12th January, has captured the imagination of the people. It has brought the issues of health and wellness and issues pertaining to youth, to a greater highlight and discussion.

India@75, a CII initiative, has been celebrating India@75 National Volunteering Week since 2012 every year from 18-24 January. What started out as a small initiative has now almost taken the shape of a movement. However, it would need the requisite push from the Union Government as its efforts will enable volunteerism to come into public discourse. Some of the broad outcomes that can be foreseen from having a National Volunteering Day/Week for India are:

- Acknowledging the efforts of volunteers in Nation Building and celebrating volunteering and volunteers.
- Bring together different stakeholders to deliberate, realign and synergize the collective efforts towards nation-building.
- Sensitize the nation on the different forums for volunteering and the importance to volunteer, irrespective of race, religion, or socio-economic background. This can further lead to more people being enrolled as volunteers.

Having an institutionalized National Volunteering Day or Week will enable the formalization of volunteering and structured evolution in the form of a National Backbone Infrastructure to facilitate plugging in by all forms of volunteers and volunteering activities. Apart from giving the due recognition and platform for volunteers and encouraging more people to volunteer, it will also
facilitate and enable the creation of a database of volunteers.

1. https://www.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/UNV/State%20of%20Youth%20Volunteering%20in%20India-compressed.pdf
10. https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/get-involved/nvw/celebrating-30-years/#/
11. https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/get-involved/nvw/celebrating-30-years/#/
12. https://www.pointsoflight.org/nvw/
The Role & Impact of Technology & Social Media in Volunteering

Ayesha Perveen

Abstract

In a world full of problems volunteering is like a ray of hope. Volunteerism in developing countries like India which is dealing with number of social problems all at once is playing a crucial role in helping that section of society which requires extra time, focus and attention in order to create an equal world for all. We are facing problems in diverse fields and that’s how it requires a diverse group of volunteers to contribute their time and skills for improving the current situation. Hunger, Lack of Education, Child Marriage, Child Labor, Violence, Protecting girl child, Over Population, Poverty, Period Poverty, Health Education, are few of the problems our country is dealing with right now and the list goes even longer if we dig deeper into the problems our society are dealing and which we are witnessing in everyday.

It’s like a struggle in a race with no finishing line. But here comes the importance of volunteers who are working selflessly for the most underrepresented, unheard section of our society, Yes volunteers has seen and heard them! The willingness to change the world is what keeps a volunteer going. In this paper we will come to know about the social impact of volunteerism and how it is imparting awareness about the importance of volunteerism among the common people. Volunteers are now broadening their horizons and now are even touching the social issues which were never talked and dealt with in past. With the increase in technological advancement new pathways for contributing in volunteerism has been generated. Now we have platforms where one who is willing to contribute to the society can work as online volunteers, as we all know the well known saying “Where there is a will, there is away”. This paper also contains the ways in which online platforms can be used for online volunteering and discusses why online volunteering is important for inspiring our next generation.

Social Impact of Volunteerism

There are number of online volunteering opportunities are available these days like online teaching, advocacy through social media campaigns, blogging, content creation and fundraising etc where anybody can contribute using online platforms and inspiring young generation building new leaders for working towards a strong nation. These technologies has laid new pathways towards the ways where anybody can contribute to these causes from home, whether married women, students living in villages far from the location of such volunteering opportunities or working professionals who don’t have time can contribute through online volunteering and play their part in giving back to society. In the era of 4G high speed data connectivity anybody with a network and a networking device like smart phones and computers can connect with the virtual workspaces and start a new journey towards a noble cause.
Virtual Workspaces
There are number of platforms that are being used these days as virtual workspaces. With the help of new platforms one can connect to the workspaces online and can join with the peer volunteers. Theses virtual spaces are just like physical working spaces where all workers are connected together working towards achieving a same goal. Google classrooms, Slack etc. are few such platforms where volunteers from different geographical locations can connect online. Following up, tracking and work evaluation becomes easier with these platforms. Organizations can assign their work to the volunteers online and volunteers can submit their assignments in the given time schedule. They provide a common platform to connect, manage and share information with the other volunteers of the same organization.

Videoconferencing
Video conferencing means to conduct a conference between two or more participants at different sites by using computer networks to transmit audio and video data. For example, a point-to-point (two-person) video conferencing system works much like a video telephone. The tangible advantages of video conferencing include lower costs on business travels and staff training; less time for meetings, training and projects because of improved communication among participants, trainees and teammates. Video conferencing enables the organizations to create a face to face communication with the volunteers which gives better understanding.

Email Marketing
Optimized emails can be a great way of volunteer engagement. Depending upon the requirements of the organizations email marketing can be used to ask volunteers to gear up for the next campaign, inviting volunteers for upcoming event or sending a reminder. Email marketing is efficient and pocket friendly tool for non profits while a good email can help your organization in targeting your volunteers, bombardments of email and incompatible with the smart phone mails can make them feel uneasy. Make sure these emails contain a clear call for action.

Tools for Finding Volunteers
Earlier finding volunteers were one of the cumbersome tasks. But with the availability of new websites has made the search easy. Now there are number of such platforms available using which one can find volunteers for their campaign. All one has to do is to sign in and post volunteer recruitment advertisement for their organization. These platforms enable the Non profits and Ngo's in finding the volunteers who are already looking for such volunteering opportunities. Anybody looking for volunteers can post their volunteer advertisement on these websites and can find the helping hand for their organization. Numbers of volunteer recruitment websites are available these days. Idealist provides one such platform where organizations can post their recruitment advertisement for free, while one need to pay for posting job opportunities, posting for recruiting volunteers are absolutely free on Idealist and no wonder has around 2 million website visits per month hitting the list of most popular websites. Create the good is another such platform which can be used for non profits of any size whether the requirement is for small organization which need few helping hands or big organizations with big group of volunteers. Volunteer match is another big hit in the list with more than 100.000 non profits registrations on the site. With the use of filters which can help to find the volunteers according to cause and locality, finding volunteers is comparatively quicker. Using paid premium version organizations can also use services like volunteer surveys, analytics and opportunities to promote listing. Google adword grants is another platform where one can post volunteer ads using volunteer focused keywords with the help of google adword grants.
Volunteer Engagement Techniques
Generally organizations pay more attention towards the engagement of donors but volunteers are also the main assets of any organization as they are also contributing their time and skills in the organization. They are contributing something equally valuable as money. Every drops make an ocean similarly without volunteers an organization might be not able to achieve the desired outcome that’s how engaging the volunteers is as important as engaging the donors. Different organizations use different techniques for engaging their volunteers. Engaging the volunteers requires knowing them better.

CRM – Customer Relation Management
When an organization understands the volunteers better they will be able to get the most out of them by assigning the work which compels them most. But managing each of the volunteer in a group of thousand volunteers is not easy for a human mind. Here comes the technology as a savior, one can use CRM tools for this process. CRM tools will help the organization in figuring out the details of volunteers like geographical locations, language preferences, previous volunteering experiences, important corporate and familiar connections, interests, skills etc. Entering the details of your volunteers in crm will help the organization to keep the data organized, in aligning the engagement strategies with their personality and better operations.

Crafting targeted outreach strategies
Once the organizations have the details of volunteers it’s important to strategize the techniques and target those differently using different approaches. One fit for all strategy might not be suitable when it comes to volunteer engagement. There comes a need to identify the volunteers and align the engagements as per their interests as they will be contributing their time and skills which can be very important for the growth of organization in more ways than one. Addressing the volunteers online on social media can also be very helpful as most of them are active social media users; doing so can help the volunteers to connect with the stories the organizations post on their non profit’s official page. By showcasing the cause of the organizations non profits can target the volunteers for engagement.

Different approach for millennial
It’s important to go with needs of organization and tailor things accordingly but in order to engage the volunteers it is even more important to align the goals of the organization with the goals of volunteers. Latest technologies are one of the gateways for alluring the volunteers towards your organizations as most of the volunteers will be millennial it’s important to include something important from which they can learn at the same time of helping your organization. It’s important to understand what volunteers expect out of this volunteering opportunity, where and how of the responsibility along with the outcomes expected from the volunteers and how it can benefit the particular organization. Concrete results will also help in building strong relations with the donors.

Hosting Thanksgiving Events and Meet up
A thanksgiving event can help the volunteers in understanding the volunteers better and build stronger base for engagement. Organizing thanksgiving meet ups can make volunteers feel more valued. Such events might help the organizations in attracting more volunteers for your cause creating a better understanding among the peer volunteers and developing a healthier environment. It will also help in higher volunteer engagement level. These events can also serve as a catalyst for the volunteers to perform even better in future.
Volunteer Management Tools

Managing volunteer is often a tough job and it gets tougher if the requirement of the organization is of larger groups of volunteer. Imagine this without the help of technology. Managing volunteers is now possible with number of volunteer management tools. These tools can help the non profits in registering, scheduling and managing the volunteers no matter how far they are. Init live is one such event focused tool that enables to organize event of the organization. This tool is helpful for the organization with big events throughout the year. It allows the organization to connect with the volunteers about any event and help the organization in keeping track of the volunteer throughout the event whereas volgistics is a basic tool which helps the organizations to register schedule communicate and manage volunteers. Keeping a record of current and past volunteers and also allows the organization to connect with volunteers through sms and email. Signup genius is a tool which allows to create templates and share with the community while galaxy digital offers volunteer registrations, scheduling and communication. Signup works as registration and reminder tool and is absolutely free. Vsys enables the organization to find the volunteers with specific skills that are required for the organization helping them to find the right volunteer. Giveffect is another all in one tool which is helpful for managing the donors, fundraising and event management including website hosting. Organizations can also use tools like VolunteerHub with features like recruitment, registration, management and communication of volunteers.

Role of Social Media in Volunteering

Social media allows us to easily convey our message to the world. Social media can be used in many ways either for creating fan page or building networking groups for volunteers. Marketing is now more attractive as it can help recruiters to post advertisements on the fan page where the volunteers can find about the organizations. Organizations often use close groups where they share the pictures and videos of task related to volunteers to foster team spirit among the volunteers of an organization. Some sites also uses to publicize the events of the organization to show how much fun volunteering can be. Social media provides platform where organizations can use closed groups for planning, communicating and sharing ideas while open groups are used for marketing purposes. Volunteers use some sites for evaluation and validation of tasks also. Different platforms can be used for different purposes like twitter for fast dissemination, Facebook for sharing ideas, Youtube for campaigning videos, Linkedin for validation etc. Social media also works as a great platform for online advocacy and raising awareness about certain campaign, increasing the engagement. These platforms also serve as a source of endorsements for the volunteers which can be very helpful for them to showcase their skills for future recruitments. Similarly Twitter allows organizations to engage with a huge following all at once. Using trending hash tags and mentions from relevant donors and corporate can play an important role in organizations growth and marketing strategies. While Facebook posts are great source for building words of mouth.

Role of Social Media Management Tools in Volunteering

Social Media Management Tools

With the involvement of social media there comes a need for social media management. Social media management is one the trendiest jobs for the millennial today. A good social media manager can help in building a balanced online reputation with the help of crated contents and hash tags. Managing social media involves the analytics whether a certain approach is working or not can be determined with the help of analytical data obtained using social media management tools. Social
media management tools provides complete insight about the posts, metrics like which post is working best for them, whether people visiting the pages engage or likes videos or images, which time of the day gets more shares or engagements etc. with the help of these metrics social media managers can get an idea for building the right approach which can be highly useful for them but how to measure them? Numbers of online tools are available for such purposes. Let’s Get Real to: ‘A journey towards understanding and measuring digital engagement’.

**Brandwatch**
Offering a suite of tools that work across major social media platforms, Brandwatch is perhaps best used as a research suite. One can even monitor your brand’s reputation in real-time, seeing if users are posting positive or negative messages about you. Best of all, the data is accurate – Brandwatch filters spam and duplicate mentions.

**Google Analytics**
What’s there to say about Google Analytics that hasn’t already been said? As the clear top choice for analyzing website traffic, it’s also ideal for evaluating certain social media metrics. You can use it to measure the value of traffic coming from social sites, determining how visitors behave.

**Hootsuite**
Similar to Buffer, Hootsuite is a social media management dashboard. On top of scheduling posts and aggregating content, you can use its analytics tools. The platform not only tracks standard engagement numbers, but measures your team’s performance. For example, it records resolution times for customer service issues.

**NetBase**
Specifically targeting enterprise-scale brands and agencies, NetBase advertises that it processes posts nine-times faster and 50 to 70% more accurately than other comprehensive social media analytics platforms. Community managers can use it to quickly make decisions on large accounts they manage. NetBase can read millions of social posts in 42 languages and determines user sentiment regarding trends.

**Crowdbooster**
For a quick and simple Twitter and Facebook analytics tool, many marketers choose Crowdbooster. Through an intuitive and customizable dashboard, you have access to real-time engagement data that exports to Excel. The tool also makes recommendations about when to post, who to engage and how to improve your interaction efforts in a weekly performance summary.

**Role of MOOC**
Massive open online courses allows users to learn new skills for free. Numbers of universities are providing different online courses with the help of platform like Edx, Coursera, Alison, Futures learn etc. These courses are available in two versions, audit version allows the users to go through the course and complete access to the course without any certification while with a payment of certain amount one can also avail a certificate which can be used for sharing along with curriculum vitae on different job portals. These MOOCs are serving as a great source of education for many non profits who are educating the underrepresented students across the countries. These courses are comprised of short lecture videos and crisp contents which allows the learners to grasp the concept in an easy way. As these courses contain self assessment tests which helps the learners in evaluating their knowledge while learning. These courses also serve as a source of learning new skills which helps in building future leaders. Many organizations use such courses in order to hone leadership skills among their volunteers. These platforms also provides courses like fund raising, policy making, digital marketing etc. which are very helpful for the organization in yielding positive outcomes.
provides information about the markets you own and want to enter, such as demographic data about gender and occupation. Edx is one such fastest growing platform where students can get enrolled in the self paced online courses. Whether the learners are working officials or students it allows the learners to complete the course at their own speed. It also facilitates learners to participate in the online forums to discuss any topic. Learners can also avail paid certificates once they complete all the given assignments along with other self assessments.

**FutureLearn**

This course allows the learners to learn new skills at their own speed. These courses are made up of chained video lectures, assignments and back links to other websites for detailed explanation of certain topic. Crisp and to the point contents of this MOOC platform makes it stand out from other courses. A healthy and interactive forum and questions at the end of each module helps the learners to participate in the forum and learn new insights about the topic from peer learners. Both paid and free courses are available on Future Learn.

**Case Study**

Gateway is a nonprofit which provides audio service for blind, visually impaired or reading disabled listeners. There are more than fifty such services but only one in New York. Gateway airs verbatim readings from magazines, newspapers and the web spoken by skilled human voices. Any person certified as legally blind, partial blind or requires visual aids other than ordinary glass in order to read print can apply for the service on website and are eligible to receive Gatewave services. Gatewave is financially supported by individuals and organizations. There are three ways using which listeners can use the service:

- One can listen on the Internet.
- One can listen on a special Gatewave or In Touch Radio Receiver (a charge for a new receiver may apply).
- One can listen on Apple or Android Kindle Fire and iOS Device.

Gatewave doesn’t charges to use the service however one can pay voluntary annual contributions if they want. Gatewave telecast the entire schedule of the week and along with time, duration and name of the programs. From healthcare to motivational readings, political news, current affairs to book reviews to magazines to journals, there is everything stored for all types of listeners. They even create special contents specifically to help listeners live a full life. The Gatewave is backed by a group of volunteers and are the vital asset of the organization. Volunteers of all age group are engaged in the organization each with a different role including responsibilities like on-air reading, administrative, fundraising, marketing, event planning or ambassadorship. The 24 hour broadcast service for both local and national listeners depends on the dedication of the volunteers behind it. Volunteer readers must have access to a recording studio or home recording system. The selections of volunteers are based on reading abilities, where volunteers must pass a reading test. The audition includes a 100-word pronunciation test and several brief excerpts of reading from newspapers and magazines. The reading test takes about 15 minutes. The volunteers are asked to commit two to three hours once in every week for minimum one year thus helping the organization to cut down the amount spent in training new members. Volunteers are assigned with specific publications depending upon the schedule.

With the help of devices listed any one can build a home setup and become a volunteer. The idea is to create a studio at home. Technology here plays a big role. The recording studio requires microphone, audio adapter, microphone stand, computer, software like Audacity and a timer. The
recording procedure is made up of number of steps including set up of a quiet environment, setting up Audacity; it allows the recorder to monitor the level of the voice which is displayed on the screen of the computer. The recordings are preceded in two halves where after completing the first half of recording one can start the second half as new project. Once the recording is done audacity enables the recorder to remove noise from the recording by selecting Get Noise Profile. Depending upon the length requirement one can also stretch or shrink the reading time without changing the pitch using “Change Tempo”. After completing editing part it enables the user to save the file as mp3. Select constant rate (128) Joint Stereo and export the file to upload. A separate password and website are provided for uploading the program.

The volunteers are managed using a virtual workspace which enables them to communicate, plan and share the ideas for successfully running and managing the organization. Future improvements for more involvement & better results, speeding up the mission of non profits so that more people can be benefited at the same time.

Latest technological advancements have geared the speed of organizations making the functions within smoother, faster and easier. Different volunteers located at geographical points can contribute together for a common cause hence developing a strong moral basis for the betterment of society while video conferencing enables to understand the organization and volunteers better. Technologies have been helpful for both the volunteers and the organization and with the help of latest technologies we can find solutions for different problems of the society. Augmented and Virtual Reality can be used to educate students by giving them a real sense of a particular place or experience of visiting new places. Google Cardboard and Expeditions can help non profits in making the education a fun and unique experience for the students while Artificial Intelligence can help the nonprofit organizations in finding volunteers at the right place and right time however implementation of these technologies depends greatly upon the expenditures the organizations are willing to spend. Switching to apps can also play a key role in benefitting any organization as nowadays users have mostly switched to smart phones, so making websites mobile friendly or creating apps for organization can help in fundraising, managing and finding new volunteers providing better connectivity and stronger relation among the volunteers just a notification away. Switching to clouds can help the organization in providing more security for the organization’s data. As organization contains lots of financial data which can also result in loosing data in case of hardware crash, switching to clouds for storage can help the organization in managing the terabytes of data in more efficient, accessible and secure way using two factor authentications.

Conclusion

Though there are number of technologies available the gap still remains same. The technology can play an important role in volunteer management with the use of virtual workspace but still it cannot remove the requirement of face to face live meetings. People still hesitate in online financial transactions and cyber attacks still need to be tackled in an efficient and urgent way. Most of the people are still not aware of the new technologies and millions of apps are getting developed everyday increasing the competition. In developing countries adults and senior citizens are not even aware of the importance and sensitivity of digitalization while Uavailability of high bandwidth, internet facilities, procurement and maintenance of hardware are other challenges in the list. Bringing the latest technologies to the mainstream behind non profits organizational, functional and management operations requires lots of effort, time and financial bodies but once implemented successfully it can deal with many social, economical and environmental problems in many different and time efficient ways.
CREATING IMPACT THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

India@75 Count Me In Group

Introduction and Background:

Volunteering is one of the most visible articulation of civic engagement and spirited citizenship that promotes camaraderie, catalyzes social inclusion and creates social capital.

India has a traditional history of community participation through volunteerism displayed by religious adherences, philanthropy and value systems engrained within our society and culture. Shramdaan too has been a value of volunteering that has been manifested in various forms in our country and gained popularity and traction in the society through the clarion call given by the ‘Father of our Nation- Mahatma Gandhi’ to devote time and efforts towards various social causes.

Volunteering in the global context, particularly in Europe, received a shot in the arm by the ‘Declaration 38 on Volunteering’, which recognized the contribution made by voluntary activities in improving social cohesion. However, the volunteering landscape in India was still largely unorganized, unstructured and unreported, thus the larger impact being scattered and largely diluted. The UNV State of World’s Volunteerism Report of 2018 also highlights this aspect at a global level, where 70% of the “Volunteeria” workforce volunteered informally.

The National Service Scheme and the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan were the formal volunteer based programmes that were launched in India to capitalize on the multitude of our young population. Despite these efforts, a large number of the population still fell in the uncaptured and informal volunteering spectrum. Research conducted among employees of various age groups, levels of hierarchy and spread across several states in India at the Mahindra Group shows that there is a stated desire to devote time towards Volunteering, given the right opportunities and avenues are provided. There is credible evidence to show that this desire to serve is considerably higher in the younger age groups and Millennials.

The untapped potential hidden in the voluntary sector represented opportunities to complement and converge the efforts of different stakeholders in our country. This scenario prompted India@75 (envisioned by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to leverage upon the strengths of the industry, government institutions, community groups and individuals to translate the development story of our country), through the creation of National Volunteering Grid (NVG), as an overarching structure to create an eco-system for structured volunteering in India for capturing all types of volunteering.

The volunteering engagement is enabled by The National Volunteering Grid, a portal which acts as the meeting point for NGOs with projects in the functional areas and corporate volunteers who may
NVG in association with nonprofits, aims to provide credible volunteering opportunities to individuals, organizations, communities and corporates to participate, collaborate, co-create and deliver, thus facilitating millions of Indians to celebrate the virtue of selfless service and share their common aspirations of an inclusively developed India, by 2022.

Since 2014, India@75 has reached out to a cumulative of 20 million people re-shaping and uplifting the lives of citizens in 79,498 villages across the country. The interventions have revolved around the Sustainable Development Goals and targeted in the areas of education, environmental sustainability, good governance, health, sustainable cities, rural urban connect and so on.

Two major pillars of National Volunteering Grid are:

- Pro Bono niche volunteering, objectively engaging professional skilled volunteers
- Count Me In or activity based generic volunteering for individuals as cause & effect

Through these two initiatives, India@75 aims to organize and institutionalize the volunteering ecosystem in the country and act as a bridge and a catalyst to further the attainment of sustainable development goals.

This paper focuses majorly on the initiatives of India@75, corporate employee volunteering sector and the relationships with the community.

Corporate Volunteering Scenario in India:
Corporate volunteering programs enable companies to deliver care to communities in need and support causes that require technical guidance. The level of employee participation and retainment of volunteers plays a major role in deciding the effectiveness of CV programs. The phenomenon of employee volunteering requires an understanding of the intrinsic motives and contextual factors that surrounds an employee. (Sekar,2017).

Pleooza and Hassay (2006) have grouped employee volunteerism in three categories. The first is extra-organizational volunteerism, which refers to the volunteering activities done by the employees outside the workplace. The second is inter-organizational volunteerism, where the employer plays a passive role. The employee chooses a cause/charity and the firm makes monetary donation to the cause or give time off to the employees to support the cause. The third one is intra-organizational volunteerism (IOV). In this form of volunteerism employer designs the volunteering program and give employees different opportunities to participate in them. It has been argued that IOV gives the firm the maximum benefit as it is directed by the employer and the strategic potential of employee volunteerism is realized when efforts are streamlined to a limited number of causes.

Porter and Kramer (2002) have highlighted the fact that companies often fail to realize the true strategic potential of corporate volunteering programs. They have argued that volunteering programs should be in alignment with the corporate's strategies and values. They have also argued that when a firm focuses on a limited number of activities and drive its resources to them, it creates a greater economic and social impact. Kotler and Lee (2005) identified six areas of strategic importance that revolve around CSR: corporate social marketing, cause-related marketing, cause promotions, corporate philanthropy, corporate volunteering and socially responsible business practices. CV is a lot different from traditional philanthropic activities as it goes beyond monetary donations and
requires the involvement of human resources of an organization. Few of the major corporate employee volunteering programs are described below to highlight the diversity, depth, impact and reach of the sector.

Mahindra Group instituted the Employee Social Options (Esops) in the year 2005, which is a volunteering platform to provide employees an opportunity to participate in various social projects in the focused areas of Education, Health, Environment and Rural Development. Nearly 600,000 volunteers have devoted over 26,00,000 volunteering hours in community and social projects since inception. In the last year alone (F19) 91,351 employees contributed 5,95,311 person hours towards CV, with 6.52 hours being the average person hours contributed by each employee.

In the past 10 years, Cognizant through its employee volunteering program, 'Outreach', has impacted 4,50,000 lives through its work in the areas of education, community welfare and environment. The Tata’s have created the Tata Engage platform, which has a target of achieving a million volunteering hours each year, through employee volunteering initiatives.

IBM Volunteers was launched in 2003 and close to 52,388 IBMers have collectively contributed 290,000 hours of community service enabling local community organizations with skills and capacity to serve their constituents better. Currently there are over 14,000 IBM volunteers building the STEM skills of close to 200,000 students in the public-school system besides skills-based support to over 1000 non-profits from across India.

ICICI kicked started their employee volunteering program through Caring Hands in 2011. As part of the activity, employees conduct eye check-up camps for underprivileged children at schools across the country on a single day. On an average, the program reached out to children across more than 100 locations every year. The initiative has reached out to over 1.4 lakh children with more than 20,000 benefitting from corrective spectacles.

As part of CRISIL’S employee engagement program, CRISIL launched CRISIL RE- Change the Scene in 2016. It is a social impact incubator, where the objective is to design solutions to resolve problems rooted in communities. The campaign entails a rigorous selection of projects conceptualized by employees in partnership with local NGOs catering to specific needs and problems, with defined community outreach and impact goals. The 2016 edition of the programme saw 16 projects across three cities focusing on women’s empowerment, environment conservation, education and integrated rural development selected for funding and implementation. In the past 3 years, CRISIL has engaged 5,500 employees in 65 communities across 10 cities.

Deloitte has engaged more than 40,000 volunteers across 17 cities in India, who has worked in 156 projects covering more than 930,000 beneficiaries. Cumulatively, they have generated over 260,000 cumulative volunteering hours. Every year, Deloitte celebrated Impact Day, where employees volunteer in projects on education and skill development.

The Siemens Volunteering Program offers an opportunity to over 18,000 employees across India to engage in corporate citizenship projects for 7 working days a year. The focus areas of corporate citizenship are Primary Healthcare and Health Education, Disaster Relief, Enhancing Living Conditions, Promoting Science and Technical Education.

Through its employee engagement program, Oracle aims to advance education, protect the environment and enrich the community life. In FY16 and FY17, Oracle India has engaged 14,393 Oracle volunteers who has supported 155 organizations, clocking 65,680 volunteering hours.
Schindler has a Volunteering Program called Muskaan, which provide its employees with a platform to volunteer their time through different programs and initiatives. Additionally, the employees also engage in activities such as tree plantation, joy of giving week and running for a cause.

The corporate volunteering programs help to build a balanced society, so that it is crucial for the beneficiaries and acknowledges the efforts of the individuals who give up their time and skills. Traditionally, corporate volunteering was viewed as a strategy devised purely to reduce the costs. However, the benefits of volunteering are plentiful and far reaching and it has been observed that apart from the multitude of economic benefits, there are broader social impacts associated with volunteering.

The European funded Third Sector Impact project has devised a twostep approach to define impact (Sivesind, 2015). The first part of the definition states that:
“the direct or indirect, medium to long-term consequences of the activity of volunteers or of the third sector organizations on individuals or on the community, ranging from neighborhoods to society in general”

The second part of the definition states that:
“Impact goes beyond and above the outcome that would have happened without the third sector activity”

The paper follows a similar approach in describing the social impact of volunteering, which spreads across as the
• Impact of volunteering to the community and the society as a whole
• Impact of volunteering to the individual/volunteer
• Impact of volunteering to the corporate/organization

The above-mentioned areas have been classified under various heads to describe the social impact as explained below.

**Social connections and Strategic partnerships:**
Volunteering connects multiple stakeholders through a single platform and the nature of association crosscuts various functions and sectors.

The National Volunteering Week is such a platform facilitating convergence of Industry, Government and the Civil Society/ Non-Government Organisations with active participation of individual citizens. India@75 NVW gives every Indian an opportunity to engage with nation building exercise by volunteering individually, through community groups / NGOs /corporates etc and contributing in terms of time, skills or money.

In 2013, as a pilot run, India@75 with support from CII celebrated the NVW to sensitize, recognize and celebrate volunteerism in India with the theme ‘Count Me In’.

NVW 2016, 2017 & 2018 were themed “I For India” to encourage individuals’ contribution as well as to lay stress on ‘Individual Social Responsibility’ and citizen’s charter. NVW focuses on appreciating and understanding the work of individual volunteers across the nation.

In the past year, the initiative has managed to forge 16 new long-term partnerships were developed with major corporate giants such as Mahindra, Hero FinCorp, Cello and Jindal being some of the
partners who came on board for India@75 National Volunteering Week 2019.

There have been examples of corporates learning from each other, working in partnership and acting as agents of change through their volunteering programs. JP Morgan Chase joined an IBM Corporate Service Corps (CSC) team to Brazil in 2014, and subsequently launched the Detroit Service Corps in 2015, and later went arm in-arm with IBM in Mumbai to provide joint expertise for an organization focused on gender equality and preventing violence against women. (CSC Impact Assessment Report)

MyGov under Ministry of IT (reporting to PMO) was also supported by India@75 to channelize volunteer energy towards national mission mode schemes.

**Social inclusion and change:**
The partnerships in the sphere of volunteering is key to regeneration of deprived communities. Volunteering contributes significantly to building community cohesion – weaving the social fabric and creating links and networks in communities, providing people the opportunity to join and develop relationships. Volunteering helps to foster greater trust among citizens and developing norms of solidarity and reciprocity that are essential for stability.

India has one of the largest democratic exercises ever exercised in the entire world through its general elections. Many corporates have actively contributed to developing awareness, building the capacities and innovative use of their skills to improve voter turnout. The Government of India has also recognized these efforts and launched the Democracy Awards to recognize the efforts of such corporates and other organizations working around voter’s education and electoral participation. For their efforts in the Local Body Elections in the Major General Elections held in 2016 and 2017, the Mahindra Group has been selected as the first recipient of the Democracy Award for the mobilization and awareness efforts conducted by the organization in Maharashtra State. This is a clear evidence of a successful Public Private Partnership campaign for Social Inclusion and also a clear indicator of its recognition by the Indian Government.

India@75 was able to galvanize the convergence of major stakeholders like NSS, NYKS, non-profits, individuals and corporates etc to create larger self-sustaining networks in their respective geographies to work as per local priorities, promoting social inclusion through their projects.

Evidences have also shown that volunteering would also help build a safer community and reduce crime. A study by Putnam (2000) showed strong antithetical relationships between levels of voluntary membership and crime. Similarly, Kawachi (2000) has also evidenced strong negative correlations between measures of voluntary membership and assault, robbery and burglary in the United States.

**Civic engagement and Active citizenship:**
One of the core objectives of the India@75 initiative has been to spread the culture of volunteering and to foster a spirited citizenry. Various corporates have also designed their employee volunteering programs around civic engagement and community participation. The Lifeline Express project of Mahindra Group is an example in this case, that has had steady partnership from external stakeholders, which includes government, local institutions and the community at large.

Another example in this regard is the coastal clean up drive conducted by United Way Mumbai along with Coca Cola India under the Clean Shore Mumbai campaign. This drive also had large participation from other similar volunteer organizations and community groups such as Beach Please, Jay Foundation and Mahim Beach Clean Up.
Even at the international level, this aspect of civic engagement has been seen at large, especially in countries with considerable development deficit. The National Survey on Volunteerism of Kenya reports that volunteering has helped in building a confident and democratic Kenya. Volunteering itself has been about people who step forward to help others whose lives are very different from their own, without judgment or prejudice, to work with people affected by drug or alcohol misuse, people with mental health problems or those affected by war and conflict. Volunteering has thus been a way of creating a climate of optimism, hope and a confident Kenya.

Services & Public goods delivery:
The paradigm of social responsibility has also transformed the way in which businesses operated. Volunteering has become core to business practice and operations. Creating a positive change and public goods delivery has also been interwoven to the social business practices. In a country like India, the Government alone may not be able to ensure timely delivery of services and reach out to the last mile beneficiary. The corporate and the nonprofits have expanded themselves to be an ideal last mile connect for delivery of social initiatives. Volunteering fills gaps in the supply of goods and services that are desired by their beneficiaries but are not available from either commercial or public sector providers.

Taking a leaf from an example shared previously, IBM launched the Corporate Service Corps in 2008 as an element of its Global Citizen’s Portfolio—a collection of policy and program innovations to help IBMers become effective twenty-first century global professionals and global citizens. However, the scope of the program was expanded, and they take on issues from local economic development, entrepreneurship, transportation and education, to government services, healthcare and disaster recovery to suggest innovative solutions.

Volkswagen India has been associated with the National Federation of Blind Maharashtra’s since 2015 and has supported various requirements of the school including construction of a new school and hostel buildings. This is one of the projects that have seen a ripple effect and employees in their individual capacities also supported the students of the Jagriti School for Blind Girls. The contributions from the volunteers have been varied. From spending time with the students to understand how they overcome their disability in their day to day lives, to providing things they need, like headsets for their audio lessons, to supporting them with scholarships, volunteers from the company with their actions have said “Count me in.”

Developing skills and Capacity building:
Corporates have also been instrumental in building the capabilities of non-profits, in effect bringing about social development. It utilizes the skills, experience, talents and education of corporate volunteers, to bring their skills and knowledge to affect change in their communities and enhance the capacities of organizations involved in the social sector and social projects. Thus, website / mobile app development, creating marketing strategy, social media strategy, brochure designing, program development, legal advice, financial advice etc for nonprofits too have been incorporated under Pro Bono.

Till date, the Pro bono initiative has received more than 1000 projects from 4000 NGOs of which almost 500 have been delivered, with a value of INR 50 million.

Benefits to the employees/individuals and employers/organization:
Several scholars have studied the motives that drive employees to volunteer for volunteering programs. Penner and Finkelstein (1998) found out that pro-social values and concern for the
society is the biggest motivator for the employees to volunteer. Some of the researchers have also demonstrated egoistic motives where employees volunteer to benefit oneself as one of the most important driving factors to volunteer (Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen, 1991). The egoistic motives include opportunities to develop social relationship with fellow employees, subordinates and beneficiaries, and to enhance their own skills through practical experiences. Clary et al used a functional approach to understand why employees volunteer where they identified six motivational functions served by volunteerism-Values, Understanding, Social, Career, Protective and Enhancement.

- **Values:** Through volunteering, employees get a chance to express their altruistic and philanthropic values.

- **Understanding:** Volunteering give individuals an exposure to new learning experiences and a platform to exercise their skills and knowledge.

- **Social:** Another function of volunteering is that it provides employees with a platform to interact with their fellow colleagues and develop social relations.

- **Career:** Volunteering give employee’s career-growth opportunities. This could arise from interactions with superiors during the volunteering activity or enhancement of skills through volunteering. The 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating shows that nearly 80% of the volunteers believed that volunteering enabled them to develop their interpersonal skills and develop a sense of empathy. Two thirds of the volunteers also were of the opinion that volunteering has helped improve their communication skills. Similar pronounced patterns could be observed for other skills as well.

- **Protective:** The fifth proposed function refers to the reduction of guilt that an individual feel through volunteering. Some people participate in volunteering activities to get rid of the negative feelings.

- **Enhancement:** Some scholars have claimed that helping others leads to the satisfaction of one’s personal need and enhancement of self-esteem.

Traditional research studies have displayed that most people are of the belief that supporting and helping others is a means to attain fulfilment for oneself. However, an internal survey was carried out at the Mahindra Group, to understand the motives of employees to volunteer. The results reveal that “To bring about a change in the society” with a score of 4.71 (out of a maximum score of 5) is the greatest motivator for employees to volunteers in Esops activities. Skill enhancement (3.85) and Social interaction (3.92) are also important motivators for volunteering. This clearly highlights the motivational shift that has occurred among individuals, who engage in volunteerism not primarily for personal gains.

Geroy, Wright and Jacoby (2000) have demonstrated meaningfulness of tasks, knowledge and skills gained and social contacts made to be the three most reported benefits of participating in volunteering programs.

The benefits of volunteering are not merely limited to the employees, but it also affects the employers positively. It has been well established that the employees affinity towards the employer can create a competitive advantage, which is inimitable, intangible and undeniable. Further, it has also been seen that employee retention and engagement have been hallmarks of the corporate volunteering programs. Watson and Abzug (2005) have found a positive correlation between satisfaction gained
through volunteering and business profits.

**Conclusion:**

Volunteerism has created deep rooted diverse impacts socially, economically and politically in the global environment. It could be regarded as a form of social capital that enabled a positive change in promoting marginalized communities, building civic engagement, participatory development paradigm and creating an active and resilient citizenry.

The expectations of the employees from volunteering programs should be assessed to better the employee's volunteering experience by strategically conducting events and deploying resources. The measurement of social impact of volunteering is highly important since it assays the value of volunteering, reports community action and participation, enhances accountability on the civil society organizations, effective benchmarking, increases sustainability, promotes long term thinking and also provides an impetus to evidence-based decision making and policy changes for government, corporates and other stakeholders.

The India@75 initiative aspires to formalize the existing channels of volunteerism, mainstream volunteerism in companies through structured employee engagement initiatives, develop tools for measuring the impacts and take forward the agenda of creating a platform for active citizenry to contribute in reduction of social, economic and environmental inequalities.

Yoann Kassi Vivier, Jennifer Pawalowski, Carol Gutter. Demonstrating the Business Value of Pro Bono Service.
Technical session 3:

Accreditation Framework for Volunteers
“Why youth will participate in public policy making process as Volunteer” a conceptual glimpse from rural India

Mr. Santanu Bhowmick

Abstract

Presence of largest no of youth force in India makes the country to celebrate the fact of ‘demographic dividend’. Now, to enjoy this demographic dividend it has to be converted into development dividend. Therefore, to ensure the same, young people need to participate in democratic process, discussion, deliberations and public policy making process etc. with true spirit.

Youth is the backbone of society and future change agent of any nation as they have lot of innovative ideas and endless energy which can be channelize as productive human wealth. In rural India, “Gram Sabha” is an important component where youth community can participate and contribute their ideas/thoughts which will be counted as ‘participation of youth’ in policy making process. Policy can be consider as a stepping stone for any kind of initiative in regards to development and growth, so youth participation in policy making is very much important.

Now, researcher arises some questions like why youth will participate in Gram Sabha or public policy discourse at the grassroots level as it is voluntary. Is there any approach from the grassroots administration to encourage volunteerism for developmental issues and initiatives? If youth are willing or volunteering, how they will participate? How their participation may contribute to the process of policy making and produce public goods for themselves and village communities at large? What are the major factors at play, in regards to grass root level politics and policy making initiative from the bottom end? What would be the framework of youth volunteerism in a rural areas and what would be the role of Local Government to cater the spirit and energy of youth? What are the roles of Local Government and Governance at play to address the issues of youth for ensuring their voluntary participation in policy making process, Gram Sabha and other means? In this direction, youth participation in policy making process will enable the Local Government system to move one step forward to create a youth centric institutions and delivery of services as ‘Good Governance’. In this direction, researcher is conducting a study with qualitative facts which may able to answer above raised questions.

The study has been initiated to describe the present status of youth participation and volunteerism, to find out the barriers which are facing by youth community in regards to public policy making process and participation at village and Gram Panchayat level. It also makes an attempt to produce some ideas to address those issues.

Key Words: Youth and Volunteerism, Participation, Policy
Introduction

Citizen participation in governance process is important for its proper functioning and youth participation is very much necessary as India is enjoying the demographic dividend with significant no of youth population. India is the country with 2nd largest population after China and more than 50% of the population in India below the age of 25 and more than 60% of them below the age of 35 (Youth ki Awaz, 2019)¹. So, Youth participation is not only important but it must be mandatory. Mainstreaming youth is a key way to take hold of the demographic dividend (Gireesan 2012)². Youth collectively can be an asset to development; at local, national, regional and international level (DFID-CSO Youth Working Group , 2010)³. Politics and governance is the foundation for any development initiatives at all levels in India. Active involvement of youth in governance is essential for the country to march ahead with dynamism and youthfulness (Sarumathy et al., 2012)⁴. (Peter Ronald de Souza, 2009)⁵ The book specified 7 aspects like trust and circles of belonging, family and social networks, leisure and life style, politics and democracy, governance and development, Nation and the World, Anxieties and Aspirations. So, it is expected that youth need to participate in all spheres of the society and youth participation in politics and governance is very much fundamental.

In this juncture, researcher raised some questions like why youth will participate in Gram Saabha or public policy discourse at the grassroots as it is voluntary. Is there any approach from the grassroots administration to encourage volunteerism for developmental issues and initiatives? If youths are willing or volunteering for social cause, how they will participate with due recognition? How their participation may contribute to the process of policy making and produce public goods for themselves and village communities at large? What are the major factors at play, in regards to grassroots level politics and policy making initiatives from the bottom end? What would be the framework of youth volunteerism in rural areas and what would be the role of Local Government to cater the spirit and tap the energy of youth? What are the roles of Local Government and Governance at play to address the issues of youth for ensuring their voluntary participation in policy making process, Gram Sabha and other means? Now, it is a concern of the researcher to make an attempt to answer the above raised concerns.

Background and Approach:

There are policies and intervention by the state and central government to promote and ensure youth participation in all spheres of the society. But despite these facts, participation of youth in policy making process is very minimal and implementation of those policies also lagging behind. In this context, the researcher feels that policy making process is one activity of a huge holistic exercise, where politics, system of governance and deliberative democracy all link with one to another. Therefore, researcher raises the question why the youth community should participate in the public policy making process as it is voluntary. As researcher need to probe the why question so it may need to look into multiple dimensions and aspects.

National Youth Policy 2014⁶ stated that youth of the country must need to be empowered to achieve their full potential, and through them India will became a rightful place in the community of nations. So, to make the India as rightful place the country need to be a developed nation not developing nation and youth has a significant role to play. In other side, way and means of development also has been questioned in many times by multiple scholars and researcher. India is the world most ancient civilization- National Commission for Youth, 2002 (NYC, 2002)⁷, India. In this direction, the researcher believes that India need a balanced approach for it development initiatives where it must take a proper concern of its tradition, rich heritage, culture and utmost ancient civilization.
Importance of youth participation in policy making, implementation, evaluation and overall process of monitoring is very much needed for ensuring the demographic dividend (Gireesan 2012) 2. Youth is the largest work force in terms of citizen numbers and they have multiple ways and means to contribute and to work for the betterment of the society. So society, cannot avoid them and without participation of youth in developmental process, the society may not grow in a right manner.

Government of India first brought out the National Youth Policy in 1988 8 and the policy categories the youth community as important group and attempted to address various issues of youth. The policy also emphasized role of youth in society and politics. The Government of India set up a National Commission for Youth in 2002 and based on its deliberation it brings the National Youth Policy in 2003 9, which also recognize the potentials of youth, their role and responsibilities towards the development of the society and nation. The National Youth Policy 2014 addressed the vital issues of youth participation like promotion of social values, community engagement, youth participation in politics and governance, etc. In this direction, the policy emphasized the importance of youth to participate in all levels of governance, with special reference to the participation of lower level of rural and urban governance including Gram Sabha, Ward Sabha, Mahalla Sabha etc. Youth has a social space in all forums starting from the grassroots to national level. So, every youth need to grow holistically, but the main question is who is responsible or going to take the responsibility for their growth and development? Therefore, a grassroots mechanism is required which may exclusively made for the peoples’ welfare. In this connection, Local Government can play an active role and may take responsibility to make an account of it.

Government is focusing a lot for skilling of youth in different trades but apart from the formal skill development, it is also needed to take care about their civic sense, community engagement, volunteerism, capacity building, and social responsibility of the youth. It is noted that many youth lack civic sense, self confidence, and volunteerism and they may need special attention (Balakrishnan 2013) 10 (Yadav 2019) 11. To become a responsible citizen, these components are needed for every youth of the society. In this context, Government has some platform like National Service Scheme (NSS) 12, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) 13 etc. To ensure the civic sense and engagement among youth, they need to be more active in the activities like plantation, shramdan activities in their own village, blood donation, protection and prevention of natural resources etc.

**Definition of Youth- Regional, National and International:**

The researcher believe that it is hard to define youth in a concrete way but to avoid the operational issues and better understanding each countries has fixed a set age criteria. Keeping the spirit of federal structure high each state has flexibility to define youth as per the needs and concerns of the youth like Jharkhand, Kerala, Karnatak, Odisha and few other states has separate youth policy. West Bengal has no separate policy for youth so it supposes to follow the National Youth Policy 2014.

In 1988 first National Youth Policy was framed by the Government of India. The National Youth Policy of India (2003) defined the youth as in the age group 13-35. However, the latest National Youth Policy, 2014 modified it and defined ‘youth’ as persons in the age group of 15-29 years. In this paper, we have adopted 15-29 years as youth in order to keep update the report. United Nations (UN) adopted the age group of 15 to 24 for defining youth and every country has different age criteria for categorize youth.
Significance of the study:

Policy making is a key activity for development agenda at all levels. But the problem is, participating in policy making activity at higher level is not very easy for a common person or youth. Here, researcher believes that if youth are really interested they can make significant change at the grassroots as it is quite easy for them to participate in the process of local level policy formulation. ‘Gram Sabha is a constitutional and democratic forum where youth or any person of the concerned area can participate and make their points. 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act has been passed in 1992 by the Government of India where importance has been given to the Gram Sabha and it expected to function as a platform of deliberative democracy. But, youth are not interested to participate in the policy making process of many reasons so to address those reason and to find strategies for the same the researcher initiated the study.

Objectives of the study:

- To understand the status of voluntary youth participation in policy making at the grassroots.
- To explore the reason that why youth are not interested to participate in Public Policy making process.
- To put forward some strategies and suggestions based on the study.

Methodology and tools used for the study:

Qualitative method has been adopted for the study. Secondary data has been used to develop the document, being a youth development activist and development professional the researcher also shares his real life experiences and generated ideas which he gained throughout his academic and professional exposure.

Youth Participation- Politics and Governance

Youth knowledge; skills, attitudes, and behavior are vital aspects for the implementation of sustainable development in rural India (Antony, 2011). So youth can play a significant role in the overall system of democracy, politics and governance. But only few young leaders and ministers are there is the actual system of government and governance of India. In the present 17th Loksabha there are 64 (12%) Member of Parliament (MP) aged below 40 (The Indian Express 2019) and in 16th Loksabha there were 71 (13%) MP aged below 40 (PRS LS 2014). But, we have expectation, need and demand for more no of youth participation in power politics. In order to address the reason of less youth participation in politics, governance and policy making process the researcher raised some questions which as follows:

1. What kind of young people are contesting in the election at various levels?
2. What kind of young people are winning the elections at various levels?

To answer the above two questions we can refer a study on Youth Agenda for India (Sachin et al. 2012) it highlighted that lack of democratic structures within the political parties and strong nepotism creates barriers for youth to enter into the politics. The author also said that even the outlook of the present political leadership is not very encouraging, rendering the youth alienated and disheartened.
The average MP's assets rose from Rs 14.7 crore in the previous 16th Lok Sabha (LS) (2014) to Rs 20.9 crore in the 17th LS (2019) (Mampatta 2019). At present more than 95% of the young MPs are belonging to rich family either strong connection with the politics. So, in actual power politics influential or elite domination is very much visible so participation is not inclusive. However, more questions can be raised like how much money a MP and MLC candidate used to spend officially and unofficially for contesting and winning the election? It has been witnessed that a huge amount of money a MP candidate used to spend which cannot be feasible for a middle class young leader even though he/she may be very much competitive in all terms. So, financial status of the family, background, political dynasty all together decide a MP or MLA candidate to contest and winning in the elections.

So, it is a proven that power politics in state and central level is really not very easy for a youth who belongs to poor and middle class. In this context, researcher idea is that youth can participate in local level of government and governance system as a stepping stone of bigger possibilities and prospects in higher level of politics and governance. There are end no of example like Chipko Movement, 1970 Uttarakhand, Pathalgadi Movement 2018 Jharkhand, Supreme Court decision on Vedanta Project in 2013 Odisha etc. which all got international attention but movement was started locally with the participation of poor and common citizen. In this direction, researcher wants to state that there are end no of issues and problems existing in each and every parts of the country but no attention has been given by our leaders who are very famous and well known. Therefore, it is demand of time and urgent need of the hour for youth community of this country to take a call and fight back by which problem can be addressed and participation of youth will also get recognition at all levels.

Existing mechanism of citizen and youth participation in governance process:

State government and the national government made multiple systems to address issues of people participation. Government of India made an exclusive platform named “My Gov” where every people can shared their opinion about government policy and others. There are public grievances cell at various levels of government, Right to Information (RTI), Gram Sabha, Ward Sabha etc. at play to promote and address various issues of participation. It has been a decade old problem of India that there are systems but its implementation and functioning is lagging so many cases it noted that citizen an especially youth are not using the existing platform of participation. The basic argument of the researcher is, today youth are getting expose to the education and technology whereas previous generations were suffered due to lack of education opportunity so expectation is more from the present youth community. In this juncture, youth can play a proactive role which will largely contribute towards the youth participation process and leads to good governance at all levels.

Since, the present study wants to emphasize on youth participation in policy making process at the grassroots. It need to say that in 1992, 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment made mandatory provision of Gram Sabha and Ward Sabha which can be highly contribute towards the participation of youth and citizen in rural and urban areas. The study is specially focused on rural areas so 73rd Amendment and Gram Sabha will be major point of discussion as a forum of participation at the grassroots. Gram Sabha activities is an ‘undisputable part’ of decentralization which caters a healthy democracies and leads to the socio economic development of Indian society (Dhavaleshwar 2014). Apart from these, there are some systems which specially made for youth community only. National Service Scheme (NSS) for the student youth and Neheru Yuva Kendra Sangathanam (NYKS) for the
non student rural youth are exclusively made the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India for promotion of volunteerism among youth. The main idea behind these two initiatives is that youth must get proper platform and training exposure for nation building. In addition, Youth Red Cross by International Red Cross Society, Civil Defence Course by the state government also implementing in the state.

‘Gram Sabha’ is a structural system of local level governance where any citizen can participate and become a part of decision making process. In the present context, majority of development programme in rural areas runs with the prior approval of Gram Sabha. Apart from the ‘Gram Sabha’ at local level there are other structural platform like Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Committee (VHSNC), Tanta Mukta Samaiti (Maharashtra state-to solve dispute at local level), Village Development Committee, Social Audit exercise, Palli Sabha in Odisha etc. are existing where youth can voluntary participate in the process of governance and public policy deliberations. Each state has some unique system at the village level where participation can be possible. In addition, NGOs, CBOs, Clubs, Temple Committee, Market Development Committee, School Management Committee, Parents Teachers Committee, SHGs etc. also considered to be a vibrant platform by which any citizen, women and youth can document their participation in many forms.

Reason for less youth participation in policy making process at the grass roots:

First of all researcher explored that there is no concrete data management system which is maintaining a record of gram sabha participation and status of youth participation in public policy making process at grassroots. So, identification of reason is a complex task and the study based purely on secondary data without quantitative data. But, researcher made an attempt to reach to a scientific conclusion.

(Das 2015) 19 analyze the Rural Economic and Demographic Survey (REDS) dataset, collected during a national-level household survey conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) over 2006-2008 and stated that on an average, 13% of villagers attend the gram sabha meeting. It also noted by the study that the attendance rates differ by gender where about 21% of men, and 7% for women on average participate in the gram sabha. On the other hand, the attendance rates of SCs and non-SCs (STs and non-STs) are 12% and 14% (17% and 13%), respectively. So, required data set for youth participation in this regards is difficult.

So, it is a fact that youth community are not participation in the policy making process as per the need and expectations, and there are many reasons. Some reasons explored which are as follows:

- Lack of awareness about local level government and governance process among youth is one of the basic reasons for less participation of youth.
- Youth may want to be part of gram sabha and policy making process but due to lack of Panchayat and ward members’ interest and initiatives they are not able to participate.
- Political leaders from the ruling party and government contractor used to dominate in the meeting and youth also may fear to open up on various issues.
- Youth of the area has an assumption that the local level leaders are not interested to allow them to enter or interfere in their politics.
• Lack of Publicity about the gram sabha meeting is one of the reasons for less participation of youth and citizen.

• Elected members also need training and orientation by which they can understand the value of participation, power of youth and how they can use the energy of youth for their own constituency management.

• The Gram Sabha is still an administrative formality for the ward members as well as Gram Panchayat has not made any significant efforts to ensure participation.

• No specific concern from the state and local government to mobilise youth for the participation in governance process.

• Block Youth Officer has played no role in connection with the youth participation in policy making process.

**Suggestions:**

• The local government needs to create an enabling environment by which youth can take interest in the governance process.

• The Gram Panchayat may use Information, Education and Communication (IEC), Media, field level communication campaign, interpersonal contact by Panchayat Raj Institution (PRI) members, traditional media and outdoor publicity for ensuring participation of citizen and youth in the gram sabha meeting.

• To ensure participation from all special attention can be given to backward and marginalised pockets of the Gram Panchayat.

• In meeting, politics and political argument may be avoided as it is a government meeting and a general phenomenon is that majority participants of the Gram Sabha used to be supporter of ruling political party.

• Meeting Agenda of the gram sabha may inform in advance to people of the concerned area for more participation and fruitful discussion.

• Youth development initiative need to taken as an agenda of Gram Sabha meeting for discussion where youth may find interest.

• The place of gram sabha meeting must be public place not private ones.

• The Gram Panchayat used to give notice to the Panchayat notice board but how far people will know that there is a notice in the Panchayat notice board unless the local members informed their voters and give notice in more places like Public Distribution Shop (PDS), Anganwadi and other public places?

• Local Club, NGOs, SHGs may come together for a collective responsibility to ensure youth
participation in policy making activities.

- School and college can take initiative by which student may visit various government offices and understand the basic structure of village administration

- College student and other educated youth from different field can be invited separately by the Panchayat for the inclusion of participation.

- The District Youth Coordinator of NYKS can act proactively to mobilise the youth of the district for ensuring youth participation in policy making process at grassroots.

- The state government may frame an inclusive job roles and responsibilities for Block Youth Officer (BYO) where Local Government and Youth must be one component as concern.

**Conclusion:**

Lack of awareness about the Local Government and Governance system among youth is one of the major reasons which create barriers for youth participation. Therefore, the elected members of PRI (ward member) can play a proactive role to address related issues. In other side, elected members also need to understand and need to properly value the ‘Youth Community’ as without their support and participation preparation of inclusive policy and development will be a dream only. Collective responsibility from all the stakeholders can be an important approach by which participation can be increased.


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Why Volunteers Can’t Volunteer? – A Survey Based Study On Volunteering Trends In India & An Analysis Of Various Challenges And Synergizing Factors For Volunteering

Dr. N. Mehetab Nasreen

Abstract

Almost all the humans one time or the other want to volunteer to change their surroundings. But though thousands have the intention to volunteer, among that 1000 only 100 actually volunteer. So what stops them from volunteering is what our paper deals with. This is based on survey of a sample of 5000 diverse people belonging to different age groups predominantly young people, based on a common elaborate questionnaire, where we found the attenuating and synergizing factors for people to Volunteer, and the paper concludes with the solutions provided by the people in the sample themselves. The sample for the online and offline survey is pan Indian, random and not uniformly distributed across states. The paper discusses mainly the 5 attenuating factors and 3 synergizing factors for people to volunteer, it also includes reasons for people to drop from volunteering. The factors are mainly related to volunteers in India and emphasizes about the need to provide a flexible accreditation framework to volunteers to bring more people into volunteering and sustain the existing volunteers.

Introduction

India is an young nation. India has more than 50% of its population below the age of 25 and more than 65% below the age of 35. It is expected that, in 2020, the average age of an Indian will be 29 years. Every human has an inherent desire to help others, so by heart every human is naturally a volunteer but it depends on his surroundings and many other factors which may either facilitate volunteering or pose challenges for doing the same.

In India ,from SEVA to CYBER SPACES, there are lot of different varieties of volunteering practices, there is a wide variety in the age of people volunteering. Internships in volunteering like GOI MOYAS recent SWACHH BHARAT SUMMER INTERNSHIP, volunteering through governmental organizations like NSS, NYKS, bodies like UNV – like the recent V FORCE initiative for online volunteering of UNV INDIA, NGO’s like PRATHAM etc., Service clubs like rotary club, lions club especially has started increasing infusion of people above 40 and retired people into various volunteering activities, religious NGO’s like AMMA foundation, Rural Development Trust, Zakat foundation, CSR activities by companies like Infosys and their employee volunteering teams who has been playing an active role in education in government schools, International NGO’s, youth clubs, through innovative chain challenges like PROJECT RIPPLE, pressure groups and various other types of organizations.
Online volunteering is emerging as a breakthrough in volunteering making volunteering easy and more productive with comparatively less effort and more outcome for the effort.

The objectives of this survey based research are to know the various trends and opinions of Indians regarding volunteering, the challenges they have personally faced while volunteering and the factors which actually helped them to volunteer and facilitated their volunteering journey. It also attempts in taking their opinion regarding the need of an accreditation framework to promote volunteering and how such framework should be designed to facilitate volunteering which include both infusing fresh volunteers and also sustaining the existing volunteers.

**Methodology**

A sample size of 5000 was the target, received 4700+ responses through online google forms and offline printed questionnaire's distributed through various people connected to a network of volunteers. Few samples were also collected over phone from states where samples were lacking. All the offline and other kind of responses were fed into the google forms before the final analysis.

Questionnaires had both open ended questions and questions with options showing various possible answers in those options, open ended questions weren’t made mandatory keeping in view the audience (as people of all age groups, of different mother tongues and different types - active volunteers, occasional volunteers and non-volunteers) were involved.

**The questionnaires were designed based on the objectives of the study.**

The analysis was based mainly on primary data obtained through the survey and secondary supporting data extracted from various reports, surveys and books on volunteering (extracted materials have been marked and sources mentioned in references).

The closed ended questions have been depicted in the form of bar diagrams and pie diagrams and an analysis and overview of common open ended question's answers has been made and specific observations from various open ended answers has been mentioned.

Sample was inclusive of people of all age groups, no specific criteria for age was kept for the participants. An effort has been made to make the sample pan india and the sample contains participant scattered over all the states, but not uniformly distributed among states. Nearly 50 % of samples are from states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala and Uttarakhand.
The questionnaires were designed in Hindi and English and concerned active volunteers of states were asked to make an effort to explain and translate in their language if needed.

(Note – few closed ended questions were allowed to be answered using multiple options – hence some questions have the overall % crossing 100 as multiple options were opted by people taking the survey)

Links of questionnaires’ –

**English**
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdM9eZeAFACj0hQW-lljXVTdHNA-98ov65PtQwBA64T64aaOA/viewform

**Hindi**
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdYQQDgeR31hpmDlTA5DeIOqkcQc-XY3RNtqKlow25X7IfFLQ/viewform

**Result**

1. 85.3 % have volunteered in some or other form in some occasion while 14.7 % never volunteered according to them (a definition of volunteering and sample activities was provided below the question)

2. 99.1% of people like volunteering (almost everyone likes volunteering) and wants to volunteer if they'll get an opportunity.

3. Why do you volunteer? Was asked to know the driving factor behind, Few reasons like 1) satisfaction 2) want to do something for society etc, were given in options, others option was also provided to make it partially open ended, results are shown in the infographic below. most of people volunteer as it gives them satisfaction while a significant other portion of people came into volunteering as they can’t stand the sight of people suffering and as volunteering is an opportunity to do something for their society.

![Infographic showing reasons for volunteering](chart.png)
4. Challenges – Various challenges include lack of support from family and friends (62 %), lack of funding (43%), lack of awareness regarding opportunities by various organization to collaborate and work, lack of awareness of innovative practices like online volunteering, time management was also stated by many (about 40 %).

5. Helping factors - Friends circle is one of the most common factor that supports and facilitates an individual to volunteer. Over 80 % preferred to volunteer with an organization or with an NGO or under a program like NSS ,NCC as doing alone poses difficulties both in cases of initiation and sustaining their works. Over 90 % of people who were volunteers were associated with organizations or were doing with a group of likeminded friends.

6. Criticism - 83 % of the people admitted that they have received criticism from their parents and close circle that volunteering was a waste of time. But the criticism was less when they were volunteering for a structured organizations like UNV, NSS and NYKS.

7. Awareness about different methods and opportunities about volunteering – 47 % of the people answered that they aren't aware of different types of volunteering and didn’t either has knowledge regarding the opportunities, among the people who answered most were either aware due to their organization and due to social media.

8. Online volunteering - A matter of surprise was that some people who were volunteers for about 3-4 years also didn’t have any idea about innovative practices like online volunteering. And overall only 37 % people had either volunteered online or were aware of the practice.

9. Recognition framework need – 79% people feel that volunteering can be promoted by having a proper accreditation framework and some stated that the criticism received is less and more support is received from their immediate family and friends when the volunteering activity is being associated with renowned organizations – some gave example of swachh bharat summer internship. The rest were of the opinion that if motivated and willing enough a person will volunteer without being concerned about the recognition they will get.

10. Duration of volunteering
11. Ongoing and episodic based on frequency - Among The people who were volunteering already 27% are Ongoing volunteers, rest of them are episodic volunteers. (According to Weymer’s classification and types of volunteers). Many of them volunteer during occasions like environment day, womens day etc., as that’s the time when their workplace or school or college will be conducting the event

Suggestions - Many people who occasionally volunteer or have never volunteered but willing to do so were waiting to get collaborated with any volunteering activities going nearby and expressed the wish that a database having information regarding opportunities would be helpful as often they don’t get any information and neither can they start something by their own but can help others for the same.

**Few Other Observations**

The motivating factors behind majority of people to volunteer was altruism and moral reasons, empathy etc.,

More people could sustain volunteering when they were working with an organization rather than working independently.

Nearly 80 % of the people taking survey opined that volunteering has also helped themselves to grow as a person.

Student organizations and student wings of political organizations like ABVP, SFI, NSUI (nearly 8 % of our sample) are also good platforms for college students to enter into volunteering.

Most of the volunteers who have taken the survey belong to the age group 17-26.

Workplaces, colleges and schools are important places to motivate and people towards volunteering as often it were the activities of the immediate friend circle or work environment which motivated people towards volunteering.

Most of the people love to volunteer by contributing manually, some people donate and financially support people who are volunteering as they themselves can’t manage time to volunteer,

**Common challenges & how one can address them?**

Lack of supporting environment / criticism, Time Management issues, Lack of funding, Difficulty to sustain People and dropping out from a group leading to closure of many small youth clubs or small group organizations like youth clubs, Lack of awareness about the opportunities and innovative practices can all be addressed directly or indirectly through a good organizational support, increasing the awareness regarding volunteering opportunities in general and also volunteering as social work as a carrier in particular, by providing recognition or appreciation to volunteers which will always keep their spirits and motivation level high, using technology to create a common database in the country where one can both find volunteers for their activities and also the interested people can find opportunities to collaborate with organizations and small groups nearby. There is also need to make volunteering a part of curriculum framework as NSS and NCC has almost been successful but still there is a need to increase the efficiency of these especially in professional colleges as these are the places where both the schemes are least active. (6) (as significant people taking the survey and volunteering were associated with either NSS / NCC / NYKS at some point of time).
Conclusion

To conclude, the humanity inside humans always drives them to help others, so there is an inherent desire for everyone to volunteer but it depends on their surrounding supportive environment whether it motivates them and facilitate them to do so.

By the results of this survey and some secondary data and the recent evidences (showing involvement) through programs like SELF4SOCIETY, SWACHH BHARATH SUMMER INTERNSHIP 1.0 & 2.0 (My Gov) etc., the solutions and suggestions which were given by the people taking the survey clearly showed that there is a strong need to establish a structured accreditation framework, recognition for their volunteering activities from bodies like UNV, MOYAS or any NGO’s to promote volunteering in the country.

1. INDIA’S DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND (BCC) & WORLD POPULATION PROSPECTS.
2. From Seva to Cyber Space – the many faces of volunteering in India – Femida Handy, SAGE publications INDIA.
5. WEYMER’S classification of volunteers
Technical session 4:

Innovative Practices on Volunteering
Making Volunteering an Organisational Purpose Through Innovative Practices

Deepak Prabhu Matti, Rikhiya Banerjee, Sejal Poladia, Cognizant Outreach

Executive Summary

Launched in 2007, Cognizant Outreach provides a volunteering platform to Cognizant’s employees worldwide, enabling them to leverage their professional skills and passion to enhance the quality of education, conserve and protect the environment, support community welfare initiatives and offer pro-bono services. Since its inception, 150,000 Outreach volunteers in 29 countries have clocked over 2.8 million hours of volunteering to impact 600,000 lives. In 2018 alone, 52,286 first-time volunteers globally, including 39,309 in India, clocked 530,648 hours to make a difference to society. At Cognizant, volunteering is not limited to special occasions. As a result, volunteering initiatives were carried out on every single day in 2018.

Volunteering is an act of passion, which needs to come from within. In driving a culture of volunteerism across the organization, Outreach follows innovative practices to keep employees motivated and recognize their passion, thus inspiring more of them to volunteer. Through this paper, Cognizant Outreach will share some of the heartwarming outcomes of the program and talk about the innovative practices that have encouraged greater volunteering at Cognizant.

Innovations in Our Volunteering Strategy

Cognizant Outreach has implemented innovative ideas and unique processes complemented by a structured framework to design the volunteering program.

Making volunteering more employee-driven

Outreach follows a shared responsibility model and a bottom-up approach to empower employees to:

• Connect with causes they are most passionate about.
• Take complete responsibility for volunteering initiatives, from planning through execution.
• Leverage their professional skills for community benefit.
• Explore and work towards addressing local problems.
• Empower volunteers to take up the responsibility of a particular initiative in their location, so that they drive the project and influence their colleagues to join the cause, and liaison with the stakeholders.

Success story:

Thayumana Subramaniam (Thayu), a Cognizant employee and a professional basketball player from Chennai, learnt the tough wheelchair variant of the sport to help physically challenged youth realize their mettle in basketball. Through his dedication and determination, he became a certified coach
in wheelchair basketball. For two years in a row, he has led the Chennai city Wheelchair Basketball team to the third place in the National Championships. After graduating to become the Assistant Coach of the India Under-23 team, he guided the team in their first international tournament in Thailand. Thayu’s passion elevated him as one of the coaches of the Indian National Wheelchair Basketball team. He travelled to Team India’s first international tournament at Bangkok in January, 2017. In the subsequent international tournaments at Bali and Lebanon, his team won the bronze medal.

More recently, 24 Outreach volunteers worked tirelessly for over 53 days to support the Wheelchair Basketball Federation of India (WBFI) in organizing the 6th National Wheelchair Basketball Championship in Mohali from June 24-29, 2019.

The volunteers were involved in end-to-end planning and on-ground execution of the entire event, right from handling entry forms, fees, and travel itineraries, to managing accommodation, transit of players, and several other key responsibilities, according top priority to the comfort of the 450 players and 23 associations that participated in the event. The volunteers assisted teams from Chennai, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru during their training sessions, and facilitated the safe movement of wheelchairs and 1,500 kilograms of equipment to and back from the venue. Outreach also sponsored printed collaterals, trophies, and medals.

**Here is an account of the volunteer effort:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities supported for the Mohali matches</th>
<th>No. of volunteers</th>
<th>Total volunteering hours</th>
<th>Lives impacted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support during practice session</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1140</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desk volunteering – Planning of tournament</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2650</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelchair movement from Chennai to Chandigarh and vice versa</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Championship – Pickup and drop of teams</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2368</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notably, while Thayumana Subramaniam (Thayu) led the Tamil Nadu Men’s team to the third place, Shiva Natarajan from Cognizant Coimbatore led the Tamil Nadu Women’s team to the second place in the tournament.

Additionally, Preethi Ramasamy from Cognizant Coimbatore served as the Team Manager for the Tamil Nadu Women’s team. One of our employees, Umadevi Navamani, was a part of the Tamil Nadu
Women’s team at the tournament.

In a note thanking Outreach volunteers for their tremendous effort, Madhavi Latha, President – WBFI, said that it is the passion and hard work of the volunteers that helps WBFI organize such events.

Introducing volunteering as a company culture from day 1 Outreach orientation forms an integral part of a new recruit’s induction program in Cognizant. Their introduction to volunteering starts with some simple first-time in-house volunteering activities, ranging from making eco-friendly paper bags and preparing learning aids for Outreach-supported schools, to the more challenging ones such as tree conservation, beach clean-up, and water body conservation, among others.

These initiatives help new recruits:
• Understand the culture of the company and develop empathy towards the company’s diverse workforce.
• Channelize their hobbies and passion into their work roles.
• Take greater ownership of their social responsibility and work towards addressing social issues via regular volunteering.

Celebrating volunteering:

Cognizant Outreach has a robust reward and recognition structure for volunteering. In keeping with the spirit of volunteerism, the organization neither mandates volunteering, nor makes it a part of an individual’s performance reviews.

How Outreach benefits from having a robust volunteering R&R structure A robust volunteering R&R structure helps:

• Boost volunteer morale.
• Improve volunteer retention.
• Motivate more volunteers to participate repeatedly in volunteering initiatives (notifications triggered to their managers and Vertical Leads laud the volunteers’ exemplary contributions beyond the call of their duty).
• Volunteers to highlight their social work to family and friends (social media appreciation of their work amplifies their achievements).
• Strengthen their impact for the cause, by receiving theme-based/focus-area based personalized recognition titles.
• Appreciate fellow volunteers’ contributions (it is made sure that a fresh set of volunteers are recognized each time).

Success stories

Annual categories
• Outstanding Outreach Volunteer of the Year awards
• Star Evangelist awards
Remote volunteering

For those eager to make a difference but unable to make the time to step out of their homes or offices, Outreach’s Virtu(e)al teacher program provides remote volunteering opportunities. Through virtual teaching, employees from different parts of the world can now connect with remote rural schools in India as adjunct faculties.

Success story

Virtual volunteering

The Virtu(e)al Teacher program was launched in 2016 in the Virudhunagar district of Tamil Nadu in India as a pilot project named ‘School on Cloud’. By using technology to conduct long-distance teaching in government schools in India, the initiative opened up new avenues for employees from as far as the United States to directly interact with students from remote areas. Online classes held via Skype proved to be an easy way to reach out to students halfway across the globe. It has since scaled up, with 160 Outreach Virtu(e)al teachers reaching out every week to over 4,500 students in 25 schools.

In 2019, Cognizant Outreach collaborated with ‘eVidyaloka’, a not-for-profit institution that specializes in imparting education to remote classrooms using technology with the support of volunteers. Volunteers from across the globe are now connecting to schools in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, West Bengal and NCR. Considerable improvement has been witnessed in these schools, where students are slowly able to converse in English, understand the basics of Computer Science and develop extra-curricular interests such as chess. To date, Outreach volunteers have clocked 688 hours of remote teaching to benefit 5,000 students across 29 schools in India.

Active Social Media Presence

Cognizant Outreach has an exclusive and active internal and external social media presence dedicated to its volunteers and their volunteering activities.

Our social media program aims to:

1. Drive awareness and engagement among our employees on the various causes under the four
focus areas of Outreach for which they can volunteer.
2. Highlight the impact of various volunteering programs undertaken by employees.
3. Spread the message of #VolunteeringForGood across geographies and societies.
4. Encourage more people to contribute their time, passion and skills in making a difference.
5. Encourage Outreach volunteers to use social media to spread positive messages.

Success story

Yammer is our internal social media channel and Be.Cognizant is our corporate intranet. Through these platforms, Outreach draws the attention of our global employees to our various initiatives and recognizes outstanding contribution towards volunteering projects. More than 13,000 employees are a part of the dedicated Outreach group on Yammer, while the website on our intranet gets more than 3,500 unique visitors on a monthly basis.

Outreach has its dedicated Facebook page with more than 37,000 followers and counting. With an organic engagement rate of about 2%, we try to spread the message of doing good and encourage the society at large to use their social media presence to spread goodness.

Innovations in Volunteering Execution

Cognizant Outreach has incorporated volunteer-first and impact-first structures at the execution level of all volunteering opportunities worldwide, to make the volunteering process as seamless as possible.

Centralized Outreach project management team

A dedicated team of more than 50 members, spread across the most active volunteering locations around the world, support and facilitate volunteering in Cognizant. Their responsibilities range from scouting for opportunities for their locations, and providing operational and logistical support, to promoting volunteering through offline event marketing, and internal and external social media promotion. This dedicated team enables end-to-end execution of Outreach initiatives and a seamless experience for all involved.

This team has engaged and brought together 150,000 employees, including the executive leadership across 29 countries, to participate in volunteering initiatives.

• Location strategists drive end-to-end execution of volunteering initiatives, under the four focus areas of Outreach for their specific locations.
• The Outreach program team strategizes plans and execute various volunteering based projects for the four main focus areas of Outreach: education, environment, community welfare and pro bono services.
• The Outreach operations team strategizes and plans for seamless execution of events by procuring and delivering timely resources and materials across locations.
• The communications team strategizes, plans, executes and promotes various Outreach programs through e-mailers, design collaterals, internal and external social media interactions.

Gamifying volunteering

Cognizant Outreach has a monthly volunteering scorecard in place, called the Impact Index. The index score is computed based on the volunteering initiatives and hours clocked by employees across each Outreach location, taking into account:
1. Number of unique volunteers vis-à-vis the base headcount in the location.
2. Number of volunteering hours clocked.
3. Types of activities conducted based on their volunteer-beneficiary impact value.

With this scorecard, we aim to:
1. Boost competitive spirit among locations to increase their volunteering contribution.
2. Appraise the Cognizant workforce on the diverse and large number of volunteering activities taking place in various locations.

**Business Unit-driven volunteering**
Cognizant Outreach taps into Business Units to amplify volunteering initiatives. Business Units generally look for team-activity-based projects and volunteering for Outreach initiatives fulfills this requirement.

Business Unit-driven volunteering efforts
1. Enable volunteering opportunities at a global scale, with a common central leadership driving it from the front.
2. Provide a great team-building opportunity with employees spread across the world interacting for a common cause.
3. Encourage leaders to maximize social empathy among their teams.
4. Lend themselves to volunteering marathons i.e. volunteering efforts spread over entire weeks or weekends involving both in-house and on-field volunteering activities.

Success story
Sathkriya is a Healthcare Digital Operations’ Annual Outreach volunteering marathon initiative. Sathkriya provides employee volunteers a platform to contribute time and effort towards social causes through a wide range of service events. In 2018, the initiative grew from a 24-hour to a week-long Outreach marathon, packed with events across all 14 cities in the U.S., the Philippines and India.

Good to see Coimbatore scores on top.
The power of the thousands of volunteering hours is huge and we need to see them rightly and strategically leveraged.

Service activities organized by the team were based on themes such as Environment, Education, Health and Safety, and Women Empowerment, and included toy and card distribution, potluck for support staff, animal welfare activities, blood donation camps, veteran letter campaigns, etc.

**Impact in Numbers:**
Over six days of volunteering across 14 cities in three countries, 7,584 volunteers from 82 projects under the Healthcare Digital Operations Business Unit clocked 43,747 volunteering hours and hosted 94 events.

**Leveraging technology for seamless volunteering experience**
At Outreach, we have made choosing and registering for volunteering events and activities extremely easy. The app developed in-house:

1. Curates location-wise events.
2. Offers a one-stop platform for volunteers to register for events of their choice, plan logistics, and liaise with the relevant contacts for those events.
3. Maintains a database of volunteers and a calendar of events making it easier to seek out interested
volunteers.
4. Records and provides real-time data on volunteering activities and hours, delivering valuable insights into the execution of various initiatives and ways to improve their effectiveness.

Success Story
Continual enhancements in the app have resulted in its increased usage by volunteers.

**In-house volunteering opportunities**
For employees who cannot make the time to volunteer on the field, Outreach offers in-house volunteering options.
In-house volunteering
- Enables employees to pursue volunteering activities within their office premises, thus balancing volunteering with their official responsibilities.
- Creates a repository of volunteering aids such as learning kits, sapling nurturing, relief-aid kits for communities, relief materials for disaster-struck areas, and relief activities, etc.

**Social fundraising**
Employees who are unable to contribute their time or skill towards Outreach programs, are given an opportunity to support causes such as education and disaster relief through fundraising programs.

Success story
Scholarship Program
This is one of the most impactful programs run by Outreach. As part of this program, Cognizant employees provide monetary support and focussed mentorship to students. In 2012, we conducted a dipstick survey in a few of the Outreach-supported schools to find out how many students go on to pursue higher secondary and college education. The results were alarming. We found that:
- Only 60-70% of the students enrolled in colleges after Grade XII.
- Less than 5% joined professional courses like Engineering. The majority of them joined Arts colleges.
- The biggest dropout rate was among the girls. Only 10-20% of the girl students went on to pursue college education.

The Outreach Scholarship Program was launched to address this situation. Since the program’s launch in 2012, 1,860 meritorious students have been awarded scholarships for graduation with monetary support from 17,196 Cognizant employees. Over 90% of Outreach scholars are first-generation graduates, and 72% of them are girls.

Of the scholars, 543 have completed their graduation, while 236 students have completed their junior college education. In 2019 alone, 66 students have found employment in various MNCs, including Cognizant.

**Client collaboration**
Cognizant Outreach has also become a platform for Cognizant and clients to collaborate on social projects. This has helped strengthen client relationships by adding social purpose to the business vision underpinning those relationships. Under the aegis of Outreach, Cognizant hosts joint volunteering activities with its clients in areas such as STEM learning for school children, community home visits, and environment-friendly practices, to name a few.

**Innovations in Volunteering-Impact Assessment**

**School index for education programs**
For volunteering opportunities under our Education Focus area, to have a uniform coverage, Outreach’s School Index has adopted the IIIEP 4C Framework, devised by the NGO, Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vahini to promote holistic volunteering programs in Outreach-supported schools. IIIEP stands for Insightful, Inspiring, Enjoyable and Participative - These four terms represent important elements in education to be integral, effective and meaningful to a student. 4C stands for Classroom, Campus, Corridor and Community which are the various domains / places that are used to promote and influence the learning process. The combination of IIIEP and 4C gives a 4*4 matrix with 16 quadrants. The IIIEP*4C matrix provides a holistic education by having interventions in a school across the 16 quadrants.

**This school index:**
- Encourages Outreach school volunteers in coming up with new ideas and programs.
- Helps School PoCs in reflecting and planning school programs.
- Encourages volunteers to take Outreach-supported school programs to the next level by contributing to the holistic development of the children.
- Encourage students to be socially responsible and transform the school into a model school.

**Successful Outcomes**
- To begin with, over 100 schools started to report their activities under the School Index format.
- Many new impactful activities have been introduced in the schools.
- Volunteers who used the School Index, found it useful in improving their regular programs and ideating new programs.

**Categorization of activities in an Impact/Scale hierarchy**
The scale and reach of Cognizant Outreach brought with it the need to track, monitor and measure the impact of volunteering. This led to the conceptualization of the in-house Impact Index, a simple, easy-to-use impact-reporting tool.

The Impact Index is a first-of-its-kind tool that helps the Outreach council members to measure and track the volunteering impact every month, through the council’s volunteering hours, type of activities and the number of volunteers.

**Impact of the Impact Index**
The Index has transformed how volunteering works in the organization. During the first year of its inception, Outreach volunteers clocked 100,000 hours, which was a huge leap from the 20,000 hours, the previous year. The trend continues to this day. On an average, more than 300 Outreach activities happen every week, covering a wide gamut of programs such as Be a Teacher, digital literacy, water body conservation, tree plantation, talent hunt for children with special needs, skilling programs for economically deprived communities, among others.

To make the Impact Index more outcome-driven, it has been linked to the results of the baseline, midline and end line assessments for programs across our broad focus areas of education, environment and community welfare. Because of this transition, we are already observing tremendous goal-driven programs.

**Conclusion and Way Forward**
Cognizant Outreach intends to scale new heights and incorporate improvised strategies to deepen the impact of volunteering on its key stakeholders: employees, clients and the community.
The immediate future objectives include:

1. Enabling 100,000 unique employees in to volunteer in any one of the four focus areas, in 2019.
2. Partner with customers to develop strategic CSR plans for joint implementation.
3. Develop more holistic outcome-focused programs that channelize the passion of employees towards key social and national/international causes.

Acknowledgements:

Cognizant Outreach would like to express utmost gratitude to the body of the United Nations Volunteers, India, for giving us the opportunity to present the innovations in volunteering that we undertake. In its 12 years of journey, Outreach has incorporated the culture of purpose through employee volunteering in its 2,85,000 strong workforce.

Our special thanks to:

- Outreach team members for sharing their key inputs in building this research paper.

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- Cognizant Corporate Communications Lead, India – Harsh Kabra, for his invaluable support towards Outreach.

- The Business Unit Leads of Cognizant, for continuously inspiring the team to reach newer heights of impact and engagement.

- Cognizant Outreach Global Lead, Deepak Prabhu Matti on his continuous encouragement to do better and take Outreach to newer heights.

- Executive Director, Cognizant India, Ramkumar Rammoorthy, for his constant guidance and mentorship support in the idea of enabling Cognizant employees for various causes.

- Rikhiya Banerjee and Sejal Poladia, Online Communications, Cognizant Outreach for authoring this whitepaper, by making sense of all the various streams of data, processes and structures and pulling them out to write this piece of detailed literature on Outreach.

Most importantly, the paper is an ode to the multitude of efforts and impact, across many geographies, experience, and focus areas, which the 150,000 strong Outreach volunteering network, spread across 29 countries have displayed year after year. We are proud of our Outreach volunteers, and our sincere gratitude to every one of them, for contributing with their time, skills, passions and hobbies, for the larger cause of community welfare, education, environment and pro bono services. You are the real heroes.
Amplifying development process through the introduction of Youth cafes

Sehaj Sahni

The entire World has its keen eye on India on how we deal with the greatest youth bulge of the century, we proudly host among us. While this largest population of youth in the history of mankind is overflowing with aspirations in the connected world we live in, the virtual connectedness helps little to fuel these aspirations and greatly hinders the translation of impact into a measurable and sizable action. This paper provides an insight into the constructive role young people can play in the development of our vast nation through the introduction of Youth cafes in India. The benefits of adopting a youth cafe model are many- while on the one hand, it serves as a safe space for young people to engage themselves in constructive dialogue and informal quality education through experienced adults in the community, it also acts as a self-sustainable social space driven by the active involvement of adolescents, young adults and experienced adults. However, the benefits also extend to solving the age old crisis of radicalization of youth by enabling non-stigmatising social spaces for youth for civic engagement and be heard; especially in conflict prone areas to engage youth and inculcate an environment of peace and development among the youth.

Our startup, Indian Youth Cafe (Yowan Food and Beverages Private limited) took the plunge to solve the great youth divide cropping among the youth and bridge the pervasive offline disconnect and enable networking space to collide ideas and design India’s first truly youth themed cafe with a triangular revenue model of coworking space, events and hangout space selling affordable food and beverages for urban youth. Through our observations, it has been found that implementation of an omnichannel approach (online and offline integrated) towards solving the youth issues can be introduced to enable informal learning for local youth at physical spaces at crucial centers in India to track and monitor active young citizens and recognize the efforts shared through skills mainly through an online registration portal. Social credits which can be used to avail selective government schemes is perhaps one concrete way to create repositories of young people with specific skills ranging from designing to new age skills such as social media, artificial intelligence. Through our practical approach, it was also found that giving a platform to young people at community positions ensures social support and attachment, alongside generating social capital that can be tracked and tagged to young individuals.

In recent times, through our public surveys, we have concluded that most of the urban youth feels they are more aware than ever but only 20% of the participants feel that they are properly engaged in matters of civic importance (iyc, 2019). Civic engagement if unchecked can lead to a disastrous path for as the demographic dividend grows in the next decade. Enabling a self-sustaining model and instilling creative community at spaces have been at a matter of importance as India takes a center stage in the World. Young people already speak out. We just need to be heard.
Introduction:

I along with my startup, Indian Youth Cafe, which cropped up as a small side hustle project in the year 2014 when I was still working with Cognizant, a multinational company in Chennai. The initiation of the project was basically to understand the mindset of youth and how we can solve the major issues of employment, education, civic engagement and migration smoothly in coming decades to ensure the example of India stands out and we are able to reap the benefits of the greatest demographic dividend we have ever witnessed. However, going private was basically to accept a challenge and enable a physical space which can be self-sustainable and sustained to implement programs to engage and empower youth. Even though the Government has played its part by implementing many programs for youth development under the umbrella scheme of Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram, but the impact can be much broader with the integration of youth cafe model into the existing infrastructure and even enabling new pop up infrastructure to engage and empower youth in rural India, for example.

With more than four years of operation now, we have successfully proved that an autonomous and self-sustained youth development model can very well be implemented in today’s age at any local level with the interplay of media, technology and local experiences. This model can easily be expanded and integrated with physical spaces that exist currently for youth development apart from creating more spaces through an omnichannel approach for informal learning, skills development and linking to employment opportunities. This model with the mission to provide safe spaces to every youth to live, learn, work and amplify development comes with its own benefits. Apart from creating a pool of new-age skilled young people, and linking them to desired opportunities, the potential also extends to enable a system of youth development for youth in conflict and post conflict situations within India. It also has the potential to positively impact the youth with different abilities, marginalized, rural, LGBTQIA+, vulnerable youth apart from enabling a cross-collaborative community at local levels at youth cafe spaces to enable an empathetic and cohesive environment, which is less regulated than other institutes available for youth such as colleges, schools, coaching institutes, or other youth development spaces.

The research paper provides deep insights into the mindset and aspirations of Young India. The paper covers our journey of past 5 years where we have impacted the lives of more than 50000 youth through our surveys, entrepreneurship projects, community projects and social experiments revolving mostly around urban youth. However, the paper also acts a proposal for any agency working in Youth development sector, whether government or private or non-government sector as it provides a self-sustainable youth development model which makes the current model relying solely on continuous donations and public welfare finds obsolete or less in demand.

The ever-widening demographic dividend in India:

We all know that India is the World’s fastest growing economy. But do we know that Youth constitutes a major role in this progress? Youth constitutes a 35% share of the total population. In 2014, youth according to National Youth Policy (2014) between 15-29 years old contributed 34% of the Gross National Income (GNI). The youth of today with the advent of technology also wishes to be an important stakeholder in frameworks and processes that lead to policy decisions, while social spaces that exist for Youth to involve in development dialogue in India are still scarce. Further, it is argued that the experience of youth has been made more challenging by the changing nature of society in recent decades (Cote, 2014). Through our independent research and awareness campaign for Urban Youth, #Youth440, we got to know that 15 – 29-year-old youth (According to
revised National Youth Policy: 15–29 year-olds are chosen as the youth in India) increased from 168 million in 1971 to 422 million in 2011—currently greater than 440 million. To present the facts more clearly, let’s imagine we need more startups in the next five years than the total number of startups present in the entire World. When we studied Youth distribution, we found that one major issue that is also a major factor of growing phenomenon of demographic dividend is “10–24” year-olds 242 million in India in 2011—largest again in the World. The nearest any country could come was China at 182 million. This clearly shows we need more spaces to skill this Youth as they soon are entering the formal economy. The big question is- Are they employable?” The answer is unfortunately no, since many youth as many a times accepted by companies are mandatorily undergone a training to equip them to the skills to perform the daily tasks at the workplace.

Moreover, there also exists a major discrimination in genders as we found that Sex-ratio is consistently decreasing from 1991 onwards. The reduction in sex-ratio of youth is found to be much more than that of the older population. In 2011, there were 939 females for 1000 males and this number is further lowering to 904 by 2021 as per current trends. It raises a serious question. How can we call India a developed nation with no focus on the positive balancing the gender divide. Not only that, in 2011, Female literacy rate(64%) was still much lower than the male literacy rate(81%) which is leading to learning level deficits and accounts majorly to the overall statistics impacting growth and leads to widening the skill gap.

Mobility and Youth:

With the massive urbanization of existing cities, more and more youth are turning to cities in search of jobs, higher study, and other academic/business purposes. However, migration is not always successful for everyone. Migration leads to housing issues and other socio-cultural issues for our young people, which in many cases leads to serious impact on cognitive, social and emotional well-being of a Youth as they transition into adulthood. As we move towards a highly shared economy and a World with fading international boundaries, we have to ensure that migrated youth gets enough opportunity to make a livelihood. There’s also a need to look at the housing issues that our Youth is facing. Our research into co-living has proven that low-cost housing is possible and can be solved to a large extent through Co-living apartment communities. Today’s youth wants to be a part of the growth and knows very well that without our participation, the growth may not be that staggering and inclusive after all. There’s also a major disconnection among the youth with the current social and political context and youth completely lacks a clear narrative. We need youth supporting new art and ideas of change, that establishes a connection with the social, political and historical context. In simpler terms, we wish to bridge the offline disconnect pervasive among the youth and we want to nurture good circles of engagement for leaders of tomorrow.

However, the environment is still not feasible and matured enough for that youngster who may have a heart of an artist or anyone thinking out of the box. There are not enough physical (brick and mortar) platforms where youth can come and portray their talent among a large youth community at a certain place. We are also missing the chance to gather the benefits of the potential connection of like-minded youngsters who can collaborate at some point in future to build something great.

We are also losing millions of energetic youth in the hands of smoking, drinking and doping using hard drugs which is a gift of our yesteryears nehruvian model of education system. Ask youngsters, and you will find that 8.7 out of 10 youngsters carries a view that education system is simply outdated and the hope they have over the education system to provide them a sustainable career of...
their interest and skill is quite slim at present.

**Lack of social spaces for Youth and adolescents:**

We have been vocal about youth rights, enabling physical safe spaces for youth. Quality Spaces which are dedicated to serving the cause of young engagement and empowerment (iyc blog, 2019) Spaces which enable an adolescent in a smooth transition to adulthood while helping in identity formation and proper cognitive growth. There are many institutes for a young person to visit today namely, schools, colleges, skillling institutes, companies, etc. However, all these institutes instill a feeling of competition rather than much-needed collaboration. We all know that India is going to be the youngest nation in the World (with more than 670 million people below the age of 25) for at least the next two decades. According to United Nations World Youth report, as India and many other developing nations move towards industrialization, urbanization, and skill dependent business activities, the fertility and share of the population comprising of children is set to decline. However the investments in human capital and labour market agreement is of utmost importance, not only in terms of finances but also through shared experiences and skills.

The phenomenon of “Youth Bulge” poses great challenges for the socio-economic condition in India, while at the same time also presents vast opportunities for Young India, only if this share of the population is included in the formal decision-making process and young people are involved in local policymaking. The participation of the Youth is a major feature to be looked upon and how we engage our youth in the community and the World at large and provide leadership skills through informal collaborative activities shall primarily drive the socio-economic growth in our country in the future. As per World Economic Forum reports, the number of youth in NEET (Not in Education, Employment and Training) in India is more than 200 million which is a staggering figure considering the future of the world’s largest cohort of people between the ages 10-24, is already at stake. Adding to that, the lack of data on marginalized and vulnerable youth makes addressing the special challenges even more difficult.

**Mental Health of Youth and advent into the new age civilization:**

India is home to an estimated 57 million people (18 percent of the global estimate) who are affected by depression as per World Health Organisation. The proportion of youth who are affected by mental disorder patients is increasing by the day. Studies have shown a steady rise in mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse disorders among the youngsters. The generation post 2000s (Gen Z) is mostly affected as internet started taking more commercial role and routing youth aspirations to content which is less necessary than the ones which are more important for youth to engage with. This is leading to many career doubts, and with less clarity about the future of jobs; it would be unwise to not take any action at this stage with the support of finances and shared skills.

**Core of research: The offline disconnect among the youth**

We have identified one core issue with our youth which is: pervasive offline disconnect and it is the reason behind the rampantly visible divide among the youth. Differently abled, migrant youth, indigenous youth, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, displaced, refugee and ones in conflict-prone, conflict facing or post conflict regions often face challenges mostly due to the diversity and variance on multiple attributes ranging from age, geography, political opinions, ideologies, to simple things like choice of attire and sports team we like. As many young people identify with more than one
group, the challenges they encounter are often multiplied. (World youth report, UN 2019).

While the largest population of youth in the history of mankind in India and many other emerging economies is overflowing with aspirations in the connected world we live in, the virtual connectedness helps little to fuel these aspirations and greatly hinders the translation of impact into measurable and sizable action. The spaces that do exist like schools, colleges, coaching institutes, and corporates instill a feeling of competition rather than much-needed collaboration. With the advent of technology and social media; Youth is quite aware of their issues and many admit that the external pressure that comes in the form of assignments, appraisal cycles, etc is way too much to handle for today’s aspirational youth. Youth suicides rates in India stands at >35% of the total police recorded suicide cases. The lack of social and safe spaces for youth is a major obstruction in the path of development. There is still a huge vacuum that exists at youth development sector due to inability of marginalized/ underprivileged youth to find spaces which can accommodate them to instill informal learning and skills-transfer. It’s high time corporate and government agencies realise the power of youth which can be unlocked by enabling safe spaces with sustainable business model around it that allows every youth to work, live and be a part of development dialogue.

**Introduction to our youth led project: Indian Youth Cafes**

Indian Youth Café is an experiential startup project designed to bridge the pervasive offline disconnect among the youth. We started India’s first youth cafe called Urban Desi House in Chennai that supports the talent of many young artists, changemakers, creative workers and entrepreneurs. We have an omnichannel approach towards youth engagement which works through an interplay of media, technology, and local experiences to impart learning and enable positive community actions though affordable social spaces designed especially for the young people.

**YCAAS: Youth Cafe with triangular revenue model Self-sustaining spaces**

We have been actively testing a youth café as a service (YCAAS) with triangular revenue model: Food and beverages, events and coworking; that offers support to young people in a non-stigmatising way; and has provided a forum for more than 57000 young people to develop their social networks in Chennai, India with a mere 700 square feel physical infrastructure to support the activities. Through our survey with Startups and youth led community projects, we found that many young changemakers especially in urban and tier II cities are in ever-ending search for a place they can tag to work along with associates or alone. A young writer in India cannot afford to sit at a Cafe Coffee Day or Starbucks outlet to write a novel with the little cash they have in their pockets. A Cafe is considered as one of the most creative spaces for creative people but you would hardly find an average youth sitting in a Cafe, working over the next big thing. The reason is the Cafe culture in India has been hijacked by the middle class and mostly middle aged people and youth from good income background.

We started India’s first truly youth cafe, Urban Desi House with a triangular revenue model of coworking, events and hangout space selling affordable food and beverages for urban youth. We found that an omnichannel approach with interplay of media, technology and localized experiences towards youth engagement can be introduced to enable informal learning and foster collaboration for youth at physical spaces at several centers in any nation to track and monitor young citizens and recognize the efforts shared through skills mainly through a single ticket system. Social credits which can be used to avail selective government schemes is perhaps one concrete way to create repositories of young people with new age skills to harness the youth power. Also, community
positions for youth ensures social support and attachment, alongside generating social capital that can be tracked and tagged to young individuals.

Youth Cafe, a model hugely successful in Ireland, where more than 160 youth cafes work involving various social development organisations, government, youth and adults have created impact at grassroots and have enabled many young people and adolescents to identify their talents early when they attain puberty. Youth Cafes have also enabled spaces where youth have openly talked about the matters of civic importance on one hand and acted on them, while involved themselves in recreational and collaborative activities on the other. The spaces have played an important role in providing the youth an opportunity to attain much-needed leadership skills as they grow to become a responsible adult. Similarly, We also wish this kind of solutions to engage and empower youth can lead to positive changes around the community and in India at large.

The benefits of our innovated youth cafe model are many- while on the one hand, it serves as a safe space for young people to engage themselves in constructive dialogue and informal quality education though experienced adults in the community, it also acts as a self-sustainable social space driven by the active involvement of adolescents, young adults and experienced adults. However, the benefits also extend to solving the age old crisis of radicalization of youth by enabling non-stigmatising social spaces for youth; especially in conflict prone areas to inculcate an environment of peace and development. With the motto #ThinkGlobalActivateLocal , we localize the efforts of youth community in a specific region towards achieving sustainable development goals through omni-channel mobilisation. We also advocate for significant investment not only through capital resources but also through time and shared experience not only by government entities but also by reaching out to the private sector.

**Introducing India to Youth Cafes!**

We have been working on theoretical and conceptual base for the youth café model in India for over 5 years now. We define youth café as a service that could offer support for young people in a non-stigmatising way; be based on well-established youth work principles; provide a forum for young people to develop their social networks; play an important role in offering a secure base for young people; and enable them to bolster their resilience and connect them to their communities. A relaxed atmosphere in youth spaces is important as already researched in Ireland where Nolas, one author points out that youth policy in previous decades have tended to favour ‘structured’ programmes over the ‘riskier and unstructured sounding language of relationships, identity and belonging’ associated with more informal youth work approaches.

Through our project Indian Youth Cafe, we found that many aging countries( with an average age above 35) around the World like Ireland and other European nations are involved in helping design and build community spaces for Youth which are run in collaboration with the local government, adults and other non-governmental agencies there.

**What is exactly Youth Cafe?**

A youth café is a safe, dedicated, quality meeting space for young people ranging in age from 15 to 29 years though anyone can access and avail the services and collaborative activities of the same. It is determined by young people for young people, in partnership with adults in the locality.

In more general terms, a youth café offers the following to young people:
• A relaxed meeting space, which is safe, friendly, inclusive and tolerant;
• A place for all genders and for young people from all social and cultural backgrounds to engage in social interaction with their peers in a safe and supportive drug- and alcohol-free environment;
• A location for relaxation, recreation and entertainment, and, where appropriate, as a site for information, advice or even direct care/service provision;
• A place where young people can develop good quality relationships with their peers and with adults.

We wished Youth Cafe can be an empathetic space designed for the youth which would not only sell affordable food/beverages but also host a plethora of activities like workshops/youth meetups, etc. to engage the youth in meaningful connections and conversations. We at Indian Youth Cafe strived to instill a feeling of Collaboration among the young people which could lead to a domino effect in the sustainable urbanization of the New India.

YOUth- An emotion. YOUth Café- A Bridge.

Third institution for the youth- Equality for all- time to think above schools, colleges and other coaching institutes.
A omnichannel platform to initiate and empower youth projects: Mixed use of technology, media, and locally catered experiences.
Attract funds for youth projects through events- Empower potentially strong start-ups.
Mentor – Mentee model to create a knowledge repository at low cost- exchange of thoughts.
Direct employment for thousands of youth- Youth workers, graduates (Stipend based model).
Indirect employment for skill tagged youth.
Free networking for the youth. Connecting like minded change-makers on a regular basis. Not just once.
Career guidance workshops/ Notifications of job postings for local youth.
Most affordable co-working spaces for young people on registration basis.
Eco-friendly – Made by creative up-cycling techniques- using Up-cycled Shipping Containers, scrap wood pallets, tetra-packs, etc.
Learning based workshops/events.
Engaging youth in community awareness programs.
Apprenticeship, residency programs, internships – India and the World.
Stage: A platform for new-age artists, musicians, entrepreneurs, coders to showcase their art and skills- Unending learning from thousands of youth- for thousands of youth.
In line with United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda- #Youth2030

Six core theories that could be conceptualised as underpinning the youth cafe model are mentioned below. These theories have been adapted from Ireland model of youth cafes ( . However, since India is a different nation in terms of youth mindset, many theories have been localized according the local youth preference. In some conflict prone areas, social support, resilience and civic engagement theories play a more critical role in shaping the youth. Let’s have a look at the theories:-

Social Support:

Social support is defined as ‘a range of interpersonal exchanges that include not only the provision of physical assistance, emotional caring, and information, but also the subjective consequence of making individuals feel that they are the object of enduring concerns by others’. Research on social support shows that recipients have better mental health, fewer physical health problems and lower
rates of mortality, while increased social support positively affects people’s ability to cope with stressful events that happen in life, both directly and indirectly.

**Attachment Theory:**

An attachment can be conceptualised as a type of social bond or affective tie that develops between an individual and another person during the life course. Since the 1980s, researchers have placed greater emphasis on the significance of maintaining stable social attachments during adolescence. And how relationships with stable adults can positively impact on youth development. It can be argued that youth cafés have the potential to play an important role in offering a secure base from which young people can grow and develop through the development of secure Attachments with their peers and adults alike.

**Civic Engagement and Participation Theory:**

The civic engagement and participation of young people has been a focus of policy and academic attention over recent decades. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasises the Participation rights of children and subsequent policy and legislation especially in ageing countries.

The youth café model is based on the principle of youth participation and ownership, emphasising the importance of young people playing an active role in the management and operations of the café. Thus, the youth café model has the potential to contribute to the democratic inclusion of young people, facilitate personal and skills development, and enable young people to contribute to and shape the lives of their communities.

**Resilience Theory:**

Resilience is defined as ‘good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development’. It could be argued that youth cafés have the potential to act as a ‘protective factor’ for young people exposed to adversity – for example, by providing a safe and relaxing environment that allows them to get relief from or avoid risky or stressful situations in their home or community environments.

**Social Capital Theory:**

Social capital has been defined as the ability of people ‘to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures’. Having a sense of belonging to a place such as a community has been shown to help children form their identity. Furthermore, when young people feel this sense of attachment and feeling of belonging, they are more likely to make friends and interact with peers, and vice versa. It can be argued that youth cafés have the potential to help young people to feel a sense of place and to develop trusting relationships with others in their communities – all of which helps to enhance their social capital.

**Positive Youth Development Theory:**

PYD theories can be characterised as strengths based approaches to youth development since they advocate that young people have the power to change the world around them. According to Lerner et al (2009), the approach consists of the five Cs – Confidence, Character, Connection, Competence, Caring – defined as follows: • Confidence has been defined as self-efficacy or self-worth and positive feelings about oneself and one’s ability to succeed. • Character denotes a sense of individuality and
commitment to one’s values. • Connection is a sense of safety, feelings of belonging and community. • Competence is the ability to act effectively in schools and at home. • Caring refers to feelings of empathy or sympathy for the plight of others.

It can be argued that youth cafés – by offering formal and informal activities through which young people can connect with others, develop skills, further their personal development and confidence, and take on leadership roles – have the potential to foster the six Cs in the lives of the young people with whom they work. In lieu of evolving youth development model, we have further added one more theory to the existing set, which is to use the technology, media, and local physical infrastructure to

Skills Input and Opportunity Theory:

Through our research projects and surveys, we have enabled a repository of young skilled people within our community and the same can be done through an omni channel approach by enabling spaces and inviting young people to use the physical space to co-live, co-work and amplify the development agenda. Right from ancient ages, centers of education such as Gurukuls used to provide spaces for young people to learn, live and be an active citizen to contribute to the society. Similarly, through an integration of media, technology and local experiences to engage and empower youth in a safe and non-judgemental environment is needed to bring the positive changes at local and rural contexts in today’s date. Youth Cafe model has the potential to contribute to the democratic inclusion of young people and facilitate personal and skills development. Through our activities, we have found that experienced adults such as lawyers and other creative professionals feel honored on being called for a talk. These talks and workshops which can work on zero investment can lead to a multiplied effect in creating informal repositories of skills, which can empower youth to find more opportunities to learn and work.

Youth themed cafes- a study (Low-cost/ Ultra low-cost pop-up cafes)

Youth cafés are all about meeting the needs and giving much-needed attention to the change makers of tomorrow. A well-run café can be a source of support for young people and can offer them a secure base during times of immense change in their lives. It can also act as a protective space in young people’s lives, helping them to face any issues or difficulties that arise and be more resilient as a result. We verified and checked the sustainability of a youth café by creating one. We designed and built a café named Urban Desi House in the year 2015. It is a self-sustainable youth-themed café where have been engaging Urban Youth from Chennai and bio-region in various projects and collaborative activities. Right from the first day, we knew that external support was tough to find in contemporary India especially for the Urban Youth as it is considered to be a population better equipped than rural youth. However, we were in touch with various other youth initiatives and expanded our network gradually. Moreover, we have been striving to give a platform to young people who wanted to showcase their skills/art. As of now, we receive cash/online/card payments to sustain the operation of the café. Thankfully, we broke even in just about 1 year and since then, saw tremendous support and enthusiasm among the Urban Youth to see a creative social space made just for them. Till date, we have clocked more than 70 lakhs revenue through the space with our YCAAS model with <10 lakhs investment, and has given opportunity to more than 57000 youth to connect offline till date. We are also a DIPP recognized and one of the top 3000 startups in the country, awarded by IIM Kolkata and Department of Science and Technology, Government of India. We have also worked with many big startups and NGOs, such as Vidyasagar, Bhum, Cowrks, RMZ in the past to streamline their community engagement practices.
There has to be a serious revaluation of our work and education spaces in the 21st century. A normal coworking space in India charges anywhere between 5000 to 30000 according to coworking industry estimates. However, our youth coworking model supports the initial space requirements of the young person and through our startup, we have been renting out seats to young people at just around 1000 rupees, which makes our coworking space in chennai as the cheapest coworking space in India currently. Further, it’s also high time we realise that the skills needed for the 21st century have changed or continuously changing. While old skills are becoming obsolete, there is a new race to bring in new skills and platforms for making systems more efficient. According to the World Economic Forum, these skills have been classified into three categories namely, 1. Foundational literacies, 2. Competencies and 3. Character qualities. We’ve come far from simple textbook knowledge, but we still have a long way to go! It’s time to reimagine education through informal spaces of learning, as it has been proved many a time, that formal education system is already overburdened.

Potential to Solve Age old crisis of Youth Radicalization:

Radicalization of youth: Conflict prone regions such as Kashmir can unlock a huge potential of Youth through initiation of Youth Cafes. The destruction of formal schooling is often seen as a major roadblock for many Kashmiri Youth, often stigmatised for offensive activities led by some groups. Youth cafes can be the solution to many issues faced by the young people and enable a positive environment of peace, positivity and growth. If human capital investment falls short or if the labour market is unable to absorb new workers, the opportunity deriving from this demographic dividend may be squandered (Williamson, 2013. A study conducted by Population Action International (PAI), a Washington-based private advocacy group, suggests a strong correlation between countries prone to civil conflicts and those with burgeoning youth populations.

In fact our project has contributed to many goals as given below in a 700 square feet real estate. Let’s imagine what can happen if the localization and depth of youth cafes is achieved successfully.

**BASED ON SDG INDICATORS DATABASE.**

Through our omni-channel mobilisation, we have directly or indirectly contributed to many SDGs starting from 1.1 - by enabling employment opportunities to poor urban youth. 1000+ young people have benefited through our employment or community programs. Our project has enabled informal learning space for 3000+ young people with the help of experienced adults, indirectly contributing to 4.3. Through our campaigns, we have created awareness about contraception usage leading to overall engagement with 20000+ people, directly contributing to 5.1. We have contributed to 8.4, 8.5, 8.6 by providing employment to many unemployed/ migrated youth and also provided safe spaces to connect Youth in NEET with learning/ employment opportunities. 57000+ youth have benefited from free internet through our facility directly contributing to 9.1. With more support, our project can enable safe spaces for youth in conflicted regions, thereby contributing to 16.1

**How can a Positive Revolution happen if Youth collaborates for a better future: Physical spaces that empowers today’s youth to not only learn informally, but also find opportunities through youth-led projects supported at local levels.**

For long, the task of accurately structuring our society to fulfill its necessities had been the responsibility of the adults in the community. They had been considered the better preceptor and
solvers of the problems that occur in the social order and hence don’t demand the intervention of
the youth. But as the civilization advances; the conditions change, and the youth of the country are
needed to come strong and take the baton of development. The young and the fresh have more
to offer to the society than they thought earlier; in young countries like India where >65% of the
population are teenagers. Moreover, the youth of today are more active, understanding, responsible
and well informed about their social order, more than the adults. They have a better understanding
of modern technology and are self-motivated to bring change. One such technology that has helped
them to analyze the societal and communal situation is the internet and the use of Social Media. The
young generation has done a splendidous job by speaking up and intervene in matters of civil and
national interest. We have established NGOs to carter to poverty and sanitation, we have come into
the political sphere to create better structures of administration, we have excelled in creating new
and decade advanced technologies and products, we have positively affected the economic sphere
of the county and have eradicated many social evils and misconceptions. The young minds of today
are developing and have become the people that we need to sustain the future we dream of. Truly
enough to say that, when we join hands miracles happen! Lastly, this paper acts as a solid proof of
concept and should be considered seriously by the stakeholders of youth development in India and
other economies, especially dealing with Youth bulge.

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Expanding Volunteer Base and Enhancing Quality of Volunteer Work

We are living at a crucial point in history. The world is faced with a series of challenges that threaten the very existence of mankind and India is at the heart of this. Home to the seventh largest population in the world, it is a hub of development challenges. The country manages to be placed only at the 130th position in a list of 189 countries in the Human Development Index rankings. The huge population and the plethora of development issues means that there is an immense need for civic participation to implement effective solutions.

The rising challenges around us has also meant a growth in the number of NGOs working towards the betterment of the society to around 3.2 million, nearly one NGO for every 400 people in the country. These organizations working on a wide variety of social issues are faced with challenges of their own – with limited funding, resources and manpower to work with. Majority of the workforce of these organizations are the volunteers who are willing to put in their time and efforts without looking at financial incentives as their primary motive. Even beyond NGOs, Governments and corporate organizations have been increasingly encouraging volunteer action to make a positive impact on the communities around them.

In the light of this increased focus on the need for volunteerism, this paper hopes to understand volunteerism better and explore ways of expanding the available volunteer base. The aim is to not only ensure an increase in the number of volunteers available to take up social action but also to improve the quality of the available human resource. The success that volunteerism is able to bring about in creating social impact on a large scale makes it a relevant social apparatus that needs to be studied and improved upon.

India has more than 5.5 million volunteers engaged in various activities, regularly contributing their efforts to the community. With a population of over 1.32 billion, this means that merely a little more than 0.4 per cent of the country’s population engages in volunteerism. It is then essential that we look at the different sections of our society and explore how to effectively engage them in impactful volunteer work.

With 65 per cent of India’s population aged under 35, and 41 per cent aged under 20, a larger focus falls on the youth of the country. The country is at a juncture where the youth population has the potential to become its biggest asset as it is set to become the youngest nation in the world by 2020. Efficient channelization of this demographic dividend can ensure a major boost to volunteer activities across the country. This in turn will ensure progress in several fields under-served due to the lack of personnel.

According to the report on ‘State of Youth Volunteering in India- 2017,’ a majority of youth took up volunteering activities through programmes in their schools or colleges and the opportunity to
improve their educational or employment prospects/ enhance their CV proved to be motivation for 25 per cent of them. Other factors influencing volunteerism among the youth have been related with perceptions towards volunteerism as a ‘waste of time’ by the older generation and also information regarding volunteering opportunities and how to access them.

Considering these factors, the first step to take up would be to make volunteerism easily accessible to the youth in schools and colleges. These educational institutions should be encouraged to partner with multiple Civil Society Organizations while also promoting activities of the NSS to ensure maximum participation of youth in voluntary work. Including volunteer work as part of the curriculum would help to further active participation of the youth. Dedicating a fixed number of hours weekly to social action efforts and introducing easy-to-adopt programmes for the students can help build values of compassion and empathy. Active participation in voluntary work during adolescence also increases chances of an individual engaging in these activities later on in life. As these individuals participate in voluntary work, they are also provided a platform to build strong relationships with each other, develop their skills in leadership, communication and team work. Through engaging students in such initiatives, institutions will not only be able to ensure students instilled with moral and social values but produce well-rounded students who will be confident and responsible global citizens.

Another approach CSOs and the Government could adopt is to connect students enrolled in professional courses to volunteering opportunities related to their field of study. The work that is expected out of volunteers in most cases is designed with the focus only on the requirements of the organization and sometimes it is ‘general help’ tasks that are assigned to the volunteers. Instead it would be more beneficial for both the organization and the volunteers if the responsibilities of the volunteer was aligned with the expertise and skills they have to offer.

For example, offering computer science students with an opportunity to work on providing technical support for the organization or engaging students of engineering in developing technology to solve challenges faced by various communities can create a larger impact. While these opportunities do exist, they are limited in number. This approach would help students develop their CV and improve their employability. This would also help CSOs tap into a skilled workforce, thus reducing the time required to be committed to training the volunteers and also improving the quality of the results generated.

The employability aspect of students participating in volunteer work related to their chosen career path could be furthered with the active involvement on the part of potential employers. Students with a background in such extra-curricular work are proven to be more employable due to their on-field work experience and enhanced leadership and interpersonal skills. However, if private companies set such voluntary field work related to their profession as a criteria for the selection of students into their organization, the number of youth indulging in community development activities across the country would increase rapidly.

Another huge section of youth that form an untapped potential volunteer base are those in pursuit of government jobs including the civil services. These are largely young graduates who are enrolled in coaching institutes or engaged in preparations through self-study. The 2019 civil services examinations alone saw nearly 800,000 candidates appearing for the exam. Introducing experience in voluntary work as a parameter for the selection to job opportunities with the government/PSUs/ banks would incentivize voluntary work to a large number of youth. This would also help them get a better understanding of work at the grassroot level, and have a first-hand knowledge of the development issues the society is faced with. In addition to increasing the volunteer base, this would
also ensure a more socially aware, compassionate and responsible work force.

While youth does form a wider section of the present population, it is only natural that most study and effort is directed towards increasing the youth engagement in social action and community service. It would however be beneficial to also look into other sections of the community who can effectively contribute to voluntary work, if provided with the right opportunities.

The women of our country are a section often found ‘missing’ from our workforce. The female labour force participation fell from 36.7 per cent in 2005 to 26 per cent in 2018 in India. A decline in the participation in the labour force means that India has a larger number of well-educated young women who are home-makers. It has been observed that these women are largely pressed for time between child care and other household responsibilities, and very few find time to take on any additional work. However, once the children grow up and are on their own, majority of these women find themselves questioning their self-worth and lacking the confidence to take on new initiatives.

At this point, if opportunities are designed to understand and suit their requirements, these highly educated women, equipped with experience and knowledge can contribute qualitatively to various fields. Their contributions could especially be valuable in reaching out to young mothers from less privileged background, contributing to providing healthcare and education or any field related to their knowledge expertise. Such an intervention will be highly beneficial to the community. At the same time these engagements will also help these women grow more confident and see themselves as positive contributors in the community, increasing their self-worth.

Nearly 104 million of India’s population form another large network that is rarely considered as a potential pool of contributors to social development- the elderly. They are always considered as a section of the society to be provided with services and that needs to be cared for. India’s workforce prescribes retirement by the age of 60 years, which means that several of these persons are not in need of care. This is a time when most persons are still active and able to contribute productively to the society. Limiting them to a ‘retired life’ is underutilizing experienced hands who can add value to volunteer work.

An ideal example of what the elderly can offer can be understood by exploring the story of Senior Citizens Bangalore. It started with a group of four retired men who saw school children walking barefoot past them. Not only did they donate shoes to them but decided to commit themselves to help underprivileged children further. Founded in 2001, Senior Citizens Bangalore has grown to a network of almost 70 members. They provide education and food to underprivileged children and empower them to be employable. Working closely with schools, these elders have helped organize skill development workshops, setup smart classes and provided scholarships to the students. They have served over 3000 children and continue to contribute to their development.

In order to efficiently engage such retired professionals, it is imperative that we start seeing them as a resource that can actively contribute to the development of the society. Connecting these persons to engaging opportunities that can capitalize their skills, knowledge and experience will help CSOs and other voluntary initiatives to gain a large resource pool that can enhance their contributions to the society. As in the case of home-makers, engagement in such activities will also provide these persons an opportunity to stay active and feel productive, while also keeping at bay feelings of loneliness and reduced self-worth.

While these ideas have been explored by a few organizations, if scaled up and promoted across CSOS, government agencies and private companies, can have a lasting impact on our societies. It
can help cater to the deficiency of volunteers that most organizations experience. Ensuring active engagement of a larger number of youth can help develop them into better communicators and compassionate individuals – reducing their involvement in substance abuse and violent crimes. Their volunteer experiences will also ensure we have more employable youth entering our workforce. Engaging home-makers and retired professionals in actively contributing to the development of the society will contribute to improved physical and mental health of these sections of the population. Thus these innovations not only target expanding the volunteer base but also in contributing to a healthier society.

Channelizing the existing knowledge and experience of homemakers and retired professionals through customized opportunities will reduce the efforts and resources required to equip the volunteers with the necessary skills. Capitalizing on the professional training gained by the youth during their formal education will also help CSOs to create impactful solutions to the challenges they are working to overcome.

These innovations need to considered and designed according to the requirements of all the involved stakeholders concerned. Jointly working towards the implementation of these ideas can help expand the volunteer base available while ensuring quality of the work contributed by the volunteers.
Leveraging Dochakuka Approach To Innovate Youth Based Volunteering For Education In India

Rikhiya Banerjee

Abstract

DOCHAKUKA is a Japanese word which translates to “GLOCAL” in English. Originally referred to adapting farming techniques to local conditions, DOCHAKUKA, has now evolved as a transformative strategy which allows the assimilation of global best practices in local conventional exercises. Based on the view “think globally, act locally” paves the way for adaptation, rejuvenation, and innovation of age-old practices making them relevant in a dynamic world.

In context of India, DOCHAKUKA provides a novel and promising approach to innovate youth-based volunteering for education which plaintively has become a peripheral social activity. The DOCHAKUKA approach calls for-

• Identifying existent deficiencies and gaps in the Indian volunteering practices specific to education and skill empowerment.
• Recognizing the best global practices.
• Devising routes to fuse the best of both local and global practices, with any modification needed, to address the flaws.

The paper attempts to exemplify the approach by means of three case studies of:

AIWC - ALL INDIA WOMEN’S CONFERENCE (SAHARANPUR), INDIA
ACTIVEH - ACTION TOWARD INITIATIVES AND VOLUNTEERING FOR EDUCATION IN HAITI
RCF - RISING CHILD FOUNDATION, NIGERIA

At the end the paper shows how this approach holds potential to optimize volunteerism in India to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 4- QUALITY EDUCATION, at the microcosmic level of society which when upscaled will be reflected at the macrocosmic level of nation.

Keywords: Dochakuka, volunteering, innovation, global, local

Introduction

The UN General Assembly (UNGA), without restricting the boundaries, defined volunteering as an umbrella term for “a wide range of activities, including traditional forms of mutual aid and self-help, formal service delivery and other forms of civic participation, undertaken of free will, for the general public good and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor.”

In India, volunteerism has been a part of India's rich tradition where it's roots can be traced back to ancient texts, rituals and traditional practices. In Upanishads, “Daanam” – an act of voluntary giving
is explained in detail along with a set of rules to be followed and is graded into Shramdaan, AnnaDaan, Vastra-Daan and Gyan-Daan of which “Gyan-Daan”- voluntary sharing of knowledge- has been accorded the highest status among all. Post-Independence, volunteerism formed the foundation of the literacy movement where many educational initiatives were initiated by volunteer groups, the recent one being against increasing commercialization and corporatization of education.

In spite of volunteering being embedded in the country’s cultural ethos since time immemorial and global recognition of its valuable contribution in the recent times, it is not yet prioritized in design and implementation of policies to develop it as an attractive and productive option for youth to invest time and energy. Acknowledging the need to support volunteering, resolution was adopted by UNGA in 2002 which highlighted the need for sharing of experiences and good practices adopted worldwide to enhance and expand the current practices of extending special recognition to volunteers and volunteer involving organizations.

In this context, DOCHAKUKA provides a novel and promising approach to innovate youth-based volunteering for education-Gyandaan- which plaintively has become a peripheral social activity.

**Dochakuka Approach**

Dochakuka is a Japanese word which originally referred to a way of adapting farming techniques to local conditions. Dochakuka evolved into a marketing strategy when Japanese businessmen adopted it in the 1980s. This concept expresses the idea of the old saw: think globally, act locally. Japan’s advertising industry started employing foreign actors and picturized them in Japanese contexts transforming the old saying into the more actionable dictum, “Meld global inside local.”

Glocalization, then became an accepted formula for businesses which proved to work best for companies having decentralized authority as it allowed the company to standardize products according to different needs and wants of different cultures. An example of a company succeeding in creating new “glocal” products for their emerging markets is McDonald’s new rice meals in India and China.

Similarly, functional community organizations can leverage the approach to address glocal issues by adopting glocal approaches. Almost all of the major ubiquitous socio-economic problems like education, pollution, marginalization of women, etc. are glocal in nature because they are interdependent and interconnected at global level but unique at micro-level as their manifestations vary locally. Dochakuka approach emphasizes on adoption of different methods which are novel like “play, creativity, joy, peer-based popular education, cultural activism, and a healthy dose of experimentation” and melding them with conventional local approach.

The paper attempts to exemplify the approach by means of three case studies of functional community organizations which are volunteer based and are working to organize communities around a specific function i.e., a need, interest, or common problem that glocally affects people. Here, the function we have taken into consideration is Education and intellectual empowerment of youth belonging to under-represented and marginalized communities. These three organizations namely,

AIWC - ALL INDIA WOMEN’S CONFERENCE (SAHARANPUR), INDIA
ACTIVEH - ACTION TOWARD INITIATIVES AND VOLUNTEERING FOR EDUCATION IN HAITI
RCF - RISING CHILD FOUNDATION, NIGERIA
are selected to represent developing east, west, and center of the global map.

**Methodology**

In the paper, DOCHAKUKA approach is applied in three steps-

Identifying existent deficiencies and gaps in the Indian volunteering practices specific to education and skill empowerment through case study of AIWC (SAHARANPUR), INDIA

Recognizing the best global practices through case studies of ACTIVEH, HAITI & RCF, NIGERIA.

Devising routes to fuse the best of both local and global practices, with any modification needed, to address the flaws and to reinforce and strengthen the fifth pillar of democracy-volunteerism and voluntary action.

The biggest advantage of applying this approach to innovate volunteering is that it allows fusion of the best global practices with ongoing practices quite flexibly as per the specific needs and demands of given functional organization. These three steps help to assess, learn, innovate and improve current volunteering practices, not just from the perspective of volunteers but also beneficiaries.

It allows functional community organization to organize all stakeholders- volunteers & beneficiaries-and limited resources to meet immediate community needs while addressing glocalized problems so that these can meaningfully contribute as vehicles for community empowerment, and alternatives to institutionalized social welfare systems.

**Identifying Existent Deficiencies And Gaps In The Indian Volunteering Practices**

**Case study of All India Women's Conference (AIWC)**

AIWC is the oldest national women's organization in India which was born in January, 1927 in Poona. AIWC runs an extensive network of Short Stay Homes for women in distress, hostels for single working women, day care centres, etc. which is spread throughout the country and provides Welfare Institutional Services with the vision of Emancipation, Education and Empowerment of Women.

Working at AIWC (Saharanpur branch), for the last one year as the youngest volunteer and lifetime member, has given me enough insight to the organization’s day-to-day working. Based on my observations and knowledge gathered after talking to the Patron, President, General Secretary, and the treasurer, I have identified deficiencies and gaps in the volunteering practices specific to education and skill empowerment of the organization which are discussed below.

AIWC branch in Saharanpur is primarily a Short Stay Home for women in distress but also a smaller part of it converted into a hostel for single working women. All the work accomplished here is a result of voluntary effort of local people who co-operates with the organization whose mission is to:

- Work actively for the progress and welfare of women and children.
- Help women to utilize their Fundamental Rights conferred on them by the Constitution of India to the fullest.
• Work for a society where women are free from all types of violence, especially domestic violence and sexual harassment.

• Empower women and prepare them for taking up leadership roles.

AIWC Saharanpur is thriving on donations and voluntary contributions in different forms as the organization has not received financial aid-in-grant for last 3 years under the revamped Swadhar Greh scheme of Ministry of Women and child development. Though one can’t deny that the organization is able to survive because of volunteering and philanthropic donations, but also one can’t deny that the volunteer participation is episodic, non-committal, not-all-inclusive, ad-hoc, and fragmented. It needs to be highlighted that, “Ninety nine percent of successful NGO Programmes are due to the volunteers, it has been proven that NGO projects become successful not due to the benevolence of its donors but because of the dedication and sincerity of its volunteer cadres.”

Volunteers, all of which are middle-aged women except me (26), turn up occasionally to selective events that are organized. One can find almost everyone on events like marriage ceremony but only few mark their presence when preparations are being done for the same. Monthly meetings held under “Sanskritik Chetna” witness higher attendees but one-tenth of volunteering members reach there when some session is organized to counsel girls and women living there. Recently, a session on “Girl safety” was organized as per the government guidelines. Not more than 20 volunteers out of 146 volunteering members were present.

Students of various disciplines like gender studies, sociology, social work, home science. also come to volunteer but ironically they can’t be termed as “volunteers” as they come occasionally just to complete the formalities to get the required certificate. This happens because of two reasons-lack of both learning and participating opportunities within the organization and unwillingness of “volunteer” to start anything new of their own and get into any complicated process. As I go out urging other youths to join the organization on various platforms, I have observed that the younger generation is energetic and enthusiastic to enter into the discourse on development but not in the form of volunteerism that doesn’t provide it an opportunity to learn, experiment, and create. Lack or absence of such opportunities at AIWC is one of the major causes why there are no youth volunteers and members in the organization.

Other observation we made recently (02-July-2019) was when I gave a talk on water, sanitation, and hygiene to the girls and women by engaging them in a two-way interaction. We observed that girls who were not open to other speakers due to the generation gap were quite comfortable to speak and share their thoughts with me regarding menstrual hygiene, personal hygiene of private parts, etc. Most of the volunteering members at the organization are above 40 women, some are above 60, the eldest being our patron Smt. Kunti Paul who is 93 (but 39 is what she tells!). This leads to an incomplete or less engaging dialogue of volunteers with beneficiaries. This provides an example of how skewed volunteer representation, here absence of youth, also impact welfare service delivery to the beneficiaries.

Absence of sincere and especially youth volunteers in the organization is highly felt on the other fronts also like social media advocacy and promotion to attract more coverage and outreach, open interactive talks on issues of importance that are not talked about like sexual health, contraceptives, etc., active mobilization of other youths in the city, compilation of success stories, infusion of new ideas to make the working of organization more systemized among many others.

These deficiencies and gaps highlighted above forms the major pitfalls in the contemporary
volunteerism scenario in India. Volunteering which earlier used to be practiced largely as a way of life has now become skewed where it is interpreted as a one-time gesture or part-time engagement, sometimes only carried out to get a “certificate” or “photo in the newspaper “and is not internally driven.

This calls the most youthful country on the planet to learn from successful examples how they attract youth and sustain their interest in volunteering, making it a result-oriented learning process, to get tangible results both for an organization and volunteers.

Recognizing The Best Global Practices

Volunteering in different countries around the world, like in India, is deep-rooted in local cultural and traditional contexts. Therefore, there is not one universal model of best volunteering practice. Organizations, therefore, should refrain themselves from thoughtless imitation of successful practices but should try to extract the relevant and context-specific from best practices which can prove helpful to yield positive results in the long run. This also forms the basis of Dochakuka approach. The two case studies below provide solutions to bridge the gaps identified in Indian volunteering scenario in general and in AIWC in specific.

Case Study Of Action Toward Initiatives And Volunteering For Education In Haiti (Activeh)

ACTIVEH is a non-governmental organization in Haiti which is working with a mission to harness the passion and potential of students as a force of change for Haiti and to develop professional internships and good-will volunteer opportunities for community-development programs in Haiti. ACTIVEH creates an environment where students can:

• Channel their energy and passion towards voluntary and community activities
• Put their knowledge at the service of development programs
• Get practical experiences to better integrate the labor market
• Develop their skills to reach their full potential

This approach allows the Haitian youth to acquire problem solving skills by actively engaging them to solve real time problems. This equip both students and professionals, which are inducted annually, with the necessary tools they require at their disposal to reach their full potential in order to contribute to the development of the country.

ACTIVEH inducts youth in three major programs, each of which recognize that:

• Every young person should have the chance and tools to reach their potential
• Effective and community leadership trigger development
• Youth passion and energy are catalysts for social transformation

These three programs are designed in a way that allows holistic development of youth at different levels. These three programs are:

Volunteering and Community Service Program which recruits students from licensed Haitian universities, on a membership basis, and offers members the opportunity to engage in a range of leadership, personal and professional development activities.
An Internship Program to identify internship opportunities that can allow Haitian college students to gain practical experience to complement their studies.

A Leadership and Professional Development Program which complements students’ university curriculum by providing additional training.

Effectiveness of these three programs can be gauged from the fact that 96.2% of ACTIVEH volunteers who collectively provided more than 10,000 volunteer hours declared that they have gained new skills by engaging in volunteering activities. In a short span of ACTIVEH has established partnerships with more than 60 host institutions.

Case Study Of Rising Child Foundation (RCF)

RCF, a not for profit in Nigeria, is working towards ensuring sustainable education for all children, irrespective of gender so that they can realize their full potential and contribute to the development of the nation.

Taibat Hussain, Founder & Executive Director of RCF, in a conversation said, “After working with over 2000 children in different communities in Nigeria, RCF found out that girls are more willing to learn and excel more when they are given all the resources required. For instance, RCF have been organizing an innovative Spelling Bee competition for last two consecutive years, and a female always emerged the winner. This shows what girls can do when they are supported and given backup.”

Through mentorships and soft skills acquisitions program, RCF is training children and young adults, especially girls to take advantage of leadership opportunities around them, to speak up, to be more aware of their political environment and be confident in pursuit of their goals. Volunteers, who are mostly professionals or are pursuing higher degrees in different fields, groom new breed of leaders who can lead change and mount high positions to solve Nigeria complex problem.

Devising routes to fuse the best of both local and global volunteering practices

Key learning from ACTIVEH’s internship and volunteering program which can be adopted by AIWC (SAHARANPUR) is to initiate properly structured internship and volunteering program in AIWC, especially for students of Humanities who are studying subjects like sociology, social work, gender studies, etc. This will allow to:

- Provide students with important workforce experience and skills while allowing them to share their much-needed specialized knowledge with the organization that are required to carry out professional management of records, fundraising, social-media reporting, etc.

- Create solid bonds between the volunteers and beneficiaries (girls & women) facilitating a two-way communication. This will allow volunteers to understand the real problem they Study in depth while allowing the girls to share their problems in a more friendly environment.

- Interns and volunteers can become role models for girls & women they work with in the hostel inspiring them to look ahead in life to make it meaningful and engaging in constructive pursuits.

Key learning from RCF’s leadership building approach which can be integrated in AIWC (SAHARANPUR)
is to engage professionals as volunteers in capacity building programmes, skill-based literacy programmes, leadership building training programmes, etc.

Adopting these practices will help AIWC to attract youth volunteers as volunteering, like in the case of ACTIVEH, will be made a two ways process wherein volunteers will contribute for education and skill development of beneficiaries and in return they will go through a learning experience and will develop certain skills which will help them to enhance their portfolio as well as their practical efficiency.

Engaging professional youths or higher-grade students belonging to different fields like health, education, environment, etc. to volunteer for 1-2 years will allow them to commit to a volunteering journey rather than episodic participation. This will allow youth professionals like beauticians, yoga-trainer, language teacher, sociologist, dancer, etc. to identify ground challenges being faced by the community in their field of study and will allow them to troubleshoot the problem in reality, providing them an experiential learning. On the other side it will help to impart quality education to the beneficiaries. This will also help to refine and polish critical thinking ability, problem solving skills, communication skills, organizing skills and leadership qualities among others in professionals while allowing beneficiaries to acquire the same by setting a virtuous chain reaction in place. These qualities will enhance employability of volunteers as well as beneficiaries.

Consciously incorporating key learnings from two successful organizations operating in different parts of the world in the current volunteering practices at AIWC Saharanpur will address the identified flaws making volunteering youth-driven where youth according to Robert Kennedy is, “not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease” which can be seen in this 3-year old baby girl who is trying to open the door to help girls come in who have come back from school or in 93-year old patron of AIWC, Saharanpur who religiously comes to office on time and is one of the most enthusiastic members of the organization.

Conclusion

Clearly, this approach holds potential to optimize volunteerism in India to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 4- QUALITY EDUCATION, at the microcosmic level of society which when upscaled will be reflected at the macrocosmic level of nation. Adopting the best of volunteering practices will allow organizations to become the centers of socioeconomic service conducted by selfless and enlightened individuals. In case of AIWC, it will pave the path for it to become a dynamic organization working at the grassroots level, fulfilling the aspirations of the millions of women, both volunteers and beneficiaries, who give their unstinted support to sustain it with their valiant efforts.

It is going to be two decades in 2021 when 2001 was proclaimed as The UN International Year of the Volunteer. This gave a major boost and recognition to volunteerism globally as “an important component of any strategy aimed at, inter alia, such areas as poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, disaster prevention and management and social integration and, in particular, overcoming social exclusion and discrimination.” Now, it’s time to take actions and walk the talk to make volunteering vehicle of change for socio-economic development of society at global level, communities at local and the individual volunteer.
Civil society issues manifest in various forms. Such issues can be complex involving multiple geographies, across diverse social & demographic groups. They can manifest at an individual, community, country level or even globally. Over the centuries new societal issues have emerged and in certain cases solving one have led to the emergence of the other. Multiple studies have revealed that the extent of problems has no correlation to economic indicators or financial robustness of the communities. Even the high performing economies with strong governance are not devoid of such issues. Tackling civil society issues calls for deployment of both financial and non-financial resources, development of innovative and robust solutions, investment in skilling human resources and training. While the resources can be leveraged with the involvement of various stakeholders, the culture of the communities play an important role in the development and sustainability of solutions. There is a need to continuously generate change makers in the society to sustain the human development.

The ability of communities to address civil society largely depends on having culture of self-reliance. There are multiple stakeholders in the community who can play roles complementary to each other. While the government plays a role of being a regulator and policy maker, the business houses are the wealth generators for the community who can fund transformational projects. Non-governmental organizations play a key role in identifying issues, analysing the root causes and developing innovative solutions that benefit the community at large. While the government has the required reach and control, solutions driven by government bodies may not necessarily succeed due to various reasons inherent to the systems. On the other hand, businesses, who can potentially fund innovations and creative solutions, have limited reach largely restricted to their own area of operations. NGOs typically focus on specific issues and have the capability to demonstrate solutions locally.

In order to holistically address the issues, the critical success factor is the active citizen participation. Socially active citizens who can participate in the policy making, advising regulatory boards, liaison with business houses with a grounded experience from the NGO sector have the potential to take up transformational tasks that can have lasting impact. Such a participation is possible through voluntary involvement of the community members. It is with this thought that Youth for Seva (YFS) embarked on a journey to make volunteering a mass movement.

No mass movement can be achieved without a strong philosophical grounding. A deep level of introspection revealed how much we receive from others. Whatever people achieve in their lives is not solely due to their own individual efforts. Parents, teachers, friends and even many unknown others contribute to a person’s well-being. When we drink a cup of water, it is very clear many people have worked to bring the water from a river to our homes; not just people, but also natural
elements such as trees, rivers, clouds, sun and so on. If we contemplate on this aspect, we will be
overwhelmed with a sense of immense debt to our parents, teachers, fellow human beings, animals
and other elements in nature like trees, rivers and mountains. ‘Runa’ is the Sanskrit word for ‘debt’.
We are therefore obligated to pay back this Runa whenever we can do so. We should do everything
possible to serve our parents and teachers, find ways to give back to the society - fellow human
beings, animals and nature.

The word ‘Yajna’ literally means ‘to worship’ or ‘to please’. In order to pay back our debts, it is an
essential duty for every individual to perform 5 types of Yajna. These are not mere rituals to be
performed, but to be incorporated in our daily lives. It is everyone’s Individual Social Responsibility
(ISR) to lead life in tune with these 5 types of Yajna. Pitru Yajna (parents & ancestors), Rishi Yajna
(Teachers), Deva Yajna (Rivers, trees, mountains, sun, moon), Bhoota Yajna (animals), Nara Yajna
(fellow human beings). It is with this comprehensive philosophical grounding the organization set
out on a journey of volunteering.

Everyone is equipped with a unique set of abilities, talents, skills and financial resources. While
there is much diversity in these, there is one aspect in which we are bestowed with equally – Time!
Every individual has only 24 hours in a day. When individuals contribute their time, it is possible to
generate a wave of transformation in communities. For any movement to be successful it calls for
time commitment at various levels. “All have to give some time; some have to give all the time”

Humble Beginnings

YFS began its journey in April 2007 in Bengaluru with an aim to promote volunteerism. India being
a country having strong connect with its civilizational values of giving back to the society the
organization witnessed a great level of interest and response from its initial volunteers. The initial
responses revealed that though many wanted to contribute there was lack of knowledge on where
to begin, fewer opportunities available for far too many people, mismatch of interests with the
opportunities and largely inconvenient with their time availability. On the other hand, NGOs mostly
relied on full-time staff members and there was a lack of knowledge on how to leverage volunteers.
In this backdrop YFS put forward its first steps on creating opportunities with a punch line “In your
area of interest, near your location, at your convenient time”.

Lack of a robust primary education system being one of the key issues YFS commenced its journey
of enabling volunteers to teach at government schools, slums and destitute shelters. Depending on
the interest of the volunteers and requirement at schools YFS enabled volunteers to teach various
subjects such as Spoken English, Basic mathematics, Basic of computers etc.

Voices from the ground: Initial learnings

When volunteers began teaching, they observed many students not having basic writing materials.
This triggered the thought of raising funds in the communities to provide writing materials, books,
school bags. The School kit drive program has evolved to be one of the key programs at Youth for
Seva. Multiple corporates, business houses and individuals have supported the program and have
helped reach even the remotest parts of the country.

While teaching at schools few volunteers observed varied patterns of absenteeism in the school
children. Upon initial inquiry there was hardly any response from both the fellow students as well
as the faculty. It was brushed aside as a regular phenomenon observed every year. This regular
absenteeism triggered curiosity in volunteers to understand the key issues. Volunteers started visiting the homes of the children to understand the issues first-hand. The revelations from such home visits were startling. Many children had been continuously absent since they had to take care of younger ones while their parents are out to work. The girl children stopped attending school when they attained puberty. For few girl children, attaining puberty even meant end of schooling. There were a lot of misconceptions around menstrual hygiene practices. Additionally, in such communities it was taboo to even openly discuss some of the aspects openly.

This led to the rise of menstrual hygiene awareness programs at school to address student dropout. An animation video was produced on this topic. The programme aimed at raising awareness on the natural processes that every girl child goes through during adolescence, certain do’s and don’ts during such times. Girl children during these programs were encouraged to openly discuss their issues, ask questions and were counselled to ensure that the social stigma does not stick around. This programme has been well received over the years from school managements, parent community as well many well-wishers of our organization. Today the organization had reached over one lakh students through this program solely through volunteer involvement.

Creating a culture of innovation

Ever since its inception the organization has had a single point focus on volunteerism. The organization started with 3 simple principles: Nation first, pluralism, harmony.

One volunteer in Hyderabad during a conversation with the school management found out about a scholarship scheme sponsored by the central government available for class 8 students. National Means-cum Merit Scholarship (NMMS) was launched in May 2008 with an objective to award scholarships to meritorious students of economically weaker sections to arrest their drop out at class VIII and encourage them to continue their academics at secondary stage. Students qualify for this scholarship through an examination that tests their scholastic and general mental abilities. Excited about the benefits of the program she began volunteering to coach and prepare students for the exam. Today coaching students for NMMS is one of the largest programmes run in the education space. More than 1000 students have benefited from the coaching they received. Seeing the volunteer involvement, the education department in various cities have placed a special focus on these programs. As recent as a month ago many YFS volunteers trained the school faculty on the NMMS curriculum based on the request from the education department. This is a classic example of how creating a culture of innovation helps volunteer to think freely and design programmes basis learnings from the ground.

Bringing about systemic changes: An Illustration

Ganesh Chaturthi is a festival that is celebrated nationally with great pomp and splendour across the country. On the last day of the 11-day festival, the idol is taken out in a colourful musical procession to be immersed in a water body. Most people forget about the adverse effects on the environment because they are caught up in the celebration of the festival. Ganesha idols made from Plaster of Paris (PoP) i.e. calcium sulphate hemi–hydrate never dissolve in water. Also, colours that are used in the decoration of idols contain harmful chemicals that pollute the water body endangering the aquatic plants and marine life, damaging ecosystem. Volunteers initiated community workshops for preparation of clay idols of Ganesha. An online portal http://parisaraganapati.net/ was floated to attract the internet savvy crowd. These efforts drew a mass participation of volunteers in the idol making across multiple locations. The Pollution Control Board and the local municipal corporations
also participated proactively and supported our workshops. Over the last decade as a result of such programmes, the idols sold today are mostly made of clay. This stands testimony to our thought process that citizen participation can help bring about systemic change.

6. Involvement of Professionals: A new paradigm

The last few decades the world has witnessed a phenomenal rise in the number of qualified professionals in the country across sectors. While the professionals contribute to the wealth generation for a country many have come forward for volunteering their professional skills.

In the year 2010, YFS initiated a program Doctors for Seva to facilitate volunteering by doctors across specializations. While the programs enabled activities such as health camps, screenings many doctors volunteered for follow-up and taking forward medical cases to closure through treatments in their own hospitals. Many non-medical professionals and students volunteered to accompany doctors during such camps. Such volunteer involvement activities mutually benefitted both parties. While the doctors focused on their core work of diagnosis and prescriptions, the non-medical volunteers helped with the administration work and follow-up work. This type of engagement had an unplanned impact on volunteers connecting to and understanding various causes. In the recent Kumbhmela held at Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh more than 40 doctors volunteered their services in the festive period. The team received accolades from multiple government bodies for their valuable services and the Uttar Pradesh government officially recognized and acknowledge the contribution of YFS in the mega event. Over time YFS network of doctors helped develop content on various awareness programs for health departments.

Chiguru (means budding) is a one-day cultural fest for children conducted every year for children from under privileged backgrounds. The event witnesses display of various art forms such as folk dance, music, board games and so on. Over the years many professional artists have volunteered as judges in these events. Further to selecting the winners in each competition many judges have volunteered to nurture children to help them participate at regional or even at nation level. Deekshit Kumar a student in Hyderabad won chess competition in Chiguru event. On seeing his abilities Sriram, an international chess player volunteered to coach him further. This enabled him further to participate in the competitions at national level.

Many volunteers who had skills and passion in writing volunteered to publish articles in various media columns. Photography and videography in YFS events are completely driven by volunteers

**College students:**

In the initial days while discussing and brainstorming on the involvement of Youth in nation building there was an opinion with many NGOs that youth are not useful and are not skilled enough. On other hand there was a large mass of youth willing to take up the societal issues and own it up and solve them. There was a large gap that had to be bridged. YFS initiated on the journey of involving young volunteers in various activities. The initial response was so overwhelming that we concluded that “Youth are used less and not useless”.

YFS designed volunteering models for college students based on their time availability. Many students volunteered during their semester breaks, during the period prior to getting into their professional careers.

Storyfied, a mass event aimed at bringing out the inner child in everyone, and at spreading
motivational messages through an inspiring story narrated and delivered through innovative and inspiring modes and mediums. For this, an illustrated storybook was published by YFS, titled: “Maha: The rainbow child”. The story, centred around the theme of “Resilience”, was based on the life of Mr. PK Mahanandia, an Indian-born Swedish artist. It drew inspiration from Mr. Mahanandia’s journey from a small tribal village in the state of Odisha to becoming a world-renowned artist. The tale is a testament to one man’s strong will and determination to follow his dreams and instil in its readers the belief that success follows every sincere effort. Over 8,000 volunteers took part in this event.

YFS engagement with college students go much beyond just involving them in volunteering activities. Based on interests of volunteers, enrichment sessions are conducted through ‘Speaker on Campus’ program. Accomplished individuals in various social causes talk about their life journey, experiences thereby motivating students. Residential camps are conducted wherein students undergo various sessions helping them in developing their physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual quotient. These programs have been well received from both the student community and college managements.

YFS has taken a step further by signing up MOUs (memorandum of understanding) with college managements for volunteer engagement, developing social actions projects, setting up social clubs in college campuses.

There is as much ‘Seva for Youth’ in YFS DNA as there is ‘Youth for Seva’. Students are exposed to social projects and the spirit of seva is instilled in their minds. Once the seed is sown, sooner or later it is bound to blossom to a fully-grown tree.

**Creating change agents: A Mission**

While the nature of societal issues keeps changing it is necessary to generate change agents in the society who drive societal transformations. One of the key mission statements of YFS it to generate change makers in the society.

Mrs. Latha Rao, who was working as an Engineer earlier, had taken a career break to dedicate more time to her family. On one of the days during her stroll to the nearby park she saw many children playing all day, she wondered why they were not in schools. She found out that their parents were construction workers and most of them had migrated from different cities and states. On seeing this she decided to be the change that she wanted to see. She approached YFS and embarked on a plan. She herself took the lead and setup a non-formal school in her own locality close to her place of residence. There was initial resistance and inhibition from the parents. Her relentless persuasion with the parents finally convinced them to send their kids to her school. Slowly she received support from her neighbourhood. The local temple gladly permitted her team to use the facility. Soon the government gave a formal recognition to her school appreciated here efforts.

Shobhit Mathur, an alumnus of IIT Bombay, joined YFS in the year 2010 in Hyderabad. Inspired by the organization goals he helped increase the volunteer engagement in the Hyderabad. Additionally, he initiated partnerships with various other like-minded organizations. Armed with this experience Shobhit pursued his post-graduation in Indian School of Business. Today he is a founding member and Executive Director at Vision India foundation that is doing exemplary work in policy changes advising government bodies and at the same time providing a platform to various civil society organizations to provide inputs on policy.
Ayush Bansal began his volunteering journey in career guidance in Bengaluru. At the age of 17 he encountered the challenge for a student to choose a right career while guiding a domestic help to get back to education. Later at the age of 22 he chose to quit his lucrative job in Investment Banking to solve this problem and founded iDreamCareer. He has spent the past 11 years in the space of career guidance and as a full-time entrepreneur for the last 7 years. His most pathbreaking accomplishment as the founder of iDreamCareer has been to scale up personalized career counselling while maintaining quality across counselors. He has successfully led iDreamCareer to become the largest career counselling social enterprise in India empowering close to 2.5 million students annually. With his vision to create a sustainable enterprise which can impact millions of students, he has led iDreamCareer to become a profitable social enterprise since FY 2018. He is now working towards scaling up iDreamCareer’s annual reach from 2.5 million students (currently) to 10 million students by the year 2022.

Corporate Volunteering

Involvement of corporates and business houses in development of social indicators has evolved from being mere program sponsors, funding entities to volunteering partners who pull up their sleeves involve themselves in ground level activities. Many corporates are encouraging their employees to volunteer their time for the community on a regular basis. Few of them have even mandated their employees to volunteer at-least for one day in the year in their chosen interest area. Several organizations have developed CSR and corporate volunteering programs complementary to each other. Projects are sponsored and funded in places where employees volunteer and take ownership of their involvement.

The growth of the organized sector has caused migration of hundreds of people from villages and towns to larger cities. The employment opportunities keep them glued to the cities they live in and many have achieved the success they aspired for. When individuals succeed in their pursuits, many have the urge to connect to and give back to the communities they came from. Many volunteers have taken up initiatives in their own hometowns. Further to this the corporates have come forward to sponsor programs in support of such volunteers.

In the initial days corporate volunteers took part in several customized activities such as sapling plantation, seed-ball making, spot fixing and clean-up drives, painting school buildings, conducting sports and drawing competitions for government school children, recording audiobooks for the visually impaired, paper bag making, taking children out for outdoor learning experiences (such as to National parks, science museums and the planetarium), conducting awareness talks on menstrual hygiene, training children from government schools in various cultural activities. This helped in sensitizing the volunteers about various causes. Overtime volunteers have engaged in both on-campus as well as off-campus activities. Having on-campus activities helped gather and involve large number of volunteers at a time. Volunteers prepared science, math models that provided practical illustration of concepts that the children learn theoretically. The volunteers further involve themselves in distributing these working models and explain the usage to the children. This simple idea of engaging volunteers on-campus has eventually increased the overall engagement of corporate volunteers.

We owe the freedom that we enjoy to our armed forces who guard our nation every moment. Because of their sacrifice the nation sleeps peacefully. In the recent air strikes at Balakot our armed forces showcased exemplary level of valour. They entire nation stood by and saluted our forces in appreciation of their tremendous courage and flawless execution. As a token of thanks and respect,
many corporate volunteers came forward to make ‘Thank you cards’ and the same was sent to the Air force base at Gwalior and the Army HQ at Delhi. Such new initiatives have accolades from the corporate community.

YFS Journey on Partnerships

There is no one social issue that can stand out to be the number one or the most important issue to be addressed. Issues relating to access to primary education, primary healthcare are as important as environmental protection and protecting our biodiversity. While there are vast number of issues no organization can alone handle and address them in its entirety. Neither is it even possible to address one specific issue at a national level with a reach to every community or village in the country. It is with this understanding YFS has built a strong focus on partnerships and collaborations.

Ever since inception YFS has encouraged its own volunteers to serve its partner organization in their initiatives. Be it one-time events or for longer duration YFS facilitates volunteers to be part of various types of activities. Our collaboration story stretches much beyond merely providing volunteers. YFS regularly conducts workshops on capacity building of its partner organizations. Volunteer management strategy, Annual report preparation, creating project proposals are some of the topics that have been recently touched upon in these workshops. These workshops have helped YFS gain recognition for being one such organization which not only takes genuine interest in its own growth but also in the growth of its partner organizations. All these workshops are inspired and driven by volunteers.

An Idea to reckon with – Warriors of Change Fellowship

Swami Vivekananda once said “Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life - think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success”.

Different volunteers get attracted to different issues depending on their life situations, context and what they witness around them. Over the years we were approached by many inspired individuals who came up with an idea of their own that could address issues dear to them, seeking guidance on taking it forward. Many were not sure on where to begin and how to take the first steps. The journey from idea to an organization is studded with various milestones from framing vision, mission statements all the way to registering the entity, raising funds and beyond. While inspiration forms the foundation, the structure needs to be crafted well. YFS, through its Warriors of Change fellowship program has enabled volunteers to make a journey from idea to organization. Fellowship volunteers are provided with required guidance on project management, proposal preparation, fund raising, envisioning the change and so on. Through this program many volunteers have managed to navigate through the uncertainties, create their own trusts, gather well-wishers who have volunteered for promoting the cause and raising funds etc. All these they have been able to achieve alongside their professional commitments.

Measuring the intangibles:

While volunteers did the home visits to understand dropout reasons and bring them back to school, the impact was more than what is visible and measurable. This simple act generated lot of insights on some of the social and community structures. In addition, it connected people different communities who otherwise would not have had a chance to do so. The social divide that exits between the haves
and have nots have been bridged to a very large extent and we believe this process shall help build a solid social capital for the country.

Typically, in communities which are socially deprived the career aspirations of children are driven by what they see in the boundaries of their own community. The opportunities that can emerge because education is not very well known in such communities. When volunteers started the activity of teaching the students, it opened access to a new demographic segment for the children. They started interacting and connecting with volunteers from various professional and academic backgrounds they were hitherto not exposed to. This helped the students to get role models to look-up to and create aspirations for themselves.

While many volunteers took up the menstrual hygiene awareness programs in schools few went a mile further to understand the practices across cultures and over the centuries. They travelled the breadth of the country interacting with various communities. These inspired volunteers gained the subject matter expertise and are further inspiring hundreds of volunteers.

In pursuit of modernizing ourselves and our lifestyles unknowingly there are certain practices we would have adopted that would harm our well-being. The youth are especially vulnerable at that age and susceptible to pick the negatives around them easily. Even the advent of technology has had as much negative effects as the positive ones. In this backdrop it is important to channelize the energies of people in the right direction, protect and develop the human consciousness to build a better society and a better country. Volunteerism has kept people away from ills like drug abuse, depressions and so on. Volunteering has become fashionable especially with the younger generation.

Many civil society organizations have high level of dependency on their full-time employees. The ability to build human capital within the organization would largely depend on the funding they would have. By providing volunteers, conducting capacity building workshops YFS has helped many civil society organizations to not only involve volunteers for some of their activities but also expand their operations with minimal addition of full-time employees. Many individuals who signed up as volunteers are now part of the trusts and advisory boards for various organizations.

Over the last decade YFS has been able to connect with more than 50,000 volunteers across the nation. The volunteer masses have been engaged in more ways than we can count. Volunteering experiences have influenced them to adopt sustainable lifestyles. Few of them have made drastic changes in their day to day living by not using plastic, resorting to only renewable sources of energy and so on. Such individual are brand ambassadors of YFS values and continue to inspire hundreds of volunteers.

Last but not the least, many volunteers have had the opportunity to explore alternate careers, find their life calling and pursue a career they dreamt about.

**Thought leadership**

Volunteering as a sector is evolving with innovation coming from various corners. There is a surge in participation from all segments of society. It is important for the Volunteer involving organizations (VIOs) and other leading non-profits and organizations to continuously share thoughts on the evolution of this sector, the opportunities to be leveraged and the challenges to be addressed. In this direction YFS has embarked on a journey to publish papers, hold conferences and panel discussions.
to enable participation from multiple stakeholders in the sector.

The first Corporate volunteering Conclave was held in the year 2018. The enthusiastic participation and the networking amongst the stakeholders benefited both the NGOs, VIO on one hand and the corporates as well on the other hand. On seeing the success of such events many corporates have come forward to host the subsequent editions in the years to come. In these conferences research papers on trends in volunteering were also published for consumption by various stakeholders.

Udvikas, a college volunteering conclave, is a forum created to enable college volunteers to understand the sector and contribute in the growth of volunteerism. It has been heartening to see the mass participation from students as well as the faculty members.

Way forward

We are already witnessing a wave where in more and more people are coming forward to volunteer and involve themselves in the community. It will be challenging for the NGOs and VIOs to engage volunteers in such huge numbers productively. Designing programs to productively engage large numbers volunteers and harnessing their energies will be key to successful engagements.

Multilateral collaborations with cause centric NGOs, government bodies and VIOs will give rise to new engagement models. Many VIOs and active citizens are venturing into volunteering programs that can play complementary to the government. Doubling farmers’ income, Swacch Bharat mission, water conservation mission are great examples on government programs where involvement of VIOs can have a multiplier effect and help the government complete the last mile connectivity.

Technology shall play as a key enabler in scaling volunteering programs beyond boundaries. Organizations that can adopt and leverage technology develop standardized resources, provide seamless experience can deliver significantly large impact. YFS has put a step forward in this direction by creating digital content, online resources to scale programs to multiple cities.

The surge of volunteerism in the country is a positive sign in the development. The volunteer community, the corporates and the government bodies have expressed confidence in volunteering as a concept and are convinced in YFS engagement models. YFS shall play a pivotal role in enabling such community enthusiasts to deliver transformational projects. The organization is confident that volunteers shall help realize the vision of building “Self-reliant communities through selfless individuals”