



VOLUNTEERING IN INDIA: PERSPECTIVES, INSIGHTS, AND POTENTIAL FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

A Market Research Report on the Volunteering Landscape in India

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About CRY

In 1979, a passionate Indian Airlines purser named Rippan Kapur embarked on a mission that would leave an indelible mark on the lives of countless children. He founded Child Rights and You (CRY), an organization that would become one of India's most trusted NGOs. With 102 projects spanning 19 states in India, CRY has impacted the lives of over 4.7 million children and has undertaken formidable challenges of child education, health, nutrition, child labour, and child marriage. They collaborate with parents, teachers, communities, and governments to create sustainable change.¹

CRY's vision and mission embodies its founder Rippan Kapur's belief:

**"One can't be satisfied as long as
there are children who need help,
one just has to keep going at it."**²

In a country as diverse and populous as India, where many children grapple with the harsh realities of poverty, limited access to education and healthcare, child labour, and inadequate protection, CRY's work is not just important, it is essential. The organization serves as a powerful voice for these vulnerable children, striving for positive change at both the policy and grassroots levels. In the face of immense challenges, CRY remains a beacon of hope for children in need.

www.cry.org

About Grant Thornton Bharat

At Grant Thornton Bharat, we are committed to bringing positive change to all that we do. As a founding member firm of the Grant Thornton international network and India's pre-eminent consulting firm, we offer a range of solutions in assurance, tax, technology, managed services, deals, ESG, and risk consulting to mid-market companies, government, large corporates, and digital natives. With over 10,000 professionals in 19 offices across India's major cities, we are at the forefront of helping reshape the values in our profession and, in the process, help shape a more vibrant Indian economy. Our goal is to become the leading provider of compliance services for Indian global companies, guiding them through the complexities of growth. We #GoBeyond for our people, clients, and communities to shape Vibrant Bharat. Grant Thornton Bharat is more than a professional services firm; it's a trusted partner on the path to success.

At Grant Thornton Bharat, our Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) vertical is a dedicated practice focused on supporting sustainable development efforts. We offer tailored solutions for various clients, including corporates, philanthropic organizations, multilateral institutions, NGOs, and more. Our key services include Assurance, CSR Advisory, and Sustainability. With a well-balanced team experienced in supporting development organizations, we provide actionable solutions for large-scale social projects, corporate clients, donor agencies, and civil society organizations.

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¹ https://nidm.gov.in/pdf/trgReports/2022/October/Report_31-04October2022ccdr.pdf; Course report "Training of Trainers on Addressing Child Centric Vulnerability, Enhancing Capacity & Promoting Resilience", November 2022 by MGSIPA, Punjab and NIDM, Govt of India

² CRY, What I can do I must do- Rippan Kapur (1954-1994)



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Acknowledgements

The entire process of this study has been about learning, relearning, and unlearning several concepts around volunteerism. This enriching journey has provided an opportunity to explore why, how and where people choose to spend their time and energies. There has been a growth – as individuals and teams – listening to the first-hand experiences from real-world heroes and change-makers.

This study is a joint effort by Child Rights and You, and Grant Thornton Bharat. Together the teams have worked passionately to uncover the popular narratives and evolving trends in the volunteering space. The leadership from both organisations has helped shape this study. The media teams of CRY and GT worked in tandem to ensure the report looks crisp and attractive.

The respondents to this market research study are from different age groups, cultural backgrounds, sectors and geographical locations of India. We were humbled by the narrations and compassionate contributions made by the numerous women and men of India, who had stood up to answer the call. Without their honest and detailed responses, we would not have been able to understand where the Indian volunteering space is headed.

Employees of Grant Thornton Bharat and CRY have actively participated in responding to the surveys and providing valuable inputs to the study. Through group discussions and detailed interviews, they have opened up, explored and discussed the driving factors and recalled experiences. Their encouragement and excitement for the study have kept us motivated.

Several organisations working in the volunteering space have welcomed us by participating in the group discussions and by responding to difficult questions. We thank them for accommodating us and for being honest in their responses.

Representatives and members from schools, colleges, and corporate entities across India have participated in this study. We are indebted to the Management teams of these institutes, for their active encouragement and engagement.





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Foreword

In a world where individualism often overshadows the collective, Mahatma Gandhi's message—"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others"—reminds us of the value of community and shared responsibility. As we navigate through changing times, this perspective urges us to reconnect with our cultural roots and reinforce a society built on cooperation and mutual support.

India, with 65% of its population under the age of 35, holds immense potential for harnessing the energy and creativity of its youth through volunteerism. Volunteering is not merely an act of charity; it is a powerful means for individuals to engage with their communities and affirm their role in society. While the impact of volunteers can be quantified in economic terms, their true contribution lies in the relationships they build and the sense of purpose they foster.

CRY's own work since its inception with volunteers has shown the tremendous potential of engaging people who are eager to make a difference by offering their time, skills, and goodwill. However, as times change, we recognize that approaches, systems, and perceptions of volunteer engagement and impact need to evolve.

This study, "Volunteering in India: Perspectives, Insights, and Potential for Social Impact," provides a comprehensive examination of the current trends shaping volunteerism in India. It draws on insights from various stakeholders, including volunteers, organizations, and everyday citizens, to understand how different groups—students, young professionals, homemakers, and senior citizens—perceive volunteerism and what influences their decisions to volunteer or not.

The findings reveal a broad spectrum of motivations and patterns. For instance, students across cities exhibit a strong commitment to volunteering, driven by both a desire to help others and personal growth. Senior citizens, with their wealth of experience, seek to contribute their skills for societal benefit. Working professionals, particularly in Tier 1 cities, often balance volunteer work with their careers, viewing it as both a

way to contribute and a means of personal and professional development. Homemakers favour flexible, hybrid forms of volunteering that allow them to manage their family responsibilities while contributing to society.

These insights highlight the diverse nature of volunteering in India, where motivations range from altruism to personal and professional growth. Yet, challenges remain, including the need for credible organizations and inclusive volunteer opportunities that cater to a broader range of people.

As our society faces significant social, economic, and environmental challenges, the role of volunteers become increasingly important. This report underscores the need for a strategic and informed approach to volunteer management. By understanding the factors that drive volunteerism and addressing the barriers that limit participation, organizations, NGOs, government agencies, and other stakeholders can develop more effective volunteer programs that not only address these challenges but also foster a culture of sustained and meaningful engagement.

This report is more than just an analysis of the current state of volunteering in India; it is a call to action. It invites all stakeholders—volunteers, organizations, corporations, policymakers, and the wider community—to engage in a thoughtful discussion about the future of volunteerism in India. By applying the insights and recommendations provided in this study, we can work together to build a more inclusive, vibrant, and impactful volunteering ecosystem.

Let this report inspire action, guide informed decision-making, and contribute to ongoing efforts to strengthen our society through the power of volunteerism. Together, we can harness this potential to build a stronger, more connected community.

Puja Marwaha
CEO, CRY



Preface

The study titled “Volunteering in India: Perspectives, Insights, and Potential for Social Impact” was undertaken to address a critical need: understanding the evolving landscape of volunteering in a rapidly changing Indian context. While volunteerism is a well-established practice both in India and globally, it remains under-researched, particularly when it comes to understanding the motivations, challenges, and opportunities for today’s volunteers. This study seeks to fill that gap by providing a comprehensive exploration of the current trends and patterns in the volunteering space, focusing on diverse groups including youth, young professionals, homemakers, and senior citizens.

The importance of this study lies in its ability to capture real-world insights directly from active and inactive volunteers, organizations offering volunteering opportunities, and the broader public. In a world where technological advances and social media are reshaping how people engage with society, it is crucial to understand the underlying factors that drive individuals to volunteer. By exploring these motivations and the challenges faced by volunteers, this report offers valuable information that can guide NGOs, government agencies, and other stakeholders in developing more effective and engaging volunteer programs.

The motivation behind this study was not only to report on the current state of volunteerism but also to inspire action. By shedding light on the diverse ways in which people engage with volunteer work—from altruistic service to skill-based volunteering for personal and professional growth—this report highlights the potential of volunteerism to contribute to societal development. It is our hope that readers will find this report both informative and actionable, providing them with the tools to better understand and engage with the volunteer sector.

Readers will benefit from this report by gaining a deeper understanding of the varied motivations that drive volunteerism across different demographics. Whether you are an organization looking to enhance your volunteer programs or an individual interested in the broader impacts of volunteerism, this report offers practical insights and strategic recommendations to help you make informed decisions. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing conversation about the role of volunteerism in building a more connected and resilient society in India.

Rohit Bahadur
Partner, Grant Thornton Bharat



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List of Abbreviations

BNV	Bharat Nirman Volunteers	NCC	National Cadet Corps
CAF	Charities Aid Foundation	NGO	Non-Government Organizations
CAPART	Council for the Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology	NGRBC	National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct
CBO	Community based organization	NSS	National Service Scheme
CDS	Community Development Societies	NSVS	National Service Volunteer Scheme
CHW	Community Health Workers	NYC	National Youth Corps
CSO	Civil Society Organization	NYK	Nehru Yuva Kendra
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility	NYP	National Youth Policy
DYC	District Youth Coordinator	NYKS	Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan
DRM	Disaster Risk Management	PMRDF	Prime Minister's Rural Development Fellows Scheme
EVP	Employee Volunteer Programs	PRADAN	Professional Assistance for Development Action
FBO	Faith-based Organizations	RSY	Rashtriya Sadbhavana Yojana
FGD	Focused Group Discussions	SBA	Swachh Bharat Abhiyan Mission
GOI	Government of India	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
HDI	Human Development Index	SHG	Self-Help Group
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services	SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
ICP	Innovations in Civic Partnership	SWVR	State of the World Volunteering Report
ICT	Information and communication technology	WHO	World Health Organization
IDI	In-depth Interviews	UN	United Nations
IRCS	Indian Red Cross Society	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
IWT	India Welfare Trust	UNGP	United Nations Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development	UNV	United Nations Volunteers
MoHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	UT	Union Territories
MoRD	Ministry of Rural Development		
MoYAS	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports		



Executive Summary

ENHANCING VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

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Introduction

This one-of-a-kind report synthesizes key findings from a comprehensive study exploring volunteerism trends amongst students, senior citizens, and working professionals.

Based on a pan-India study, this report acts as a link between corporate and government policies across different sectors and on-ground action by individuals and organizations. This publication offers newer perspectives on people's engagement with volunteering activities and intends to create an ongoing dialogue on meaningful volunteering amongst multiple demographics and how.

The study saw the participation of over 5,500 respondents, including school and college students, working professionals from the private and government sectors, entrepreneurs, homemakers, and senior citizens. This diverse geographical spread included participants from Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 cities, ensuring a comprehensive representation of the targeted population across 22 states and union territories in India.

A mixed methodology all-India study was undertaken, qualitative and quantitative tools were developed, and data was collected through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. By analyzing motivations, preferences, and expectations, this document aims to furnish organizations with nuanced insights to refine their volunteer engagement and management practices, thereby increasing volunteer satisfaction and the overall impact of their efforts.

Volunteering and Engagement of Youth

Young people are the way forward when it comes to volunteering. They are now more eager to spend their time volunteering as an extra-curricular activity. To college students, such opportunities serve their altruistic motivation of serving the society and also improve their soft skills.

In recent years, interaction between technology and education has paved the way forward for hybrid forms of volunteering, an increasing preference amongst youngsters who want to balance their academic commitments with extra-curricular activities.

The role of Senior Citizens in Volunteering

Volunteering as a charitable activity is a preferred way of spending time amongst senior citizens, as found in this report. The majority of people surveyed in this age group indulged in volunteering activities out of a concern for helping people.

Change in socio-economic conditions is evident as more and more educated seniors want to engage in hybrid modes of volunteering that do not disturb their existing routine. Reliability is also desired as established volunteering organizations are more preferred.

Volunteering among Working Professionals

Despite the demands of their workplaces, working professionals engaged in the social sector participate in volunteering activities, especially in the educational sector. The reasons vary from the need to help others, seeking diverse experiences and applying skills.

The nature of their jobs makes it imperative to engage in volunteering activities integrated into their existing lifestyles and networks.

Findings and Recommendations

Parameters	Demographics	Motivations	Preferences	Holistic perspective
Rationale	It empowers organizations to create more targeted, inclusive, and impactful volunteer programs.	It empowers organizations to recruit, engage, and retain volunteers more effectively.	It empowers organizations in reaching out, roping in, and retaining volunteers.	It enables organizations to customize volunteer programs, overcome obstacles, and promote meaningful engagement.
Students	Majority of student volunteers were female college students, showcasing a predominant female presence. A significant participation from school students in Tier 3 areas, highlights broad interest in volunteering across socio-economic backgrounds.	Students demonstrate a dual approach to volunteering, valuing both altruistic activities and skill enhancement opportunities.	Students prefer hybrid volunteering and short-term engagements, likely due to academic commitments and flexibility.	Volunteers expect personal development, confidence and skills enhancement, and as a way to explore and advance their careers.
Sr. citizens	Women aged 60-79 demonstrate a propensity for volunteering and are predominantly educated at the bachelor's degree level or higher.	Majority of senior volunteers are primarily motivated by the satisfaction of helping others and the community.	Majority discover volunteering opportunities through word of mouth, and prefer hybrid, flexible engagements.	Seniors engaging with established organizations experience minimal challenges.
Working professionals	This segment consists mostly of young, educated males from Tier 1 cities like Delhi NCR.	Their motivations include helping others, utilizing personal skills for societal benefits and seeking diverse experiences.	The education sector is a preferred area for volunteering.	Professional volunteers engage sporadically, often within their communities or social circles.

Recommendations

RESPONDENT SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS			
Parameters	Community development	Capacity building	Professional adaptation
Students	Create flexible, short-term engagement strategies for students.	Create skill-focused volunteer programs aligned with student goals.	Integrate career guidance into volunteer programs featuring workshops and networking events.

Sr. citizens	Strengthen community outreach to engage senior volunteers using personal networks.	Customize volunteer roles for seniors to mentor and teach.	Ensure flexible volunteering options for senior citizens' schedules and preferences.
Working professionals	Develop targeted campaigns to address gender disparity and accessibility in volunteering.	Align volunteer roles with professionals' career interests and skills.	Partner with educational institutions and preferred sectors.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS				
Digital Engagement	Skill Development and Recognition	Program Flexibility	Value Alignment and Cultural Fit	Volunteers from Marginalized Groups
Optimize the use of digital platforms for volunteer recruitment and engagement.	Integrate structured skill development pathways within volunteer programs to boost volunteer satisfaction.	Introduce diverse volunteering modes and durations to accommodate varying availability and preferences, appealing broadly across demographics.	Align organizational values and volunteering opportunities with volunteers' intrinsic motivations and cultural expectations to foster belonging and commitment.	Crucial to recognize and effectively harness the contributions of volunteers from marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and members of low-income families and communities towards development.

Adopting a strategic and nuanced approach to volunteer engagement, informed by the detailed insights and recommendations outlined in this report, can significantly enhance the effectiveness and satisfaction of volunteer efforts. Tailoring programs to the specific needs, motivations, and expectations of different demographic segments not only enriches the volunteer experience but also maximizes the impact of their contributions towards meaningful societal change.

In all the demographics addressed in the report, technology has played an important role in encouraging volunteerism. While earlier such activities were mainly restricted to student populations and those driven by religious charitable organisations, the current scenario shows an increased engagement across all age and social groups.

While the extent of participation varies across different groups, the gap can be reduced by encouraging participation by building long-term trust in the form of recognition suited to different demographics. This can be especially helpful when encouraging volunteers from marginalised groups such as LGBTQIA+ communities.

Crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic showed the power of voluntary activities across distant geographies. To enable better participation, especially from Tier – 2 and Tier – 3 cities, more customised and skill-focused incentives and partnerships are suggested.



ESTABLISHING THE FRAMEWORK

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“The best way to
find yourself is
to lose yourself
in the service of
others”.

MAHATMA GANDHI

“What is the
essence of life?
To serve others
and to do good”

ARISTOTLE

Background

Globally, millions of people contribute their time, skills, experiences and energy towards volunteering. According to a study conducted in 2015 by the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society, approximately 140 million people in 37 countries engage in volunteer work during any typical year.

A volunteer, could be simply defined as a professional or non-professional person who - is willing to give his/her time; is strongly motivated to devote their energy, skills and time into accomplishing tasks in whose purpose they believe in; provides a service or does a specific task through some kind of formal structure; receives no remuneration and does it out of his/her own free will; and in the course of the process of service, earns moral credit.³

Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling challenges that can transform the pace and nature of development. It benefits both the society at large and the individual volunteers, by purposefully creating opportunities for participation through strengthening trust, solidarity, and reciprocity among citizens⁴. Volunteering is where compassion meets solidarity, with an aim to address societal challenges, fostering a sense of community, and promoting positive social change. It allows individuals to give back and make a difference to the society they form an integral part of, contributing to the overall well-being both of which share the same root values – supporting each other from a position of trust, humility, respect, and equality without expecting anything in return.⁵ It comprises an ordered, structured, and functional solution ⁶resulting in rapid solutions at local levels, and hence can be seen as a natural building block of the activated third sector.⁷

The volunteering sector has evolved over time, enriched by the memories and experiences of individuals and groups. Evidence suggests changes in perceptions and behaviour patterns in volunteering, drawing from changes in global health conditions, economic progress, influx of technology and others.

3 Claassens, E. (2004). Management of Volunteers in faith-based organisations,

4 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)- <https://www.undp.org/china/united-nations-volunteers>

5 United Nations (UN) website- <https://www.un.org/en/observances/volunteer-day>

6 Ganesh, S. & Mcallum, K. (2009). Discourses of Volunteerism, Annals of the International Communication Association

7 Salamon L. M. (1999). Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector

Evolution of Volunteering

The act of individuals helping their communities goes way back in history. Centuries ago, various cultures practiced forms of volunteering through traditional acts of kindness. While guilds and fraternities engaged in charitable activities during the Middle Ages⁸, the 19th century saw the rise of philanthropy and social reform movements as industrialization led to an increase in social problems. This era saw the formalization of volunteer efforts to address pressing issues. The International Committee of the Red Cross marked a pivotal moment, relying on dedicated volunteers to provide humanitarian aid⁹. The 20th century witnessed the growth of organized volunteerism with the establishment of national and international volunteer organizations¹⁰.

The internet and globalization have given impetus to digital volunteering, allowing people to engage globally from the comfort of their homes, offering flexibility in terms of when and how volunteers contribute, reducing the need for physical resources thereby aligning with sustainability practices. It also offers a dynamic and inclusive way for individuals to contribute time, expertise, and passion to address critical issues and make a positive impact on the world. Modern-day volunteering has given birth to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)¹¹. It has gained prominence, with companies encouraging employees to participate in volunteer activities. Professional management of volunteers has become a focus, ensuring effective organization and alignment with corporate goals.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteers and organizations adapted to provide essential support to mankind in unexpected ways, and answering unprecedented demands. In-person and digital volunteering efforts in India and across the globe, helped countries and communities face various challenges. Volunteers, individuals, NGOs, and other organisations stepped forward to provide support in the form of healthcare support, food distribution, awareness campaigns, online education and tutoring, community support, blood and plasma donation, telemedicine services by healthcare professionals, psycho-social support, organizing and facilitating vaccination drives and more. The volunteering efforts during the pandemic highlighted the resilience and adaptability of volunteers and organisations in the face of unprecedented challenges. They played a critical role in providing aid, comfort, and support to those affected by the pandemic, reinforcing the importance of volunteerism in times of crisis.

The pandemic and its economic consequences increased the willingness of people to offer services to mankind. According to the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF), the World Giving Index (the scope and nature of

In 1979, Rippan Kapur – an Indian Airlines purser – started CRY with 6 friends and just INR 50. CRY's inception and growth was significantly driven by volunteer efforts, with a strong emphasis on volunteerism being integral to its DNA. This approach underscores a strategic commitment to embedding volunteerism within the organization's fabric, reflecting on its foundational years where it largely operated with volunteer support before transitioning to a structured organization.

CRY website and Senior Leadership

8 What is volunteering? A guide to the history & benefits, Bloomberg website article, <https://bloomerang.co/blog/what-is-volunteerism-a-guide-to-the-history-benefits/>; S. Rahumath, Voluntary movement in India: Gandhian perspectives, influence and success, Advance Research Journal of Social Sciences 2019, 32; Volunteering in India- Context Perspective and Discourses, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) 2012, http://researchjournal.co.in/upload/assignments/10_31-36-99999.pdf

9 What is volunteering? A guide to the history & benefits, Bloomberg website article, <https://bloomerang.co/blog/what-is-volunteerism-a-guide-to-the-history-benefits/>; S. Rahumath, Voluntary movement in India: Gandhian perspectives, influence and success, Advance Research Journal of Social Sciences 2019, 32; Volunteering in India- Context Perspective and Discourses, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) 2012, http://researchjournal.co.in/upload/assignments/10_31-36-99999.pdf

10 Wells, Ryan. "Volunteers in Service to America". Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Volunteers-in-Service-to-America>, Mar.2023; "Voluntary Service Overseas." Community Development Bulletin 14, no. 2 (1963), 59–62. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44279377>; Volunteering in India- Context Perspective and Discourses, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) 2012, <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/in/volunteering-in-india-contexts-perspectives-and-discourses.pdf>

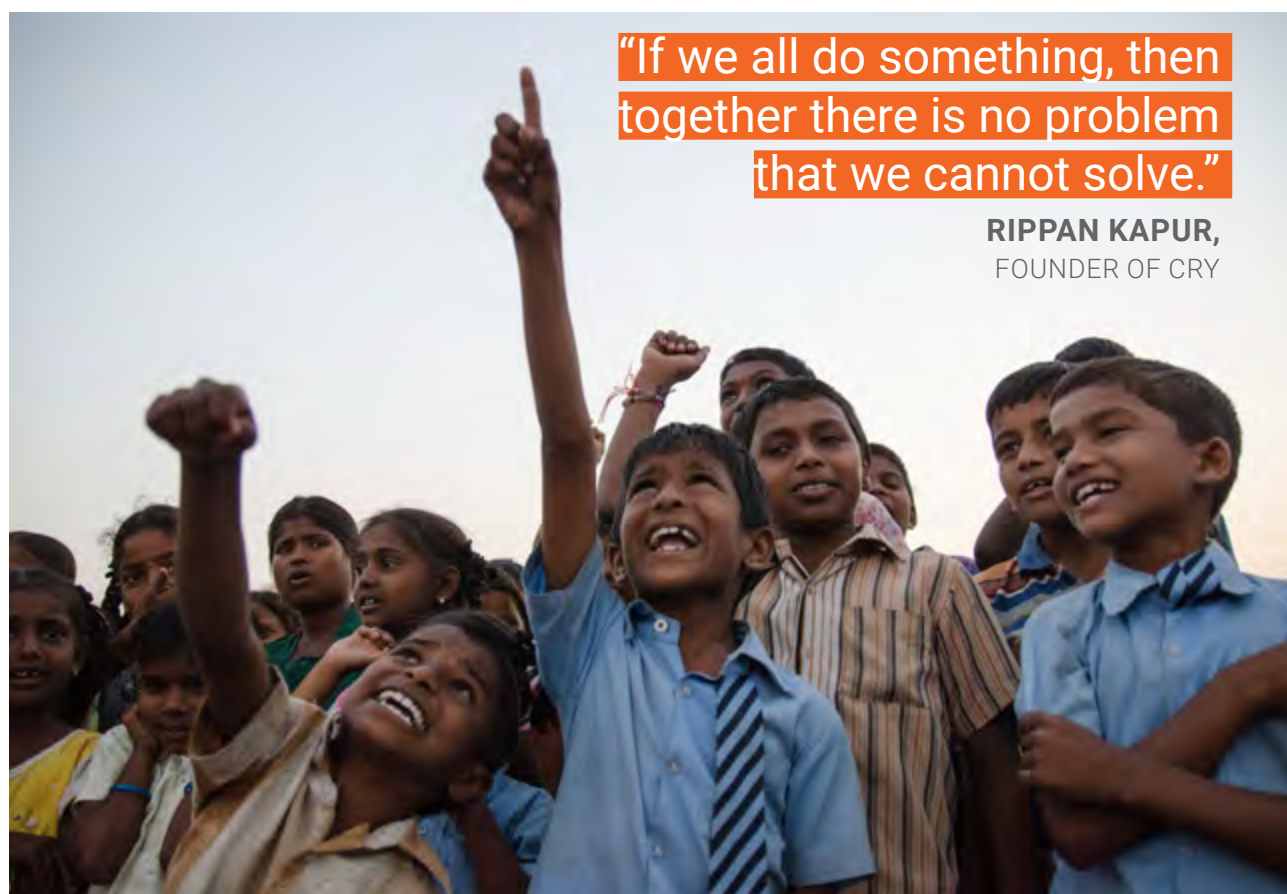
11 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to a company's commitment to operate in an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable manner while balancing the interests of various stakeholders. It is a multifaceted approach that encourages businesses to be more responsible and sustainable in their operations, benefiting not only their bottom line but also the society and the environment.

giving around the world), for 2021 had a global score of 40%, making it the most significant annual increase. Both participation and the levels of giving saw substantial growth in all three measures (donating money, volunteering time, and helping strangers) covered by the Index. An unprecedented 62% of individuals indicated that they assisted a stranger in 2021. The demand arising from the pandemic and the resulting sense of community and unity were responsible for this increasing pattern¹²

India has consistently been one of the countries with a high level of charitable giving and generosity. According to CAF, India has been one of the top 10 biggest risers in the World Giving Index score over the past five years (2016 to 2020)¹³. However, India has seen a marginal decline (from 44% in 2021 to 40% in 2022) according to the 2022 index scores owing to factors such as economic conditions and social trends.

Corporate volunteerism is a cornerstone of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) which motivates employees to donate their time to organisations, charities, and other community-based projects and initiatives. It is a way for corporations and their employees to give back to their community. According to the India Welfare Trust report, India has a potential value of INR 7,500 Crores for corporate volunteering, signifying a substantial untapped employee potential to scale volunteering in corporate India.¹⁴

Today, volunteering encompasses a wide range of activities and causes, playing a vital role in addressing social challenges, promoting community engagement, and making a positive impact on the world. This echoes with the belief : *'Atmarth jeevloke smin ko na jeevati manav. Param paropakaraartham yo jeevati sa jeevati'* which means, 'In this world everyone lives to satisfy his/her own interests. But those people live a real and prosperous life, who live for the sake of helping others.' It also resonates with one of the most important moral values in Indian society which was also India's theme for its G-20 presidency in 2023, '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*' meaning 'The world is one family' emphasizing global unity.



12 CAF World Giving Index 2022 report, https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-research/caf_world_giving_index_2022_210922-final.pdf

13 CAF World Giving Index 2021 report, https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-research/cafworldgivingindex2021_report_web2_100621.pdf

14 Volunteering in 100 Top Companies in India Report by India Welfare Trust, August 2023

About the Study

A collaborative market research study was undertaken by Child Rights and You (CRY) and Grant Thornton Bharat on the subject of volunteering and volunteerism in 2023. The research report aims to outline the current prominent trends and patterns in the volunteering space in India. The primary goal was to understand how the youth, young professionals, and other stakeholders look at volunteering, their willingness, expectations, and challenges concerning volunteering, while they contribute to the larger society.

An in-depth study was conducted to answer the larger questions for improving the volunteering space, while focusing on perceptions and behavioral patterns among Indian citizens belonging to all genders. CRY and Grant Thornton Bharat decided that the study would be inclusive and participatory. Citizens from all sectors and age groups, including students, employed, unemployed and retired populations were approached to understand how they perceive volunteering, its benefits to the society, and the role they would like to play in the sector.

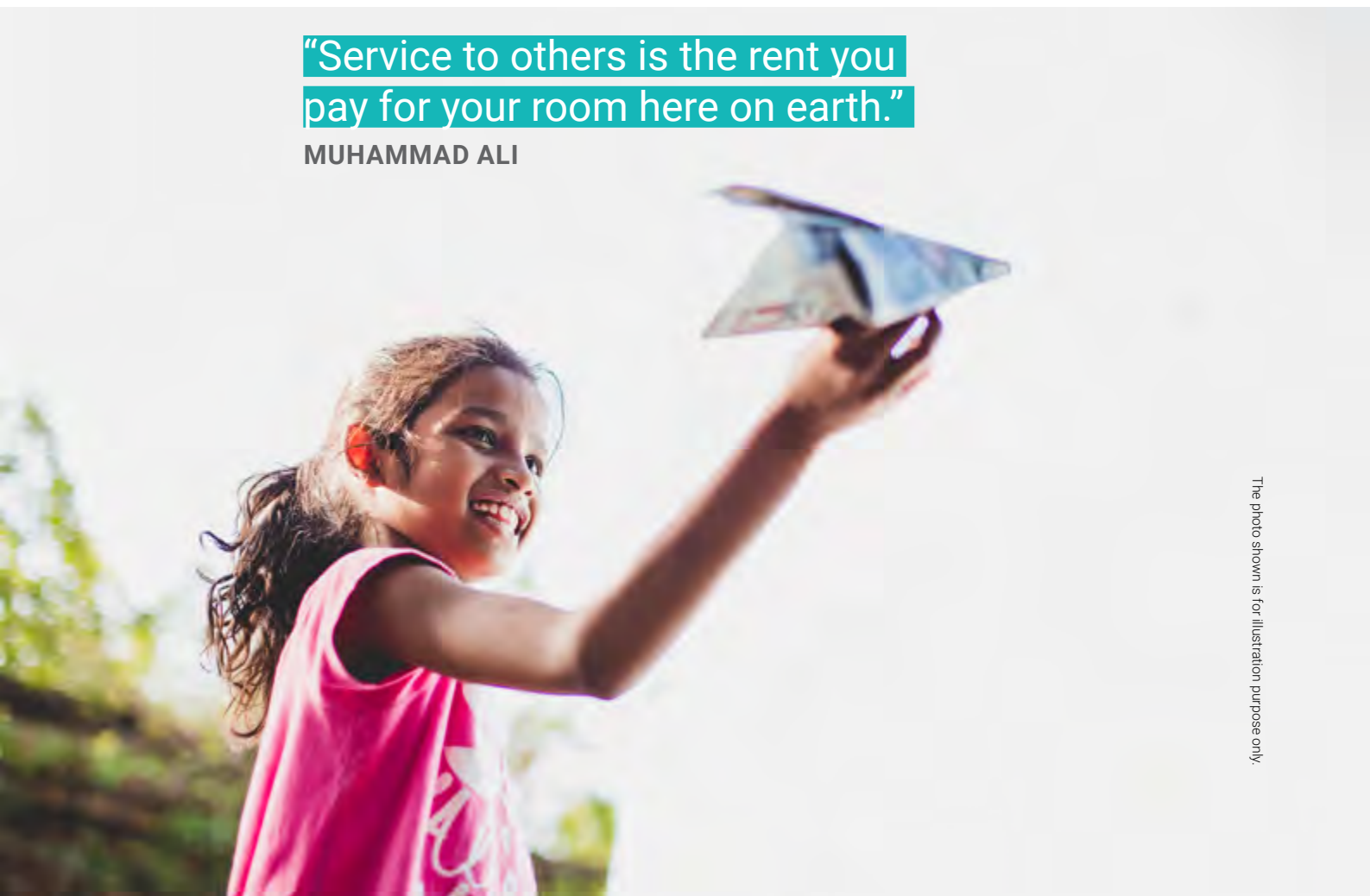
This report is studded with information and insights from active and inactive volunteers, organisations offering volunteering opportunities, and common citizens. This report aims to help and enable organizations, NGOs and nonprofits, government agencies, volunteering aggregate platforms, individuals like philanthropists and other stakeholders to understand and effectively engage with volunteers. Numerous research studies have focused on identifying motivation factors of individuals towards specific activities, because motivations have been proven to affect actual and future behavioral intentions, directly and significantly. Thus, it is imperative to understand the factors that drive people to volunteer in India.

In the last 2 decades, there has been a lot of progress in the volunteering sector. There has been an upward trend – both in terms of actual volunteering as well as its reporting. There are several new players and influencers in this sector, such as aggregate platforms. Corporates and Government agencies too have been increasingly engaging in volunteering. Overall, the middle class and upper middle-class citizens of India are exploring volunteering like never before.

Senior leadership, YuWaah at UNICEF

“Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.”

MUHAMMAD ALI



Rationale for the study

CRY and Grant Thornton Bharat embarked on a journey to collaborate and dive deep into understanding the status, trends, and expectations in the volunteering space in present-day India.

Volunteerism, as a sector, has been practiced and acknowledged extensively in India and globally. Nevertheless, it is under-studied and under-reported. Although some organisations and institutions have been open and encouraging towards their students, employees, and members to participate more in volunteering activities, a lot of individuals resist volunteering or fail to recognize their potential as volunteers. With advanced technology and social media providing new directions, the volunteering sector too has felt the impact. It is imperative to understand how, why, and where the volunteering sector is currently headed.

Several sectors such as education, health, environment, skill development and livelihoods, gender, information technology, agriculture, disaster relief, migrant and refugee support, community development, art and culture engage with volunteers to help with the progress of their planned activities towards achieving a larger goal of development. It also involves philanthropic activities. The key stakeholders would include - volunteers, NPO/NGOs, corporate companies, educational institutions, philanthropists, government agencies, aggregate platforms and other organisations offering volunteering opportunities.

Studies gathering real-world information (based on primary research) about volunteering trends, challenges, expectations, and opportunities in India are limited. Such studies would be required to understand the magnitude of volunteering opportunities and potential volunteers, and ways to match the requirements. This study not only reports the current trends and challenges, but also makes practical and strategic suggestions to organisations and institutes engaging closely with volunteers.

Ultimately, this study seeks to enable well-informed decision-making, the development of effective volunteering programs, the exploration of pertinent strategies for volunteer recruitment and retention, and the encouragement of positive engagement to create sustainable positive impact on communities and causes.

Literature Review

Volunteerism and Emerging Global Trends

UN General Assembly resolution¹⁵ (2002) characterized volunteering as “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.”

UNV 2020 has characterized volunteering as a multifaceted activity encompassing various practices, advantages, and motivations, emphasizing that volunteering serves “both a means and an end to achieving, challenging, disrupting, and even shaping development outcomes.”¹⁶

Shedding further light on the landscape of volunteerism, the CAF World Giving Index 2022 offers a distinct view of the trends in global generosity. As the world recovers from pandemic restrictions and addresses resultant needs, there has been a noteworthy shift in the practice of ‘giving’. A record-breaking 62% of people reported helping a stranger last year, the highest percentage since 2009.¹⁷

(CAF) World Giving Index 2023 report reveals that the Global World Giving Index score is currently 39, only one point shy of the peak seen in 2021. This suggests that the increase in global generosity witnessed during the pandemic has largely persisted.¹⁸

15 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA; 2002).

16 UNV2020

17 CAF World Giving Index 2022. A global view of giving trends. Charities Aid Foundation

18 CAF World Giving Index 2023. Global trends in generosity. Charities Aid Foundation

The data from the CAF World Giving Index provides empirical evidence that these acts of generosity are sustained even beyond emergencies, indicating a potentially lasting change in how communities engage in different forms of volunteerism. This continuity in high levels of charitable behavior could also reflect a deeper cultural or social commitment to communal support and civic participation - elements central to the broader understanding of volunteerism.

Indonesia has the highest World Giving Index score for the sixth year in a row. Kenya was second in 2022 and third in 2023. In understanding the consistency maintained by both countries in participation, giving, and volunteering time, the report suggests a possible explanation for these findings could be their large religious populations and strong community-focused cultural traditions. Indonesia's *Gotong-royong* ("the joint bearing of burdens") highlights philanthropic culture of collective actions and Kenya's *Harambee* (all pull together) which is a long-standing Kenyan tradition, is a type of self-help¹⁹, which unite people in times of increased need, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. The report highlighted the significant role that cultural and religious influences play in charitable activities worldwide.

According to the Charities Aid Foundation's (CAF) World Giving Index 2022, India was ranked 57th, with 33% of adults volunteering their time. Remarkably, by 2023, India had climbed to rank 43, with 37% of adults volunteering, indicating a notable increase in volunteer activity within just one year.

Building on the 'Volunteering in India: Contexts, Perspectives and Discourses' report published by United Nations Volunteers (UNV) in 2012, the report on the 'State of Youth Volunteering in India' 2017²⁰ further highlights how within the Indian context, it is important to understand the diversified expression of volunteerism which takes different forms that are often determined by the cultural and socio-political-economic context within which volunteering occurs.

An essential factor influencing volunteerism in India has been the traditions, value systems, and institutions stemming from the diverse cultures and religions that shaped sub-continental history. Hence, to fully appreciate the rich landscape of volunteerism in India, it is crucial to also consider the impact of theological beliefs and societal relationships which play a significant role in motivating acts of charity and philanthropy.²¹

Understanding Volunteerism in India

In India, the concept of volunteerism is deeply ingrained in the cultural, social, and philosophical fabric of the society. The idea of voluntary service or *Seva* holds a significant place in Indian traditions and philosophies, and it has a rich historical background.

The term '*Seva*' originates from Sanskrit and essentially means selfless service or volunteer work performed without any expectation of reward or recognition. The essence of this is deeply rooted in several belief systems in India. In Hindu philosophy, '*Seva*' is considered an act of selflessness and a pathway to spiritual growth. It is often associated with the concept of '*Karma Yoga*' from the Bhagavad Gita, where individuals perform their duties and services without attachment to the outcome. The Jain concept of '*Seva*' is rooted in the principle of '*Ahimsa*' or non-violence. It includes acts of charity, helping others, and showing compassion to all living beings.

Similarly, Buddhism also emphasizes selfless service ('*Seva*') as a means of cultivating compassion and reducing suffering. In Islam, the act of serving others is often referred to as '*Khidma*' or '*Khidmat*', which emphasizes the importance of helping, assisting, and serving individuals and the community as a whole. In Islamic tradition, concepts such as '*Zakat*' (obligatory charity), '*Sadaqah*' (voluntary charity), and '*Waqf*' (endowment for charitable purposes) are institutionalized to ensure the welfare of the community and those in need.²² Christian missionaries also have a long history of starting schools, orphanages, and medical centers.

¹⁹ Harambee: The law of generosity that rules Kenya (bbc.com)

²⁰ 'State of Youth Volunteering in India' 2017

²¹ 'State of Youth Volunteering in India' 2017

²² Volunteering In India. A Snapshot of practices, attitudes, and trends. © 2017 by iVolunteer (MITRA Technology Foundation)



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Within Sikh philosophy, the concept of service, known as ‘Seva,’ occupies a central and highly revered position as well. Sikhs are motivated to engage in selfless acts of service for the community, which range from participating in *Langar* (community kitchen) to aiding those who require assistance.

Understanding volunteerism in India means appreciating the deep-seated cultural and philosophical aspects that encourage individuals to engage in selfless service for the betterment of society. The spirit of Seva continues to inspire and drive numerous initiatives aimed at addressing social issues and fostering community well-being.

During the colonial period, the British government, adhering to the *laissez-faire* theory²³ of the state, adopted a policy of minimal intervention in social reform and assumed limited responsibility for social welfare. While the British had introduced several social service programs, the primary drivers of social welfare initiatives were Christian missionaries. This led to the establishment of numerous educational societies and voluntary organizations dedicated to engaging in social welfare activities.²⁴

India, during the first half of the nineteenth century (1800-1850), also witnessed the emergence of Institutional movements that played crucial roles in the growth and development of social work in India and led to the establishment of Brahmo Samaj, Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Arya Samaj, Prathana Sabha, Indian National Social Conference, Ramakrishna Mission etc.²⁵

Founded in 1905 by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the ‘Servants of India Society’ aimed to raise volunteers dedicated to serving the nation. As the first secular organization in India, it focused on assisting underprivileged, rural, and tribal communities, fostering unity among people of diverse ethnicities and religions for welfare purposes. This effort directly contributed to mass integration during the Indian Independence movement.²⁶

23 What Is Laissez-Faire Economic Theory? (economicsonline.co.uk)

24 Historical Development of Social Work In India

25 State of Youth Volunteering in India' 2017

26 Servants of India Society. Indian Culture, an initiative by the Ministry of Culture. the National Virtual Library of India project Servants of India Society.

Between 1922 and 1928, Gandhi and his millions of supporters embraced what he termed the “constructive program,” an essential element of Gandhian satyagraha.²⁷ This program aimed at self-improvement and social uplift,²⁸ embodying the principle of ‘Sarvodaya’, meaning ‘Universal Uplift’ or ‘Progress of All’. Gandhi initiated the Sarvodaya movement to revolutionize rural India, focusing on marginalized groups like women, children, and the untouchables. Post Independence during the 1950s and 1960s, his followers in India, notably Vinoba Bhave, continued to promote the society he envisioned, giving rise to the Sarvodaya Movement.²⁹

Post-Independence India witnessed significant social and economic changes, spurring the growth of the voluntary sector. In 1953, the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) was established by the Central Government to bolster voluntary associations’ influence, especially in rural and underserved areas.³⁰ The CSWB promoted social welfare and implemented programs for women, children, and the handicapped through voluntary organizations, pioneering people’s participation in post-independence welfare initiatives.

The Indian government valued voluntary organizations for nation-building and social development. This led to initiatives like the National Cadet Corps³¹ (NCC), established in 1948 to engage youth in activities for personal and community development. Subsequently, the National Service Scheme³² (NSS) launched in 1969 aimed to involve higher education students in community service and social development initiatives, fostering personal and social growth. Both the NCC and NSS remain active in educational institutions nationwide, providing youth with ongoing opportunities for meaningful social engagement.

In the 1980s, increased regulation aimed at ensuring transparency and accountability in the voluntary sector led to a more structured approach to volunteering. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the government granted more autonomy to NGOs and voluntary associations, allowing them to operate with greater freedom and flexibility. This shift was marked by the establishment of the Council for the Advancement of People’s Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) in 1986. CAPART allocated government and local funds to NGOs, fostering their autonomy and enabling them to operate more freely.³³

Established in 1972, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) aimed to empower rural youth in nation-building, offering opportunities for skill development and personality growth. In 1987-88, it became an autonomous organization under the Government of India, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. As the largest grassroots-level youth organization, NYKS promoted voluntarism, self-help, and community participation.³⁴

Initiated in the early 1990s, economic reforms aimed at opening India’s economy to global markets profoundly transformed sectors and influenced social, cultural, and technological aspects. As economic reforms and technological advancements progressed, they reshaped volunteer engagement. Increased access to information and the internet heightened awareness of social issues, fueling interest in volunteerism. NGOs and civil society groups saw significant growth, offering diverse volunteering opportunities spanning education, healthcare, and environmental conservation.

The Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Programme, implemented by the UNDP and the Ministry of Home Affairs from 2002-2009, engaged volunteers from local youth clubs, women SHGs, and CBOs in hazard-prone districts across India. Community-based organizations (CBOs) are local non-profit groups staffed by volunteers who understand community needs. They play a significant role in fulfilling the government’s agenda of inclusive growth. Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Indian Red Cross Society³⁵ (IRCS), and Rotary Clubs³⁶ are examples of CBOs in India. India has a strong and successful SHG movement, where women across the

27 Sourced from Gandhian philosophy of sarvodaya and its principles | Gandhi’s Views | Articles on and by Mahatma Gandhi (mkgandhi.org)

28 Lessons from a lull a century ago: The Congress party’s ‘constructive programme’ of the 1920s - Telegraph India. (2019) Manini Chatterjee

29 Sourced from Historical Development of Social Work In India

30 Central Social Welfare Board (sociologyguide.com)

31 Genesis of NCC | Directorate of National Cadet Corps (delhi.gov.in)

32 Organization | National Service Scheme (nss.gov.in)

33 Volunteering In India A Snapshot of practices, attitudes, and trends.© 2017 by iVolunteer (MITRA Technology Foundation)

34 Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (nyks.nic.in)

35 www.indianredcross.org

36 www.rotary.org

country are part of local village-level groups. SHGs have also been used as a medium to impart skills and education to women along with raising and addressing issues of concern to them.³⁷

Through the Eleventh (2007-2012) and Twelfth Five-Year Plans (2012-17), the government aimed to harness youth potential for development. Initiatives like expanding the youth club movement (NYKS and NSS) engaged rural youth in various activities. Additionally, schemes like the National Service Volunteers Scheme (NSVS) and Rashtriya Sadbhavana Yojana (RSY) provided opportunities for educated youth to participate in community development.³⁸

The Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India initiated the formation of Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNVs) under the Lab to Land Initiative in 2010-2011.³⁹ These volunteers aimed to raise awareness and enhance transparency and accountability in the government's program implementation. They achieved this by disseminating information and assisting in expediting the delivery of public services in rural areas.⁴⁰

The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan Mission (SBA), launched in 2014, aimed to achieve universal sanitation coverage through community-led approaches. Youth volunteers actively participated in cleanliness drives and building toilets to make their areas defecation-free.⁴¹

In 2013, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), the Government of India, and the UNDP launched a flagship initiative⁴² to empower young people and promote civic engagement, strengthening NYKS and NSS through UN Volunteer support across 29 districts. Implemented in two phases (2014-2018 and 2018-2022), the project enhanced the capacity of rural youth clubs, forming over 2,000 new clubs with 22,500 new youth volunteers.⁴³

The evaluation revealed increased youth participation in volunteering, integration into government schemes, enhanced employability, promotion of gender equality and social inclusion. While progress has been made, sustained efforts are needed. The project aligns with the UNV Strategic Framework and supports India's efforts to achieve Agenda 2030 through volunteerism.

Furthermore, the changing economic landscape spurred demand for skill-based volunteering, especially among the younger generation eager to apply professional expertise to meaningful causes. However, alongside these positive changes, modernization introduced challenges. Fast-paced lifestyles and individualistic values have led to time constraints, making long-term volunteering commitments difficult. This shift has impacted traditional community-centric volunteerism.

The private sector's involvement in voluntary action in India, through companies and corporate foundations, has been steadily increasing. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, including employee volunteering and giving, are offshoots of CSR and employee engagement programs.

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs introduced voluntary guidelines on CSR in 2009, later refined in 2011 as the National Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct. Mandatory CSR provisions under the Companies Act, 2013, took effect in 2014. The guidelines were updated in 2019 as the National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct to align with international standards.⁴⁴

Corporate India presents a significant socio-economic opportunity valued at INR 7,500 Crore through volunteering. Beyond mere CSR funding, both employees and companies can deeply engage in developmental

37 State of Youth Volunteering in India. 2017

38 Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007–2012) Social Sector. Volume II. Planning Commission (Government of India) 2008

39 Bharat Nirman: An Overview - India (mapsofindia.com)

40 BNV_ppt.pptx (live.com)

41 <http://swachhbharaturban.in> on May 11, 2017

42 Joint youth volunteering project "Strengthening Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) and National Service Scheme (NSS)" (2017) UN Volunteers.

43 Strengthening Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) and National Service Scheme (NSS) (December 2022).Terminal Evaluation. By Prof. Sudhakar Yedla Submitted to UNV/UNDP India

44 Home (csr.gov.in)

issues, leading to substantial societal impact. Among the top 100 companies in India, boasting over 5 million employees, there were reported 400,000+ annual volunteers contributing 5 million+ annual volunteering hours. The report (2023) by India Welfare Trust indicates a potential 5x-10x scalability in corporate volunteering.⁴⁵

Many corporations now actively encourage employee volunteering through CSR initiatives, including skill-based volunteering and community projects. Corporate volunteering has evolved into a structured approach, fostering prolonged and impactful engagement with communities. The rise of skill-based volunteering is evident, with individuals leveraging their specialized expertise in areas like organizational strategy, marketing, technology adoption, and skill training within communities. To foster a supportive volunteering environment, collaboration and commitment from various stakeholders are essential. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives can strategically align projects with employee engagement, resulting in enhanced retention, skill enhancement, and overall well-being.⁴⁶

Employee Volunteer Programs (EVPs) not only enhance the firm's appeal but also elevate employee engagement, demonstrate CSR efforts, and align with global strategies. These programs come in various designs, ranging from long-term individual projects to community events, fostering both community impact and internal benefits such as leadership and skill development.⁴⁷

They vary in form, from one-off initiatives to ongoing engagement, providing significant support for professional development. Emerging trends like virtual and 'gig' volunteering are allowing volunteers to undertake micro-projects with tangible outcomes in shorter time frames, typically lasting one to three months.⁴⁸

While CSR initiatives offer more volunteering opportunities, concerns remain about authenticity and the potential prioritization of business interests over social impact. Developing newer platforms for engagement is crucial for fostering collaboration between state and non-state actors, governments, civil society, private institutions, and individuals.

Millora (2020), in his publication, proposed a new model for understanding volunteering practices in the 21st Century.⁴⁹

This model defines volunteering according to five components: structure (formal and/or informal), site (online and/or offline), intensity (episodic and/or regular), aspiration (self-building and/or community-building), and category (service, mutual aid, participation, campaigning, and leisure).

The evolving landscape of volunteering reflects broader societal shifts towards individualistic approaches, as highlighted by researchers like Hustinx and Lammertyn⁵⁰ (2004) and Hustinx and Meijs⁵¹ (2011). This transition, termed 'new volunteerism,' influences choices related to organizations, causes, and relationships with beneficiaries, with trust and credibility playing crucial roles.

Rapid technological advancements have diversified volunteer engagement, with online volunteering addressing transportation barriers, time constraints, and considerations for persons with disabilities (Amichai-Hamburger, 2008). Cyberactivism has mobilized individuals in campaigns, petitions, and protests.⁵²

Grant Thornton Bharat has been engaging in CSR activities while encouraging its employees into giving back. The aim is to bring about a meaningful and lasting transformation in the areas where our Firm operates using its relationships, skills, and resources to shape #VibrantBharat.

CSR Committee at Grant Thornton Bharat

45 Final_Volunteering in 100 Top Companies in India by IWT (idronline.org)

46 What nonprofits need to know about volunteering | IDR (idronline.org)

47 Final_Volunteering in 100 Top Companies in India by IWT (idronline.org)

48 What nonprofits need to know about volunteering | IDR (idronline.org)

49 Volunteering Practices in the Twenty-First Century (2020) Plan of Action to Integrate Volunteering into the 2030 Agenda

50 Hustinx, L., & Lammertyn, F. (2003). Collective and Reflexive Styles of Volunteering: A Sociological Modernization Perspective. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 14, 167-187.

51 Hustinx, L., & Meijs, L. (2011). Re-embedding volunteering: in search of a new collective ground. *Voluntary Sector Review*, 2, 5-21.

52 'State of Youth Volunteering in India' 2017

Social media plays a vital role in volunteer recruitment and retention, providing organizations with tailored messaging to attract volunteers with specific interests, skills, or backgrounds. Platforms like Facebook Groups and Twitter threads are fostering engagements and providing real-time updates on projects, contributing to volunteer motivation and interest, particularly during crises like the pandemic.

Gen Z and Gen Y⁵³ are leveraging online platforms to find volunteer opportunities aligned with their interests in social justice, environmental sustainability, and community welfare. They prefer skill-based volunteering, seeking alignment between professional capabilities and personal interests, reshaping traditional volunteer models towards flexibility and project-based opportunities.

India's standing in global development rankings sheds light on its progress and challenges. According to the Sustainable Development Report 2023⁵⁴, India ranks 112th out of 166 countries in the SDG index⁵⁵, with a score of 63.45/100. Meanwhile, the 2023/24 Human Development Report⁵⁶ shows India's HDI value increased to 0.644 in 2022, placing it at 134 out of 193 countries.

While there has been some recent progress, India still confronts numerous hurdles in achieving the SDGs and enhancing its HDI. Recognizing the pivotal role of Indian youth in this endeavor, as emphasized in UNV's State of Youth Volunteering in India 2017 Report, is paramount.

The changing socio-economic landscape, influenced by liberalization and modernization, has expanded opportunities for volunteerism in India. However, addressing disparities between urban and rural areas, time constraints, and shifting social values is essential to ensure that volunteerism remains a genuine force for positive change.

Despite considerable attention to various aspects of volunteering, there's a relative oversight regarding the participation of the elderly. Harnessing their experience and skills requires understanding how evolving societal dynamics impact their engagement, considering factors like technological advancements and changing family structures.

The nature of social-structural embeddedness significantly influences volunteers, giving rise to distinct meanings and patterns of involvement. It is essential to acknowledge various social structural forces that drive volunteers in specific directions. Understanding the diverse cultural and contextual realities of volunteers across different settings, from bustling cities to smaller towns⁵⁷, is crucial for developing a comprehensive approach to volunteerism in India.

Organizational Reputation and Trust: CRY understands the importance of reputation, transparency, and ethics as key factors attracting volunteers. The organization's practice of publicizing financial details online instills trust among volunteers and donors alike. Word of mouth, particularly through personal connections and family histories with CRY, significantly contributes to volunteer recruitment. .

Senior leadership, CRY

53 Generation Y refers to the generation of the Millennials born between 1981 and 1996 while gen Z is the generation born between 1997 and 2012.

54 Sachs, J.D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Drumm, E. (2023). Implementing the SDG Stimulus. Sustainable Development Report 2023. Paris: SDSN, Dublin: Dublin University Press, 2023. 10.25546/102924

55 United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme (2021). 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report. Building equal and inclusive societies. Bonn.

56 The 2023/2024 Human Development Report. 2024. By the United Nations Development Programme

57 Lesley, Hustinx, Frans, Lammertyn, (2003). Collective and Reflexive Styles of Volunteering: A Sociological Modernization Perspective. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, June 2003, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 167-187

METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH



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India's rich history of volunteerism in different domains and different parts of the country has been largely an understudied area. The last decade has been a time of great transformation for the country, with fast-paced development in technology entering newer areas and dramatically changing the landscape of the country. These evolving factors of technology, economy, along with socio-cultural as well as political factors in this diverse nation provides a fertile ground to study the emerging changes that are being witnessed in the ways of volunteering, role of volunteers and their impact.

To delve deep into these transformations, it was essential to scrutinize and analyze shifts in the factors that motivate and facilitate volunteering, while also evaluating the involvement of key stakeholders. Hence, a mixed-methods approach was utilized to conduct a comprehensive market research study aimed at uncovering evolving perspectives on volunteerism and experiences in volunteering.

Research Objectives:

The key objectives of the study are:

1. To understand emerging key trends in volunteerism and volunteering in India, changes in perspectives and attitudes towards volunteering.
2. A comprehensive exploration of the motivational factors that drive individuals to engage in volunteer work, the facilitating factors that support and encourage continued volunteering, and the factors that may lead to volunteers discontinuing their involvement.
3. To gain comprehensive insights into the impact of volunteering and volunteerism across various organizations, sectors, and age groups.
4. To comprehend the variations in the availability of volunteering opportunities across different regions of the country, tailored for diverse age groups across stakeholders, and to determine the actions required to expand and enhance volunteering options for these groups.

Research Design

This market study uses a mixed-method approach as a research design as it combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of the study objectives. The method is utilized to provide a more nuanced and robust understanding of emerging changes in volunteerism in India and the experience for volunteers.

The quantitative data, collected through different online surveys for different stakeholders, provided statistical insights into the experience of individuals from individuals from diverse age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, educational levels, professions, and cultures. While the qualitative data, collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (both in person and online) offered in-depth context, explanations, and insights into the "why" and "how" behind the quantitative findings. The quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analyzed simultaneously.

Data Sources: We conducted a comprehensive secondary research and desk review, exploring relevant materials to construct a comprehensive database and identify research gaps in the area of volunteerism. Questionnaires and tools were formulated based on these identified gaps to facilitate the collection of primary data. Following the development, the tools were rigorously evaluated by the CRY team. The primary data collection involved the administration of online surveys targeting all relevant stakeholders. To further supplement the findings, both online and offline individual interviews, as well as focused group discussions, were carried out across various stakeholders to gather qualitative insights.

Sampling Method: The study employed a mixed-method approach, combining both random sampling and stratified sampling techniques. The selection method of random sampling was utilized, ensuring that every

individual within the population had an equal opportunity to be chosen. This approach minimized bias and enhanced the likelihood of obtaining a representative sample of the population. Stratified sampling entailed the segmentation of the population into distinct groups based on age, including categories like students, working professionals, and senior citizens and then randomly selecting samples from each subgroup. This approach ensured that each age group is represented in the sample, allowing for a deeper understanding of their experiences, to identify potential age-related patterns or trends in volunteering.

Sample Size: The research aimed to attain a comprehensive understanding by engaging a substantial and diverse group of participants from various regions across India, including Tier 1, 2, and 3 cities in the North, West, South, East, and Central parts of the country. The intended sample size was 5500 respondents, distributed as follows: approximately 60% consisted of students currently attending school or college, while 30% encompassed professionals, spanning both young and middle-aged demographics. The remaining segment was earmarked for senior citizens, government officials, and members of the CRY management. Both qualitative and quantitative research utilized distinct sample size approaches. Qualitative tools played a crucial role in eliciting rich narratives from stakeholders by providing an in-depth understanding of respondents' and stakeholders' thoughts, behaviours, and motivations. The study includes a comprehensive understanding by encompassing participants from multiple geographical areas, age categories, and professional experiences.

Data Collection Instruments

A thorough examination of existing research identified areas where information was lacking or outdated. These gaps in knowledge guided the research focus and the questions for the tool development. Further, the questionnaires and tools for both qualitative and quantitative data collection were developed along the lines of gaps identified in the existing information.

Recognizing the diverse needs and perspectives of different stakeholder groups, the study employed customized qualitative and quantitative research tools tailored to students, working professionals, and senior citizens. This approach ensured that the data collected was relevant, meaningful, and reflective of the specific experiences and circumstances of each group.

Qualitative data was gathered through structured and semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and in-depth interviews (IDIs), while quantitative data was collected through online surveys. This diverse range of data collection methods allowed for a comprehensive understanding of volunteerism from multiple angles and perspectives.

Furthermore, discussions with target groups and both direct and indirect stakeholders provided valuable insights into the project's objectives and the broader context of volunteerism. This engagement with key stakeholders ensured that the study remained grounded in the realities of the volunteer community.

The customized research tools were specifically designed to gather new, primary data from individuals and organizations directly involved in volunteerism. This emphasis on primary data collection ensured that the study's findings were based on fresh, up-to-date information that reflected the current state of volunteerism.

By tailoring research tools to different stakeholder groups, utilizing a variety of data collection methods, and engaging with key stakeholders, the study gathered rich and insightful data that provided a nuanced understanding of volunteerism.

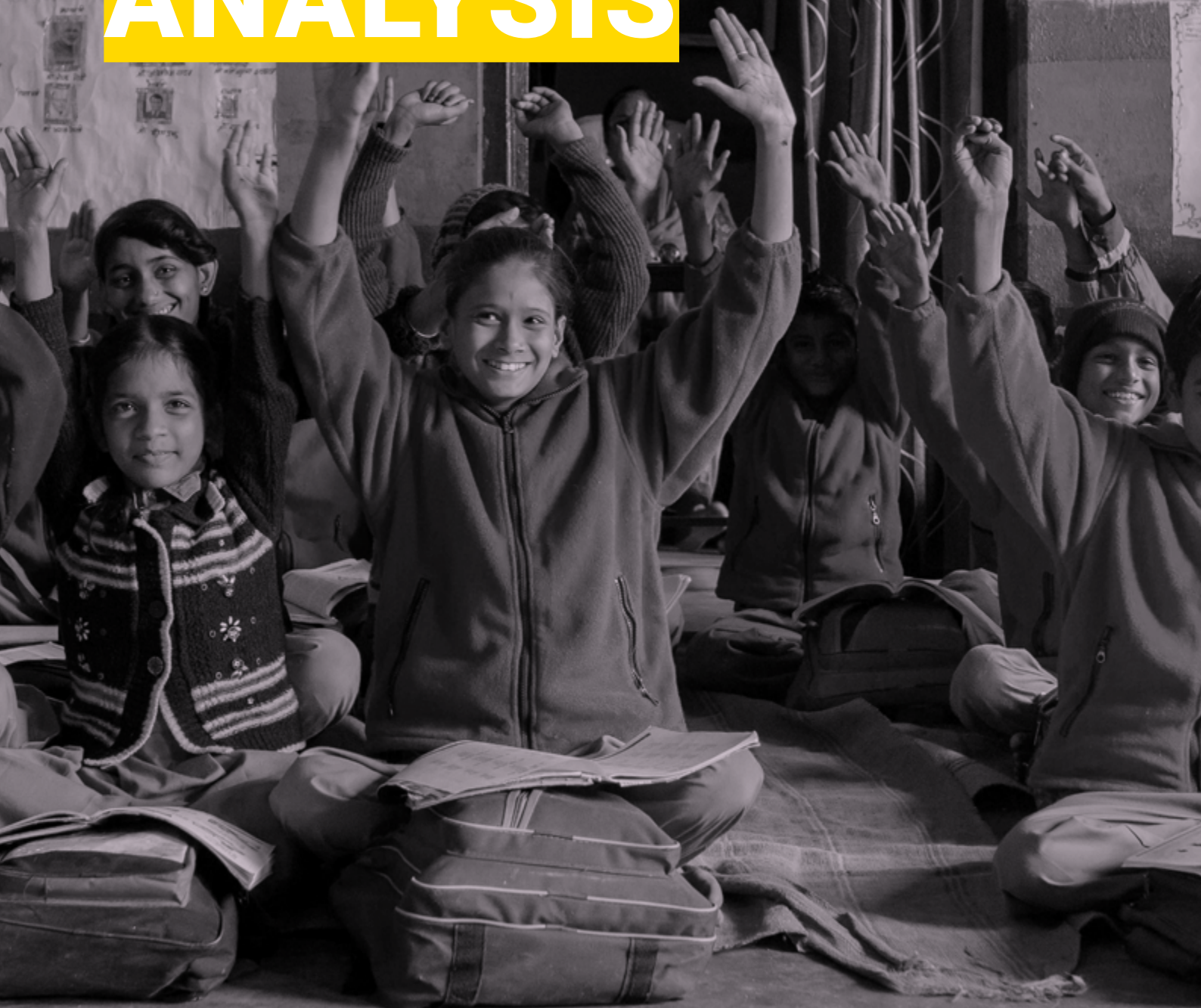
Data Analysis - The quantitative and qualitative data was gathered from a wide range of sources, including direct observations, interviews, surveys, academic publications, and government reports. The quantitative data from surveys was analyzed to identify trends and statistics. Thematic analysis was used to analyze and process the qualitative data. The analysis of data involved segmenting the data based on different factors, such as the type of volunteering activity, the motivation for volunteering, or the demographic characteristics of the volunteers. The goal was to understand how different factors influence the patterns of volunteerism. The data was examined in relation to other social factors, such as education level, age, income, and gender, to

comprehend how these elements affect volunteering trends and identify any potential disparities. Discussions were held on key findings, observations, results and recommendations with the project team to obtain relevant inputs for the final report. This involves interpreting the findings of the analysis in the context of the study's objectives and in relation to existing trends in volunteerism. Correlations were established between objectives and trends by utilizing the collected and analyzed data. The objective is to deduce insights into the current state of volunteering and identify prospective areas for future research or intervention.

Data Collection Procedure

- A. Identification of respondents** – The selection of eligible respondents for the study was conducted in accordance with the research objectives and predefined criteria. The research team engaged potential respondents through a variety of communication channels, including email, telephone calls, and face-to-face interactions. During the initial engagement, a comprehensive explanation was provided regarding the study's purpose, nature, and the extent of involvement expected from the respondents.
- B. Informed Consent** – Each potential respondent was presented with an informed consent document that delineated the study's objectives, the data collection process, and ethical considerations. Particular attention was given to affording respondents ample time to review the consent form and seek clarification on any aspects they found ambiguous. In instances involving minors, their parents or legal guardians were requested to grant their approval and formally endorse the consent form, signifying their voluntary acquiescence to participation. Throughout the qualitative research process, including the interview phase, comprehensive notes or audio recordings were taken only with the express permission of the participants.
- C. Distribution of survey** – The quantitative data was collected through online distribution of surveys via email, social media posts or face-to-face interactions. The survey forms emphasized the voluntary nature of participation and participants had the option to indicate their initial agreement or disagreement with the overall theme of the research before starting the survey. The respondents were provided with clear and comprehensive information about the research, including its purpose, methodology, risks, potential benefits, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. To protect the identities of respondents, anonymity was maintained throughout the survey, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The surveys were also designed to be anonymous to encourage participants to share their opinions without fear of judgment. There were many respondents who filled the survey anonymously. Additionally, the survey provided options to skip questions, further reinforcing privacy and allowing respondents to maintain control over their participation. This approach helped mitigate bias, as participants may not have agreed with all statements, thus ensuring the accuracy of responses.
- D. Qualitative data collection** – The qualitative data was collected through focused group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs) which were scheduled with participants at mutually convenient times and locations. The interviews were conducted utilizing both online and offline modalities. All the responses were collected while ensuring participants understood their right to decline answering any specific questions. An overall systematic and uniform approach was maintained while collecting data.
- E. Ethical considerations** – Data collection was executed with the utmost care, respect, and sensitivity toward the rights and privacy of the individuals involved. Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were crucial to safeguarding their privacy and ensuring that they feel comfortable while sharing their experiences and opinions. The confidentiality was achieved by limiting access to personal information and avoiding any form of identification that could link participants' responses to their identities. All data collected during the research has been stored securely and in accordance with data protection regulations to prevent unauthorized access or misuse of sensitive information.

DATA FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS



The photo shown is for illustration purpose only.

In this section, the data gathered has been analysed and presented in three categories of respondents – Students, working professionals, and senior citizens. In each category, the analysis brings out the nuances of demographics, dynamics, behaviour, patterns, motivators, and other factors influencing volunteering. It also covers the expectations of each of these categories.

Students

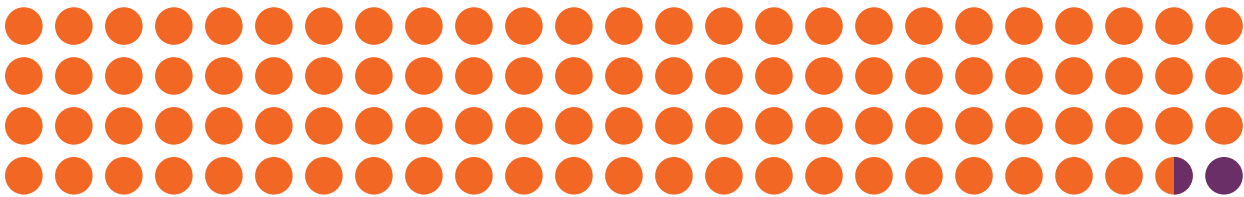
In recent years, volunteerism among young people has garnered significant attention, reflecting broader shifts in societal engagement and the values of the younger generations.

A survey of 2,481 participants, predominantly students, provides insightful data into how this demographic perceives volunteerism, what motivates them to volunteer, and what they seek to gain from their experiences. This section aims to synthesize these findings to offer actionable insights for organizations looking to engage young volunteers effectively.

Participants agreement distribution

Agreed

98.4%



1.6%
Disagreed

With a predominant female response rate and a significant representation from Tier 3 areas, the data reveals a demographic keen on leveraging volunteer opportunities for both altruistic purposes and personal growth. This section delves into the demographics, perceptions, motivations, preferences, and expectations surrounding volunteerism, offering actionable insights for organizations to harness the potential of youth volunteers effectively.

Volunteerism among the youth represents a pivotal avenue for societal engagement, personal development, and the cultivation of future leaders. Understanding how students perceive volunteerism, what drives them to volunteer, and what they seek from these experiences is essential for crafting programs that resonate with this demographic. The survey's findings provide a rich dataset for analysis, offering a window into the priorities, preferences, and expectations of young volunteers.

The data gathered was analyzed to identify trends, preferences, and disparities, informing the recommendations for engaging student volunteers more effectively.

“Engaging young volunteers, particularly from schools and colleges is identified as a strategic priority. Creating meaningful, immersive experiences for them can inspire a lifelong commitment to child rights.

Senior leader at CRY (Trustee)

A. General Demographics

Gender and Geographic Distribution



- **Gender Distribution:** With females constituting 61.7% of respondents, the data suggests a higher female inclination towards volunteerism. This finding necessitates gender-sensitive approaches to volunteer engagement and program design. One of the school teachers interviewed explained how interest areas play a crucial role while involving young volunteers. The activities should be chosen with care and sensitivity towards different parameters, best done after discussing in detail their interests and any other sensitive matters.
- **Geographic Insights:** Most of the responses to the survey came from Tier 3 areas, highlighting the widespread appeal of volunteerism across various socioeconomic backgrounds. This diversity underscores the need for inclusive strategies that cater to the unique needs and contexts of volunteers from different regions. The majority of sectors are turning towards Tier 3 cities in India, not only for inclusion but also for business potential. Similarly, these cities have huge potential in the volunteering sector. With carefully planned mobilization strategies and skills matching, volunteers from tier 3 cities and other rural areas in India can be brought under the greater volunteering network, explained Manoj Thapa, manager who specializes in rural volunteering at CRY in Bangalore.

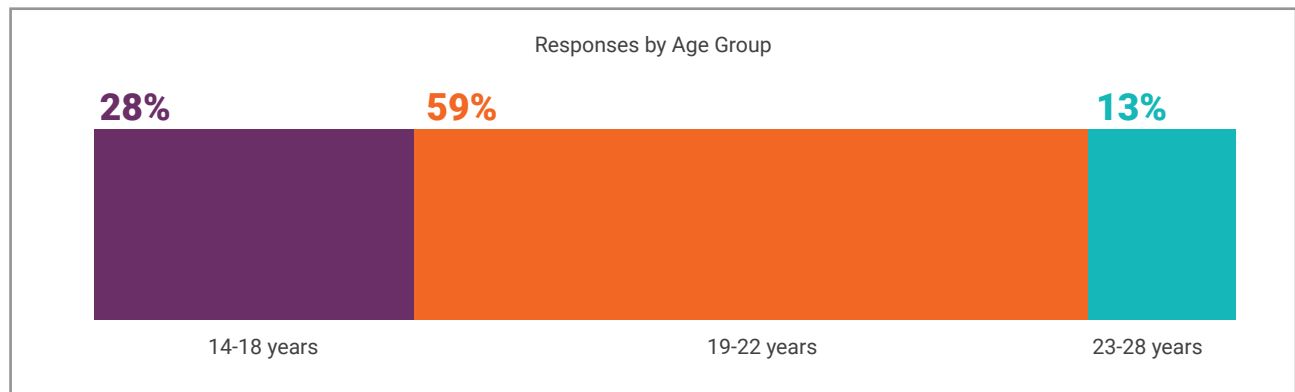


Age and Educational Background

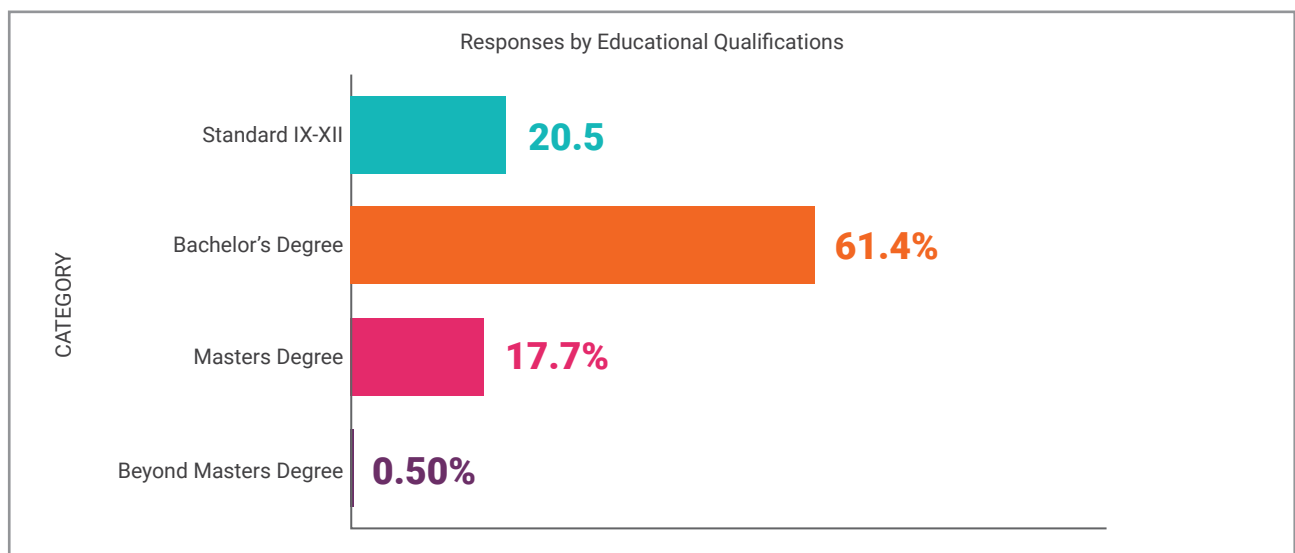
- **Age Dynamics:** The concentration of respondents in the 19-22 age bracket emphasizes the eagerness of young adults to engage in volunteerism, likely driven by a combination of altruistic motives and the pursuit of personal development.

Early Engagement: The conversation underscores a strategic focus on engaging youth, particularly students and young professionals, as a priority. Early engagement in schools and colleges is viewed as an opportunity to instill the values of volunteerism and child rights awareness from a young age, potentially leading to a lifelong commitment to the cause.

Senior leader at CRY

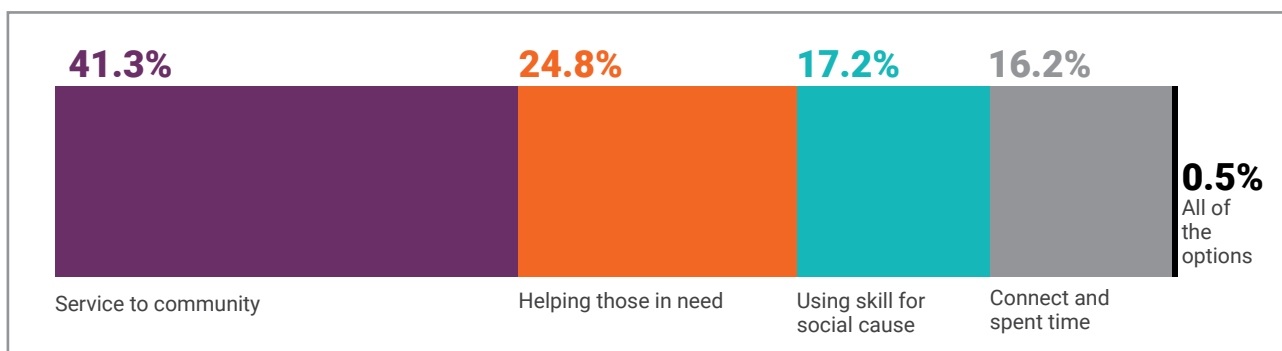


- **Educational Insights:** With a significant portion of participants holding or pursuing bachelor's degrees, the data reflects a well-educated demographic. This suggests that volunteer opportunities should be designed to leverage and further develop the sophisticated skill sets of these individuals. A senior leader at UNICEF explained the importance of including volunteering in educational policies. The knowledge and skills needed for the 21st century could be learnt and practiced through volunteering.



B. Perceptions and Motivations

DIVERSE VIEWS ON VOLUNTEERISM



- **Altruistic Service vs. Skill Application:** The survey reveals a balanced view of volunteerism, combining traditional altruistic service to the community with skill-based volunteering aimed at personal and professional development. A 22 year-old college student from Kochi explained that she has participated in volunteering only as a service, with no expectations in return. She said- "While volunteering, I have only thought about how I can help others, be it people living in old-age homes or very young children. However, I have seen improvements in communication skills and work management".
- **Social Connection:** A notable portion of respondents value the opportunity to meet new people through volunteering, indicating the importance of the social aspect in volunteer engagement strategies. A student pursuing a Master's degree from Mumbai said that she started volunteering mainly to connect with organisations and people. She explained that her passion for arts got her to volunteer with a prestigious organisation, through which she got connected with many other people from different backgrounds, who practice various art forms. This helped her build networking skills as well.

MOTIVATIONS FOR VOLUNTEERING



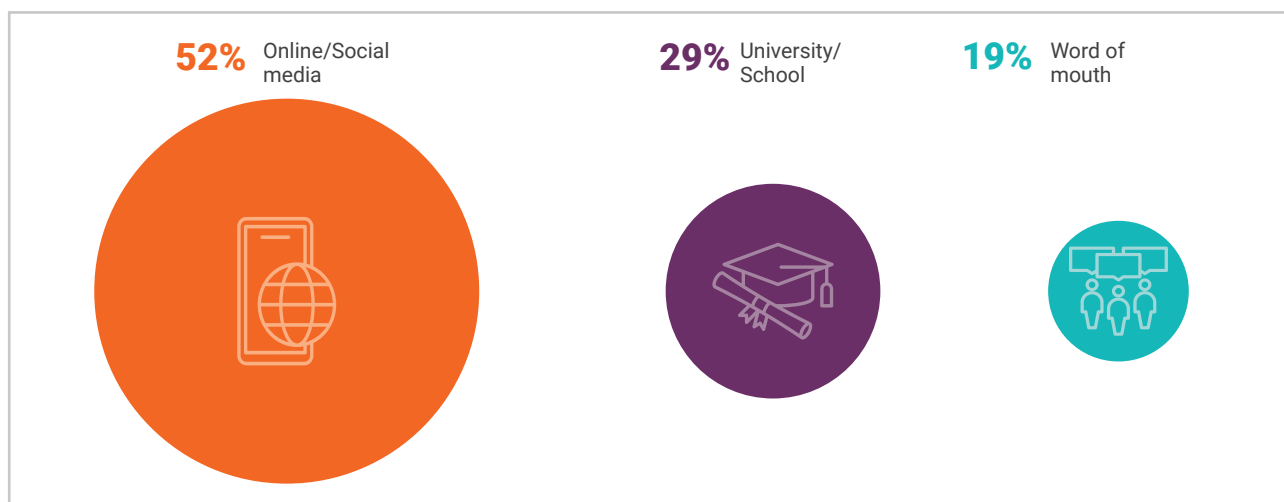
- **Learning and Development:** A significant motivator for volunteering is the desire for learning and personal growth, with many seeing it as an avenue to explore career opportunities and enhance self-esteem.
- **Compassion and Altruism:** With a strong focus on personal benefits, altruistic motives remain a powerful driver, with a large number of respondents indicating a compassionate approach towards volunteering.

"For me, volunteering is primarily driven by self-motivation rather than any external factors. If I were to pinpoint specific reasons, one would be the thrill of exploring new things, and the other would be the desire to enhance my resume and receive recognition. These factors inspire me to actively engage in volunteer work, making the experience not only personally fulfilling but also beneficial for my professional growth".

A 13-year-old student from Ahmedabad

C. Engagement Preferences and Expectations

Discovery and Engagement Channels



- **Digital Platforms:** The prominence of online and social media channels as the primary source for discovering volunteer opportunities points to the critical role of digital engagement in attracting young volunteers. Students these days are tech-savvy and prefer information dissemination through online sources, explained a retired schoolteacher from a prominent CBSE school based in Guwahati.
- **Role of Educational Institutions:** The survey underscores the effectiveness of leveraging educational partnerships, suggesting that volunteer-engaging organizations should seek collaborations with schools and universities. In an interaction with a senior leader at CRY, it was explained that there is a consensus on the need to reintroduce and emphasize volunteer programs in schools, acknowledging that youth engagement is very crucial.

CRY conducts an annual comprehensive survey to capture the impact of volunteering on volunteers across various activities, including Direct Work with Children, Internships, Mentoring Sessions, Research, Data Analysis, Content Support, Campaigns and Events, Special Projects (Institutional Collaboration), Sprint, and YCC.

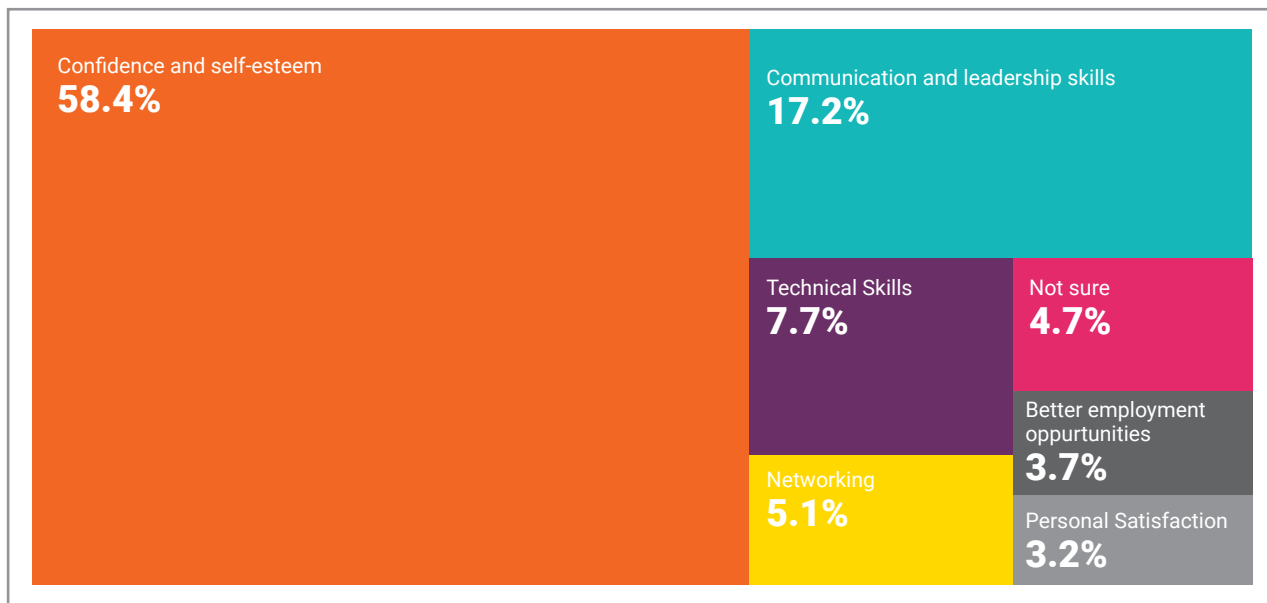
The survey employs a 5-point scale and considers several developmental factors such as **mental well-being, problem-solving skills, self-confidence, teamwork, creativity, communication, and leadership**, among others, which volunteers perceive volunteering helps them with. **The primary goal of the survey is to comprehend volunteering's influence on participants.** The results are analysed to detect shifts in volunteers' experiences across different developmental areas and engagements, highlighting changes in each aspect.

Volunteering Modes and Durations

- **Preference for Flexibility:** The data indicates a strong preference for hybrid volunteering modes that allow a blend of in-person and online participation. This reflects the desire for flexible engagement options that accommodate the dynamic lifestyles of students.
- **Short-term Engagements:** There is a notable inclination towards short-term volunteering opportunities, suggesting that organizations should offer a range of engagement durations to appeal to diverse volunteer availability and interests. A prominent volunteering aggregate platform's senior leader spoke in-depth about short-term volunteering becoming a trend in younger volunteers as well. He explained how students prefer short-term and hybrid modes of volunteering – where they can choose the number of days they want to come to a centre to offer services.

D. Enhancing the Volunteer Experience

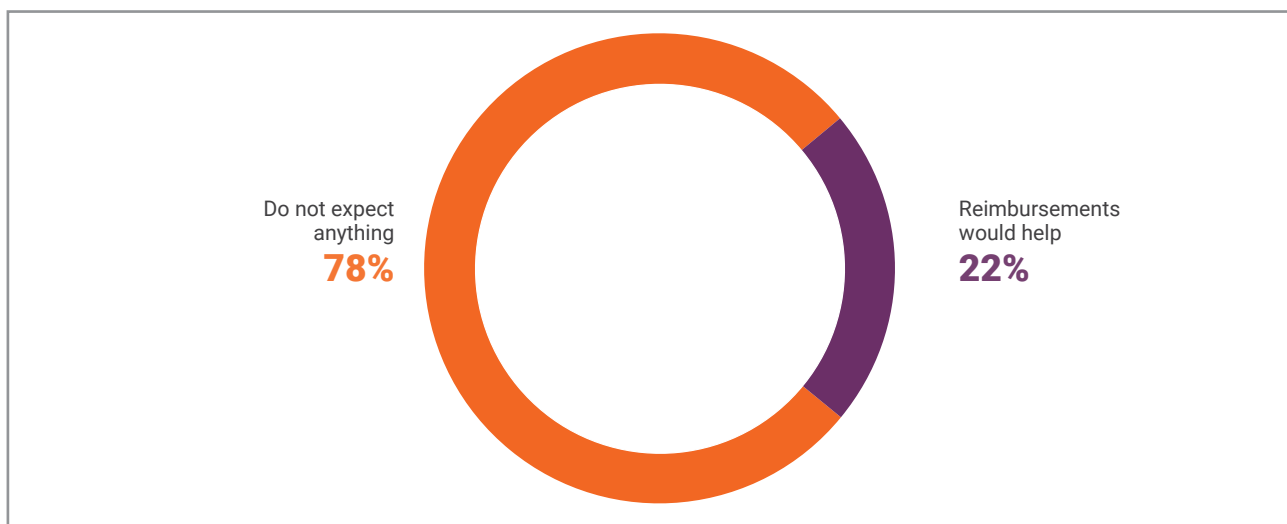
Expectations from Volunteering

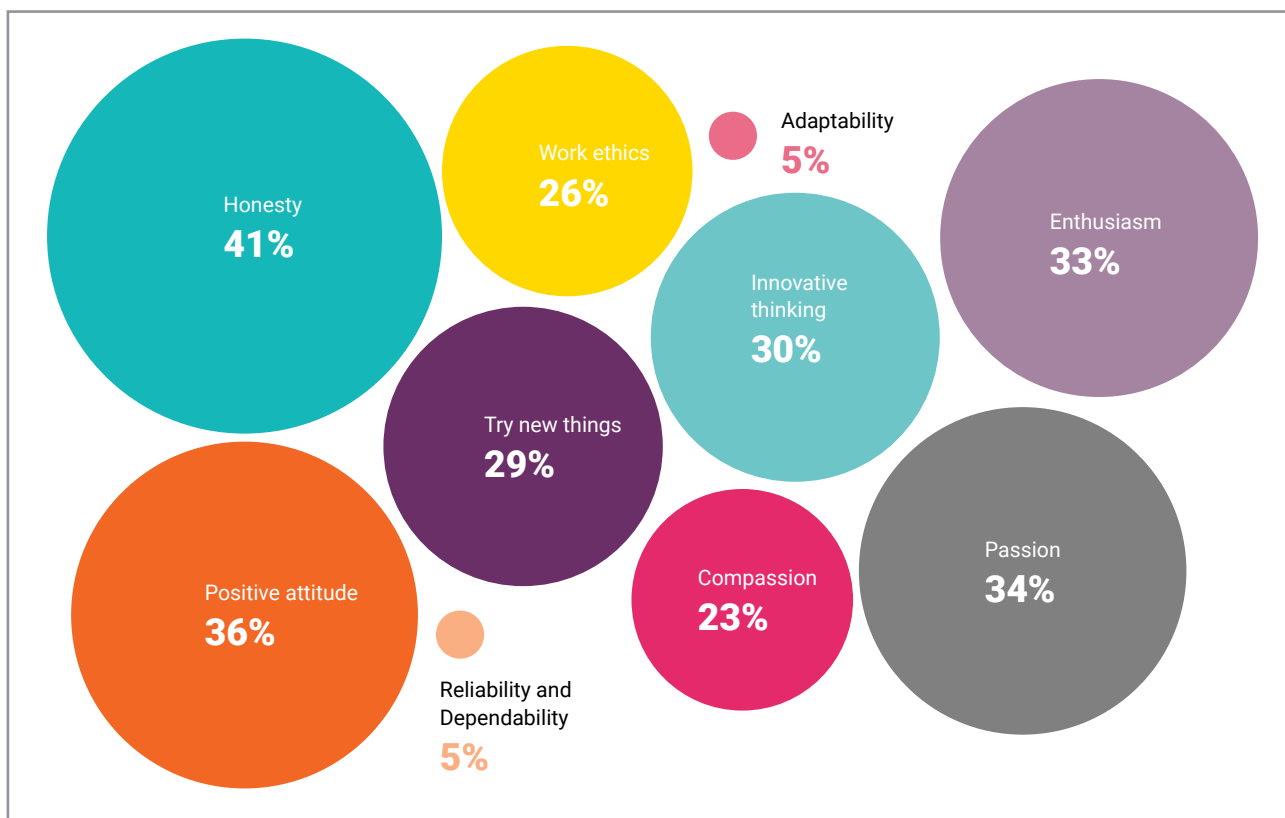


- **Personal Development:** Volunteers expect significant personal gains from their volunteering experiences, including confidence, self-esteem, communication, leadership skills, and even technical abilities. These expectations highlight the need for programs that offer structured skill development and leadership opportunities. A Bangalore-based English language teacher stressed that students these days should interact with the society around them to improve their confidence and self-esteem; one of the best ways to do so, is by volunteering with organisations that will help them grow.
- **Career Advancement:** The survey reveals an interest in volunteering as a means to explore and advance career prospects, suggesting that volunteer programs could benefit from incorporating elements of career guidance and professional networking.

Improving Volunteer Satisfaction

- **Reimbursements and Support:** Addressing practical concerns, such as reimbursements for expenses, can enhance the volunteer experience, making it more accessible and sustainable for students.
- **Value Alignment:** The emphasis on honesty, positive attitude, and a willingness to try new things as key volunteer values suggest that successful volunteer programs should align with these intrinsic motivations, fostering an environment of integrity, optimism, and openness to new experiences.





The detailed analysis explores these cross-correlations and interlinkages to offer a comprehensive understanding of volunteerism in the context of the survey.

- The survey highlights how perceptions of volunteerism vary across age groups and educational levels, with volunteering viewed as a means for community service, skill application, personal growth, and social connection.
- Younger respondents, especially those in the 14-18 and 19-22 age groups, see volunteering as an opportunity for learning, development, and career exploration. This perception aligns with their life stage, characterized by identity exploration and future planning.
- In contrast, older participants (23-28 years) exhibit a more focused engagement, aligning volunteering with personal and professional values, indicating a shift towards targeted, meaningful activities as they progress in their careers and personal lives.
- Educational attainment further nuances these perspectives. Individuals with higher education levels, particularly those holding or pursuing Bachelor's and Master's degrees, are likely to engage in volunteering for skill development, career exploration, and as a form of altruistic contribution, reflecting the diverse motivations across different levels of educational attainment.

Volunteering is unpaid work. Since the nature of volunteering is so, for some people it may get difficult to continue volunteering. In some cases, an organisation may even exploit the services, time and effort of the volunteers. There should be some way to identify these red flags sooner.

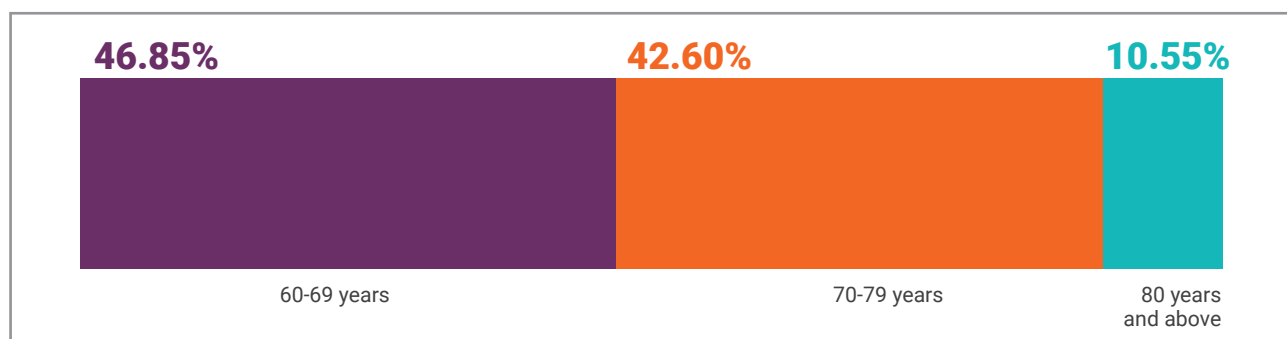
A college student from Delhi

Senior Citizens



The survey involved 47 participants, encompassing a diverse demographic spread across gender, age, state/UT, education level, and employment status. The data collection focused on perceptions of volunteering, reasons for volunteering, past volunteer experiences, challenges faced, and future volunteering preferences.

- **Gender Distribution:** 38.3% male and 61.7% female participants, indicating a higher inclination among women towards volunteerism.
- **Age Group Distribution:** Majority in the 60-69 (46.85%) and 70-79 (42.6%) age brackets, suggesting active interest in volunteering among early and late seniors.



- **Educational Background:** A significant portion holding Bachelor's degrees (48.9%) or higher, highlighting a well-educated demographic.
- **Employment Status:** Most participants are retired (59.4%), indicating availability and willingness to engage in volunteer activities.

Perceptions of Volunteerism

The majority view volunteering as a means to serve and help the community (83%), with significant emphasis on informal assistance (55%) and skill-based volunteering (30% to 21%).

Motivations for Volunteering

- Key motivations include satisfaction from helping others (83%), meeting diverse people (60%), and contributing to societal progress (49%).

- Less than 10% volunteered for learning new skills, indicating a preference for utilizing existing skills and engaging in social activities.

Volunteer Experience

- 36% of respondents have volunteered before, primarily in community settings (63%) and on an individual basis (54%).
- Challenges were minor among those who volunteered with registered organizations, with the majority expressing high satisfaction (80%).

Having worked as an engineer with the Government and having set up about several schools in Dehradun, I have always tried to balance my professional, personal, and volunteering efforts. In my experience, there should be a balanced way of living. Everybody should give their time after retirement and help others.

A senior citizen from Dehradun

I have been volunteering since my school days and I may have inherited that from my grandfather who never said no to helping someone in need. Now, after having worked for 38 years in several Indian states, I feel we should volunteer within our communities. My wife and I have been able to do that since our family supports us. Many senior citizens are not interested in volunteering, they hesitate due to health and family situations. I try to encourage my peers to come and volunteer more..

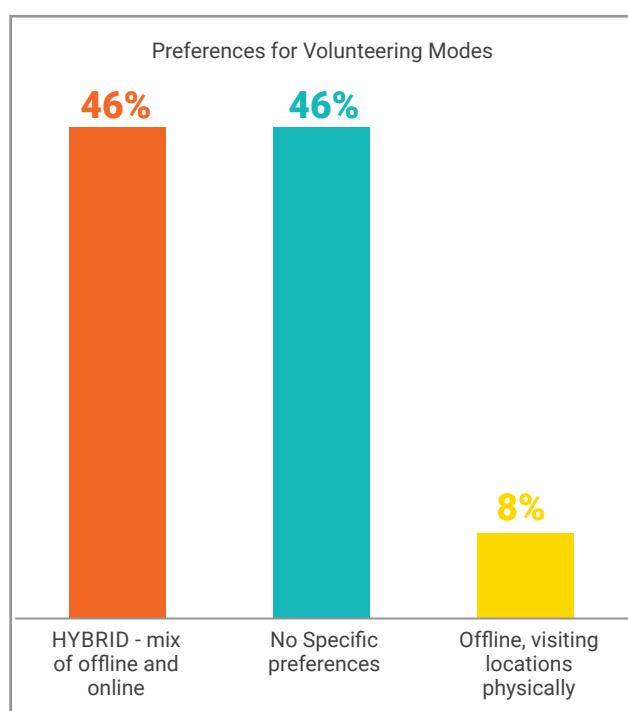
A senior citizen from Noida

Future Volunteering Preferences

- Word of mouth from friends and family is the preferred medium for discovering opportunities (92%). In an interview, a retired Armed Forces officer based in Kerala explained that he likes exploring volunteering opportunities from his friends, family, and acquaintances. Senior citizens who are mostly not very active on social media would prefer traditional means of information and mobilization.
- Preferred sectors include Education (46%) and health (31%), with a strong inclination towards hybrid modes of volunteering (46%). A retired banker who is now based in Bangalore spoke about her passion for teaching. She said that “as a banker, I did not have much time to teach. After my retirement I enjoy teaching students from Tamil Nadu since I am comfortable with Tamil. I teach online, which makes it flexible for me.”
- There is a significant inclination for volunteering without a fixed duration (69%).

The 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR) emphasized the importance of incorporating diverse approaches when developing new volunteer-led programs and initiatives that are tailored to align with individuals' work, leisure, needs, and interests.

Building on this premise, it becomes crucial to recognize and harness the knowledge and experience that senior citizens bring to the table. Developing programs that specifically consider the context and capabilities of this age group can effectively utilize their unique contributions for broader developmental goals. This approach not only enriches the programs but also enhances the engagement and fulfillment of senior volunteers, leveraging their potential in meaningful ways.



Working Professionals

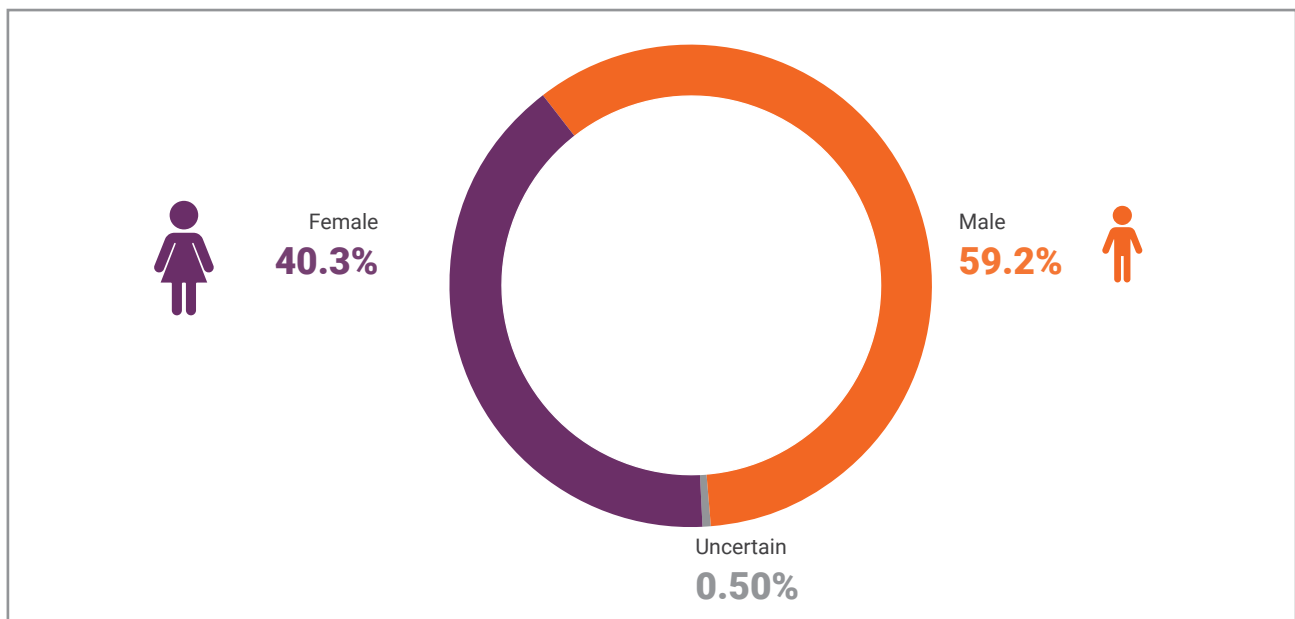
The recent survey of 846 respondents provides an insightful reflection of the current landscape of volunteering among working professionals. With an aim to parse through the fabric of volunteer behavior across various demographics, this analysis seeks to reveal the multifaceted nature of altruistic engagement in contemporary society.

The key findings reveal a volunteer base that is predominantly male, youthful, and highly educated, with a strong representation from Tier 1 cities, particularly Delhi NCR. As the majority navigate through the early years of employment, primarily within the service sector, their volunteer efforts are defined by a mix of motivations, predominantly the intrinsic reward of helping others. These patterns are not just statistics but stories of individuals enacting their values through volunteer work, balancing personal and professional spheres of life.

The analysis, therefore, extends beyond mere numbers, aiming to unpack the underlying motivations, perceived benefits, and the intricate relationship between one's professional life and volunteer activities. By examining the intersection of gender, age, educational attainment, and sectorial preferences, the aim is to craft a narrative that encapsulates the essence of volunteerism in the current era. Through this lens, insights are gained into the drives and deterrents of volunteerism, which can guide future strategies to foster an environment where the act of giving back is not just welcomed but thrived upon.

Demographic Analysis

Gender Distribution

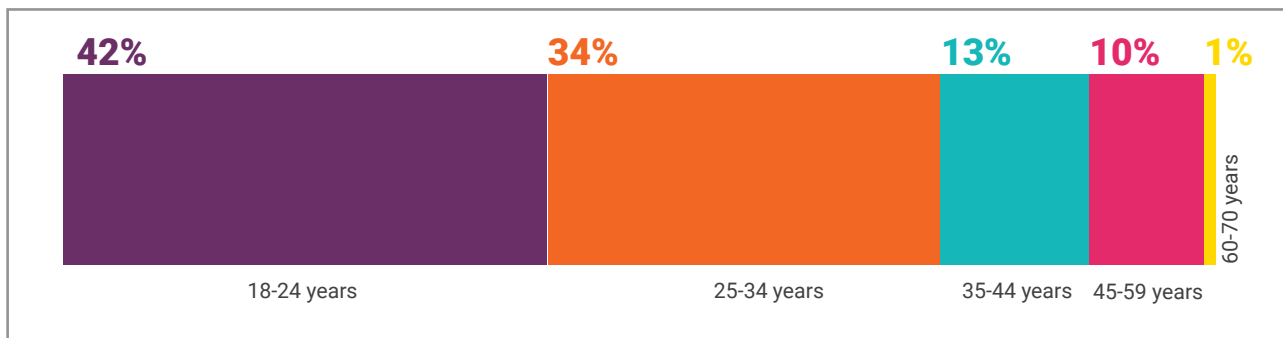


The gender landscape of volunteering within our data set depicts a preponderance of males over females, with a negligible margin opting not to specify their gender. The data indicates a potential gender disparity within the middle-aged demographic, which underscores the need for a comprehensive exploration of the broader barriers that may inhibit women's participation in volunteering. Echoing a similar concern, the 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR) also recommended a detailed investigation into the persistent obstacles encountered by marginalized groups, with a particular focus on gender-related inequalities in volunteer engagement.

This predominant male representation might mirror societal roles or reflect the outreach and accessibility of volunteering opportunities. Further exploration into why males are more represented could shed light on

underlying factors such as societal expectations, professional demands, or the nature of the volunteering opportunities presented.

Age Distribution



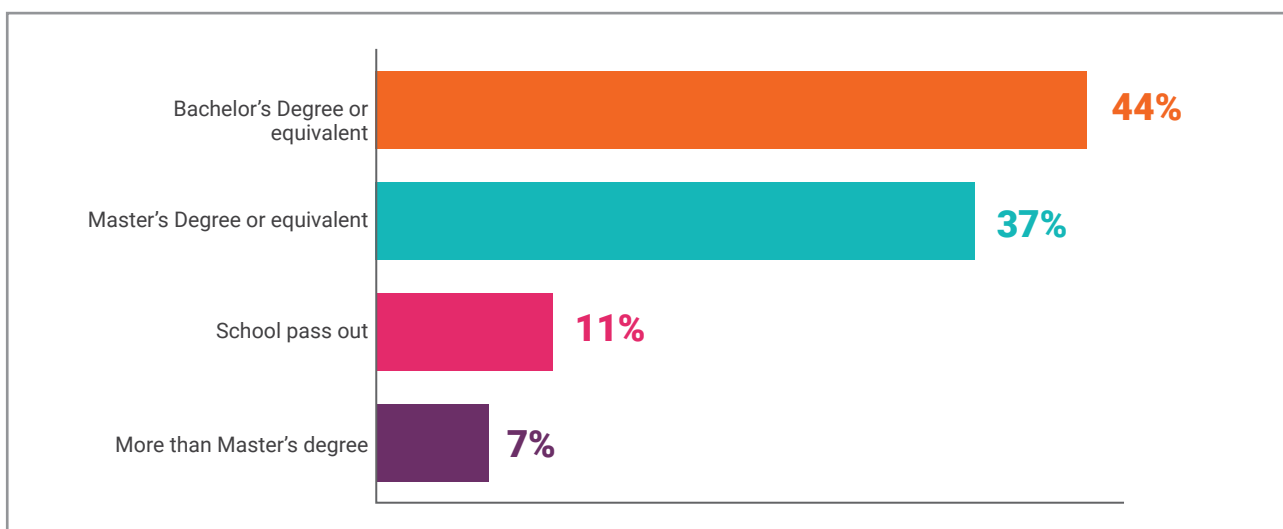
The age demographic firmly tilts toward the younger spectrum, with the 18-24 cohort standing out prominently. This predominance of youth in volunteering can be attributed to the vibrancy and idealism often associated with younger years or perhaps the flexible nature of their professional commitments. The enthusiasm of this demographic presents an opportunity for organizations to harness their energy and propensity for innovation in volunteer work.

Geographical Spread and Tier Classification

Geographically, the data reveals a concentration of respondents in Tier 1 cities, with Delhi NCR being the most common. This urban bias may indicate better exposure to volunteering opportunities or a more ingrained culture of volunteerism in metropolitan areas. However, the presence of respondents from 28 different states suggests that volunteerism has a pan-Indian appeal, with varying degrees of participation that merit attention.

Educational Background Distribution

Educational attainment amongst the respondents' skews towards higher education, with a Bachelor's Degree being the most frequently reported qualification. This prevalence of a well-educated demographic could suggest that higher educational institutions are effectively inculcating the values of social responsibility, or it might reflect the aspirations of the educated class to contribute meaningfully to society.



Employment and Volunteering

Status of Employment

The survey delineates that a substantial chunk of the volunteer population is gainfully employed, predominantly in full-time or part-time roles. This intersection of professional work and volunteerism might indicate a societal shift towards a balanced approach to work-life where personal fulfillment through helping others is integral.

Work Experience

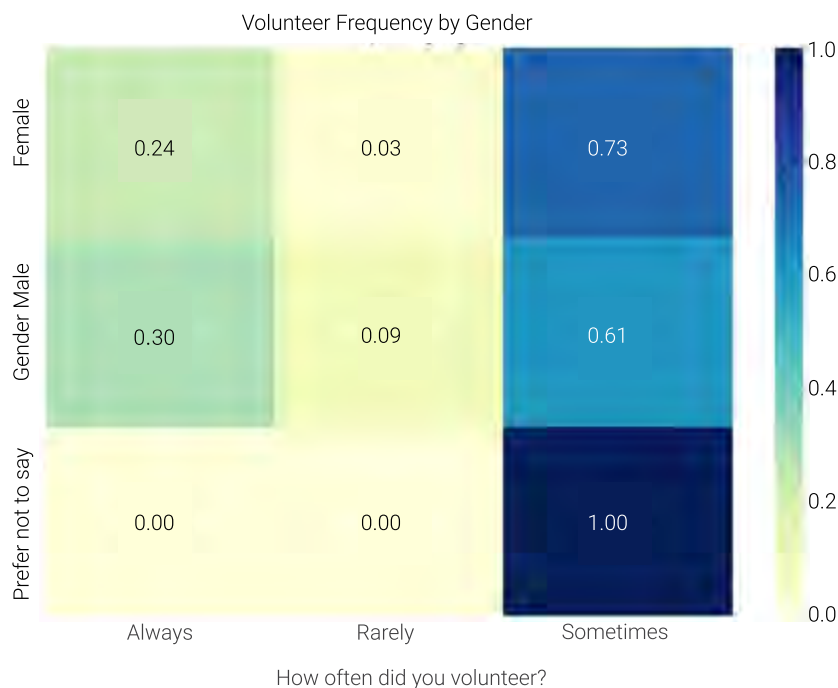
Volunteers with 0 to 5 years of work experience dominate the respondent pool, suggesting that the formative years of one's career might be more amenable to incorporating volunteer activities. Whether this is due to more discretionary time, fewer family obligations, or the drive to build a holistic resume is a question warranting closer examination.

In a focus group discussion conducted with employees of an environment sector organisation, it was noted that younger employees were more enthusiastic about exploring volunteering opportunities. Mid-level and senior employees were hesitant and expressed reasons for not being able to volunteer, which ranged from health conditions, family responsibilities to limited personal time.

Volunteering Behaviors

Frequency of Volunteering

The frequency with which respondents engage in volunteering varies, with 'Sometimes' being the predominant response. This sporadic nature of volunteer engagement could reflect the challenges of balancing professional responsibilities with altruistic endeavors or indicate a preference for event-based rather than ongoing volunteer commitments. A doctor who participated in the interview for this study explained how it was very difficult for her to find time outside her work, family, rest, and other commitments. She expressed that it becomes difficult to commit to a cause with serious implications.



Locations of Volunteering

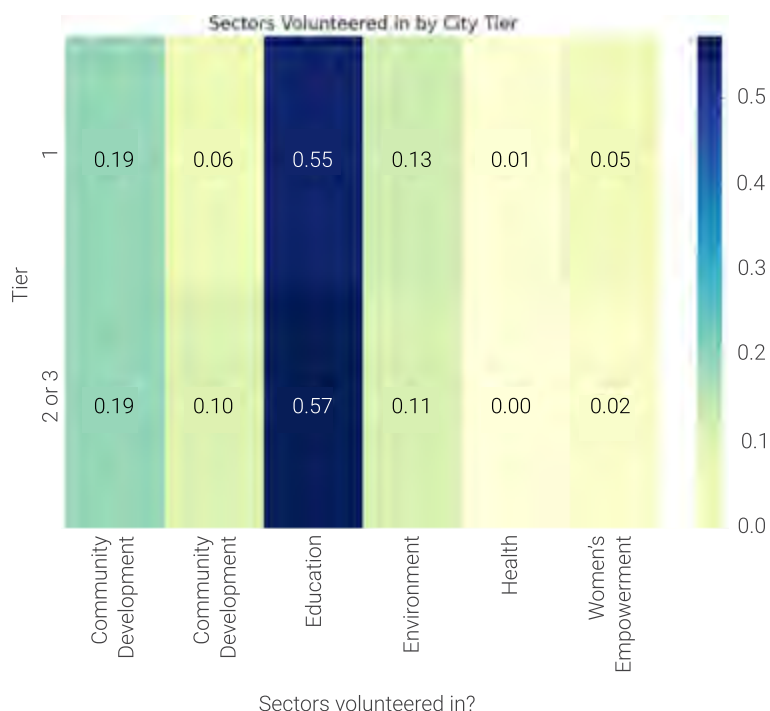
Responses suggest that volunteering often takes place within communities, among familiar social circles such as friends and family. This preference for local, community-based volunteerism may stem from a desire to see the direct impact of one's efforts or the comfort of familiar surroundings and peers. A young mother based in Mysore who was looking for volunteering opportunities in her vicinity said that it would be easier to commute, and to visibly see the impact of her work in her own domicile. She added that it would be more valuable and meaningful to volunteer and help her own community.

Sectors of Volunteer Engagement

Education emerges as the most popular sector for volunteering, followed by other areas. This preference for educational volunteering could point towards an acknowledgment of education as a pivotal area for societal development, or it might reflect the respondents' own educational experiences and the value they place on learning and mentorship. In a focus group discussion conducted at Hyderabad, majority of the participants expressed their interest in the education sector for volunteering. They explained that it allows them to share insights from their own experiences, and to interact with younger minds to get inspired.

In an interview with a senior professional from the hospitality industry, it was noted that the respondent wanted to spend his volunteering time educating and training young adults, where he thought there was more work to be done with visible impacts.

A professional based in Haridwar expressed- "I volunteer by teaching in schools for free. Additionally, I provide foundational education to illiterate students, with a focus on both education and health. We organize free health camps. In the Madrasa, students typically only know Urdu, but I am dedicated to motivating them to learn Hindi, English, and Maths as well."



Motivations and Perceptions



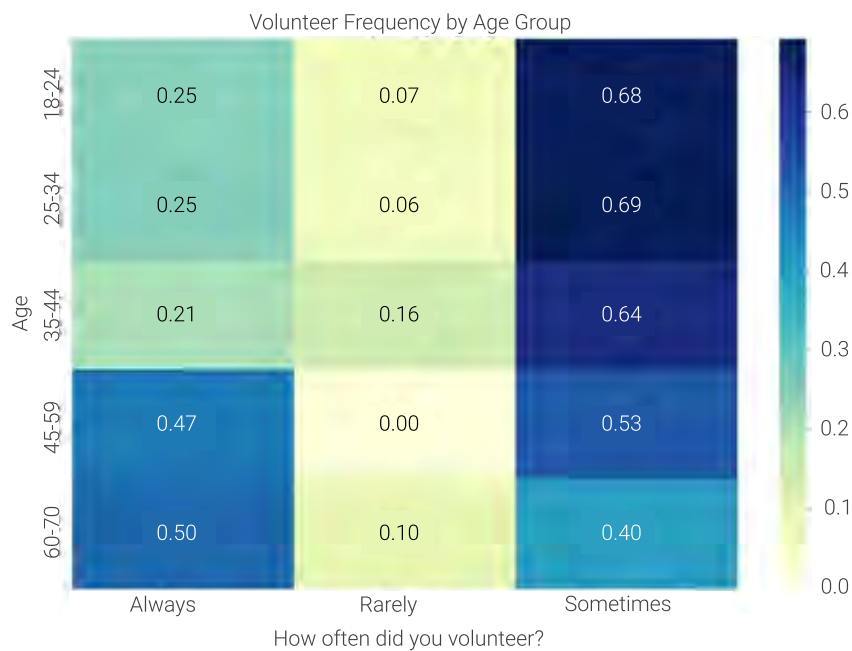
Analysis of Reasons for Volunteering

The leading reason for volunteering, "Satisfaction from helping others," highlights the altruistic pulse driving the respondents. Coupled with desires to utilize personal skills for societal contributions and to engage with diverse groups to gain new experiences, these motivations depict a holistic view of volunteerism as a mutually beneficial exercise for personal growth and societal welfare.

In a focus group discussion conducted at Ahmedabad 'helping others without expectations' emerged as the most common reason for volunteering. Voluntarily doing something for humanity or for society was crucial for volunteering. Bringing happiness in someone's life brought a certain satisfaction to them.

Age-specific Trends in Perceptions of Volunteering

Younger age groups display a measured approach to volunteering, valuing both the skill development it provides and the aspect of community service. The older age groups lean more heavily towards the community service perspective. These trends could reflect a life-stage shift in volunteer motivations, where the pursuit of experience and skill-building during youth gradually gives way to a focus on service and giving back as individuals progress through different phases of life.



Gender-specific Trends in Perceptions of Volunteering

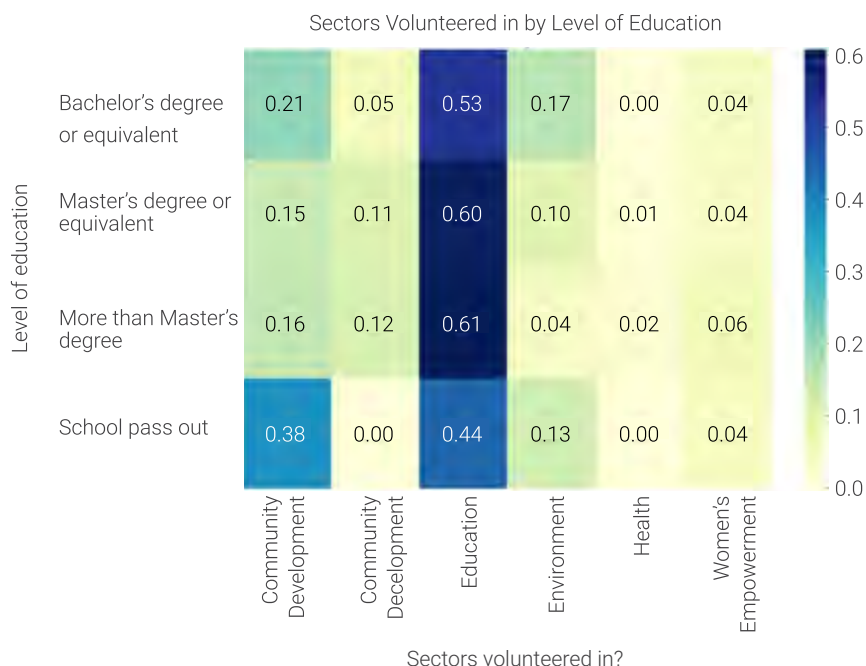
Gender trends indicate that female respondents are consistent in viewing volunteering as both skill support and community service, suggesting an integrated approach to volunteerism that encompasses personal development and social contribution. Male respondents, while sharing these views, show a marginally greater inclination towards skill utilization, perhaps pointing towards a pragmatic approach to volunteering as a means of professional enhancement as well as community engagement.

In one of the interviews, a respondent who volunteers at a prominent cancer-care hospital in Bangalore shared that she has been observing that more women are coming forward to volunteer. She said that “women with increased mobility and independence are much more committed towards completing volunteering tasks in the healthcare sector”.

Cross-Tabulation of Gender, Age, and Volunteering Perceptions

Correlations Between Educational Levels and Preferred Volunteering Sectors

The data indicates a correlation between higher education levels and a preference for volunteering in the Education sector. This may suggest that individuals with higher educational attainment are looking to ‘give back’ in a field that they feel personally connected to or competent in. Such correlations help volunteer organizations to match opportunities with the skills and interests of potential volunteers, enhancing the effectiveness and satisfaction of the volunteer experience.



Homemakers in the Volunteering space

In the interviews and focus group discussions conducted with homemakers, these were some of the most prominent trends:

- There is a willingness to volunteer closer to their homes, which would not require much travel. Most of them had family responsibilities such as taking care of the needs of their children and elders.
- There was a higher preference for a hybrid mode of volunteering which would allow them the flexibility to choose from online and offline modes, based on their time availability.
- The homemakers were more inclined towards the Education sector, willing to share their knowledge and help younger students cope with the increasing educational demands. Some of them were already engaging in online teaching as volunteering activities.
- With respect to rewards and recognition, none of them were looking for any recognition in terms of certificates or any other means. They want to volunteer for the core purpose of helping individuals or communities in need, without expecting anything in return.
- As a challenge, they expressed that it was increasingly difficult to find credible organisations in their vicinity. They said that there were very few good organisations, with trustworthy personnel, valuable intentions, good work ethics and well-planned initiatives.



STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION AND WAY FORWARD

The photo shown is for illustration purpose only.

This section provides strategic recommendations to the corporates as well as Not-for-profits seeking volunteering and in the process of developing volunteering programs. It also helps volunteers understand the current trends and perspectives of volunteers. It allows aggregate platforms to look at how the volunteering sector is advancing in general.

For Students



Develop Digital Engagement Strategies

Social Media & App Development: Invest in a strong digital infrastructure, including a dedicated volunteering app and active social media campaigns that resonate with the student demographic.



Forge Educational Partnerships

Academic Collaboration: Encourage partnerships between student organizations, NGOs, and educational institutions to create volunteer programs tailored to student interests and academic requirements. With high school students, carefully chosen activities in consultation with teachers, parents and students, age-appropriate volunteer programs could be developed.



Strategic Partnerships

Enhanced Student Volunteering

Engagement: Foster collaborations with local businesses and community groups to offer diverse volunteering opportunities that align with students' skills and passions. Establishing joint initiatives with other NGOs working on youth development to leverage resources and to amplify the impact of volunteer projects.



Offer Diverse Volunteering Opportunities

Program Variety: Ensure that there are a multitude of volunteering options, from one-off events to ongoing commitments, that align with the dynamic lifestyles of students.



Focus on Skill Development

Professional Growth Programs: Integrate skill-building workshops within the volunteering framework, providing students with certificates and endorsements for their participation.



Offer Academic Credits

Collaboration between the government, NGOs, and educational institutions to offer academic credits or recognition for students

who participate in volunteer activities to incentivize student involvement and encourage more widespread participation.



Address Practical Needs

Support Systems: Consider stipends, travel reimbursements, or other forms of support that reduce financial barriers for student volunteers.



Bridging Gender Disparities

Inclusive Initiatives: Design campaigns and support structures that specifically target female student volunteers, addressing their unique challenges and motivations.



Youth Engagement

Student Leadership Roles: Empower students to take on leadership positions within volunteer programs, fostering ownership and long-term commitment. Organise student-led volunteer events during national volunteer weeks or months to raise awareness and promote a culture of giving back.

Recognition of efforts: Recognize outstanding student volunteers through awards ceremonies, scholarships, or leadership development programs to incentivize continued engagement.



Digital Volunteering Platforms

E-Volunteering Development: Create robust digital volunteering opportunities that offer fulfilling experiences, emphasizing virtual collaboration and community impact.



Sector-Specific Volunteering Opportunities

Alignment with Academic Majors: Develop specialized volunteer opportunities in sectors such as education and healthcare, which allow students to apply their academic learning in real-world scenarios.

For Senior Citizens



Diverse Volunteering Opportunities

Implement Varied Program Designs:

Introduce a broad spectrum of volunteer roles to appeal to different interests and abilities. From mentoring programs to community gardens, the diversity of options will cater to a wider range of senior citizens.

Partnerships with Senior-focused

Institutions: Forge alliances with retirement communities, senior centers, and healthcare facilities to co-create volunteer programs that cater to the interests and abilities of senior citizens. Tailoring programs to match their preferences and capabilities enhance engagement and satisfaction.



Technology Training and Support

Develop Training Modules: Establish user-friendly training programs for seniors to become proficient in necessary digital tools. Support can range from workshops to one-on-one mentoring, with a focus on building confidence in technology use.

Collaborations: Engage in partnerships with government agencies and social service organizations to address the specific needs of seniors such as tailored digital training for seniors, covering smartphone use, internet navigation, and social media.



Meaningful Engagement

Impactful Communication Strategy: Craft communications that consistently articulate the value of seniors' contributions. Develop case studies that demonstrate the tangible impact of their work to reinforce their sense of purpose and achievement.



Feedback and Recognition

Tailored Appreciation Mechanisms: Create a multifaceted recognition system that includes both private acknowledgment and public appreciation events. Develop peer recognition programs that allow volunteers to celebrate each other's contributions.



Accessibility and Convenience

Optimize Program Flexibility: Design volunteer schedules and locations with senior needs in mind. This could involve transport partnerships for easy access to volunteer sites or virtual volunteering opportunities that can be done from home.



Cross-generational Initiatives

Empower through Experience: Establish cross-generational initiatives that facilitate meaningful interactions between seniors and youth volunteers. These initiatives not only foster intergenerational connections but also facilitate mutual learning and understanding between different age groups, enriching the volunteer experience for all participants.



Community Building

Establish Volunteer Networks: Encourage the formation of volunteer groups and clubs that can meet regularly, either virtually or in person. Use these gatherings as an opportunity for seniors to share stories, build friendships, and maintain a vibrant volunteer community.



Overall Strategy for Engagement

Integration and Feedback Loop: Regularly assess the effectiveness of the programs through feedback and adjust strategies accordingly. The goal is to establish a sustainable, satisfying volunteer environment that celebrates the invaluable contributions of senior citizens.

For Working Professionals



Bridging Gender Disparities

A comprehensive exploration of the broader barriers that may inhibit middle-aged women's participation in volunteering through a detailed investigation into the persistent obstacles encountered with a particular focus on gender-related inequalities in volunteer engagement.



Targeted Recruitment

Inclusive Marketing Campaigns: Craft targeted recruitment campaigns that appeal specifically to females and older professionals, highlighting the flexible nature of volunteer opportunities.



Skill-based Opportunities

Professional Development: Create roles that align with professional skill sets, particularly in areas of high demand such as education and counseling. Partner with the government to identify areas where professional skills are needed, such as marketing, finance, IT, or legal assistance.



Corporate volunteering programs

Encourage corporate volunteering:

Collaborate with employers and industry associations to promote corporate volunteering programs. Provide avenues for professionals to engage in meaningful volunteer work aligned with their skills and interests, fostering a culture of corporate social responsibility.



Cross-Sector Alliances

Address volunteering barriers: Establish cross-sector alliances with NGOs, government agencies, and academic and philanthropic institutions to tackle barriers to volunteering, creating a more conducive environment for professionals to engage in volunteerism.



Flexible Volunteering Models

Adaptive Scheduling: Offer volunteer programs outside of standard working hours, such as evenings and weekends, and introduce time-banking systems to acknowledge volunteer hours that can be redeemed later.



Digital Volunteering Platforms

Remote Volunteering Opportunities:

Develop digital platforms that facilitate virtual volunteering, allowing professionals to contribute from wherever they are, at a time that suits them.

In executing these recommendations, it is vital to maintain an iterative process that incorporates regular feedback from the volunteers to ensure the programs remain responsive and effective. These strategic measures should be complemented by ongoing evaluation and adjustment to ensure that the organizations continue to meet the evolving needs of their diverse volunteer base.

CONCLUSION

This report is an attempt to report and recommend the best volunteering practices. As India advances in all its sectors, volunteering, which is a historically valued way to engage with society, should see progress and increased reporting. With increasing deliberations, discussions and debates, the larger Indian community can set the direction and pace for following generations.

Like the organizations that increase their interactions and engagements in rural India, those working in the volunteering space too can facilitate the inclusion of all citizens from various rural areas, genders and mindsets.

Here are some key takeaways from this report –

Emerging Trends and some of the preferred modes of volunteering:

- Micro volunteering – short-term and skill-based with more focused outcomes.
- Hybrid mode – a balanced mix of online and offline opportunities.
- Increasing demand for compliant, inclusive, honest, and well-organized NGOs offering volunteering.
- Younger adults with more energy and time prefer offline and active volunteering.
- Increased demand in the education sector volunteering among all age groups.
- More newly retired senior citizens are willing to engage in volunteering to give back to their society, especially through mentoring and facilitating skill-building for younger generations.
- Homemakers looking for smaller and more meaningful volunteering opportunities closer to their residences, preferably in the education sector.

This report aims to inspire volunteers, report trends, and provide information to governments and organisations to help in decision-making, and record the status of volunteering in India for archival purposes.

Project management team:

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Published by

1. CRY, 189/A Anand Estate, Diagonally Opposite Arthur Road Jail, Sane Guruji Marg, Mumbai – 400011, Tel: +91 9115 9115 00; Web: www.cry.org; and
2. Grant Thornton Bharat LLP, L-41 Connaught Circus, New Delhi, 110001

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