Volunteerism and Active Citizenship

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To access all the presentations made during the workshop please visit http://www.vaniindia.org/Volunteerism.php
Foreword

In India, there is a lack of voice of marginalised communities in decision making structures and processes, often leaving them out of the social, political, economic processes of society. On the other hand, the response of such structures which are the custodians of a fair state, is slack owing to politicisation of development processes which are muted and are in the form of welfare approach, thereby depriving the excluded even their basic rights. Most often these subaltern communities are invisible in development processes or do not have a stake due to lack of knowledge, right perception, lack of understanding coupled with acute poverty and deprivation. The subaltern communities are a major section of society constituting around 60-70% of the population who face discrimination owing to age, sex, caste, status, religious background, disabilities, class hierarchy, rural urban diversity, industrialisation and urbanisation, mining activities etc. In parallel, the failure of development to reach the majority of women and men, poorly performing public services, exclusion of ordinary women and men from decision making processes, and pervasive corruption at all levels of government and administration have alienated ordinary people from the political process.

Increasingly, it has been recognised that there is lesser number of citizens who actually perceive development in a right-based approach and participation is a crucial part of this process. Youth, citizens, children are often carried away by the development paradigm of the government structures which lay emphasis on construction of big cities, metros, shopping malls, dams etc. which has often led to land alienation of subaltern communities or plays a havoc on their source of livelihood. Whilst infrastructure development is vital for an economy, there is a real need to enhance the situation of millions of excluded in the country who are living below poverty line and most of whom earn less than $ 1 per day. As discussed earlier the response from service providers “duty bearers” “the Government” and
others is welfaristic in approach i.e. the food schemes, monthly pensions and various concessions for these subaltern communities have muted their voices as recipients, ‘leading to an unfair relationship of the giver and the receiver’. In a democracy like India though there are structures like the Panchayati Raj system, where the Constitution calls for a gram sabha and self-governance and prevalence of ample legal framework to ensure participation of all communities especially the subalterns, the truth holds that they are excluded from development processes.

Similarly, volunteerism is not as effective as earlier in the country. The ubiquitous civil society organisations had its origins from volunteerism during the 60s-90s, however experiences have proven that there is less number of citizens looking at volunteering options especially in rural areas. State-run programmes like NSS (National Service Scheme) at the university level and NYK’s (Nehru Yuva Kendra) are target driven and need more capacity in management. Even professional social workers passing out of reputed institutes in the country are not willing to work in rural areas and work on issues of marginalisation in the heart land of the country. The concept of active citizenship is relatively new, though it was present in different forms in earlier days especially during the freedom movement and women’s movement.

The voluntary sector in India has emerged from volunteerism and voluntary action. Many civil society organizations mobilize services of volunteers from both urban and rural backgrounds who are engaged in development processes bringing about change in the lives of excluded communities. It is clear that this population is less when compared to the need and issues prevailing in society. Citizens’ engagement in development process and decision-making is crucial for bridging the gap. This engagement can bring about a huge difference in lives of excluded and marginalized communities. Active citizenship can be looked at in terms of rights and liberties granted by a State and the duties and responsibilities of citizens towards society.
There are a few platforms for citizenry action in India. Corporate, non-state actors, journalists, increasing middle class population are all looking at opportunities to contribute to development processes. A handful of organizations involve and promote active citizenship. However, these structures need management systems – recruitment, induction, retention and monitoring / evaluation and organized mechanisms. There is greater potential to harness this population and promote active citizenship in a much more organized way. A systematic and planned citizens’ engagement can bring about a greater impact in health, education and other development indicators.

There is a favorable environment towards promoting active citizenship in India as the National Policy on the Voluntary Sector 2007 lays emphasis on strengthening voluntary action. “The Government will encourage involvement of volunteers in public services, such as, at family welfare centers, primary health centers, hospitals, schools, vocational training centers, sanitation campaigns, etc” but not much action has been done to take it forward in promoting active citizenship in country. This is much evident in the budget allocations to volunteering through the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs – the budget allocation for 2010-2011 for youth affairs was only 263 crores whilst the youth population in country is over 40% of the total population. The Five-Year Plans have neglected the aspect and spirit of volunteerism. The International Volunteer Day (December 5th) is not being celebrated in congruence with all other international days!!!

There is a need to:
• Raise the profile of active citizenship in country
• Build and strengthen volunteer management systems in existing structures
• Policy advocacy to ensure volunteering becomes a part of the 12th Five-Year Plan
• Take forward the spirit of National Policy on the Voluntary Sector
In this context, it is imperative to raise awareness amongst civil society on development issues and ensure that their professional skills contribute to the development process in a positive way and that volunteering improves in country leading to greater participation of those subaltern communities who have experienced discrimination and impoverishment in all walks of life.

This paper seeks to address the issues, challenges and experiences of volunteering in India. It also debates the need for a policy framework for volunteerism and active citizenship in India. The paper is based on the deliberations held at the national consultation on volunteerism and active citizenship jointly held by VSO India and VANI on 11th October 2011 which highlights the following:

• Future of volunteering in India.
• Upholding the spirit of volunteerism.
• Recommendations to the Planning Commission for the proposal towards National Policy on Volunteering.

Praveen Kumar G.
VSO India
Introduction and Overview

The spirit of volunteerism is at the heart of cultural and religious practices in India. Besides these, various disciplines of philosophy, which were directly or indirectly intertwined with the religious practices, also underscored the importance of the need to work for the welfare of the society as a whole. The principle of ‘Nishkama karma” (working without the expectation of getting any reward) is one of the core values reflected in the Hindu philosophy. In every religion, contribution to society is mandatory for its followers. The concept of dana (voluntary giving) has been the cornerstone of the spirit of volunteerism in India. A noteworthy feature of all major religions has been the emphasis they placed on charity and sharing of wealth with others, especially the poor and the needy. Most think that God loves those who feed the hungry and those who give their clothes to the needy.

However, as the society evolved, the concept or the value of volunteerism too underwent some changes. The notion of complete altruistic giving was eventually replaced by more focused and systematic way of reaching out to others. Further, contrary to the earlier community dimension to the aspect of volunteerism, today the individuals choose to volunteer as part of fulfilling a deep felt need within them as opposed to an act which was bound by religious dogmas and demands. In conclusion, it can be said that the need to reach out to others is still at the core of Indian culture and this still plays a significant role in addressing the socio-political needs of the country.

The Importance of Volunteerism

Indian society has always faced innumerable socio-political challenges. Many of these challenges have been systemic and are directly linked with some peculiar social and cultural practices. Subsequent governments have never been successful in addressing all of those challenges in their entirety. In this context, the volunteer efforts, both individual and collective, played a remarkable role in addressing such challenges. Those efforts continue to have a considerable impact when it comes to addressing the needs of the downtrodden.
Introduction and Overview

Considering the importance of this spirit of volunteerism, the United Nations declared year 2001 as the ‘International Year of Volunteerism’. Now ten years later we are renewing the call, redoubling the focus and intensifying the effort. As we reinforce and acknowledge the contribution of millions of people who reach out to those less privileged in their communities, we are seeking to grow the body with our renewed effort. It is under the auspices of this renewed effort that we organised this consultation to discuss the current status of volunteerism in India and explore the possibility of pushing for a National Policy on Volunteerism in India. The whole exercise would be an awareness building exercise which will culminate in demand for a National Policy on Volunteerism. With the greater understanding we hope to consolidate our efforts around some best practices that will maximize the impact of limited resources.

The Relevance of the Consultation

Despite a tradition of religious service and sacrifice, we have not seen similar levels of sustained volunteerism around social, cultural environmental etc issues or causes. Taking into consideration the diverse needs of the country, there is a need to make it more focused, systematic and professional. Towards this objective, the consultation was organised with following objectives;

1. Facilitate a discussion towards promoting volunteerism, active citizenship and volunteering processes with a professional and systematic approach:

2. Showcase existing best practises in promotion of volunteering in India:

3. Discuss methodologies and mechanisms to promote the spirit of volunteerism amongst all sections in the community by forging a relationship with corporates, colleges, schools and other institutions:

4. Laying a road map for developing a policy on national volunteering in India:

The consultation provided us a platform to discuss on these topics with great intensity. Owing to the fact that they are not discussed quite frequently, divergent views were expressed by the participants. For. E.g., there were diametrically opposite
views on whether there needs to be a National Policy on Volunteering. This made us to realize that at this stage it may not be ideal to make any categorical observation on all these issues. We also realize that the discussion on these must move on further by holding consultations with different stakeholders.

This publication is an effort from our side to highlight some of the critical observations emerged during the deliberations. I believe this will serve as a launching pad for the sector to make concerted and constructive efforts to preserve and strengthen the spirit of volunteerism to a further level.

Harsh Jaitli
VANI-Voluntary Action Network India
You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give.

– Winston Churchill
CHAPTER 1

Volunteerism: A Critical Factor in Facilitating Social Transformation

(It would be naïve to look at the virtue of volunteerism as a one-off gesture wherein one sets apart a specific time for a progressive cause. Volunteerism, at least in eastern philosophical understanding, reflects a lot deeper and profound ethos. It embodies spirituality, ethics and cultural values and therefore, it is individual and collective, religious and spiritual, ethical and philosophical. India’s trajectory along with its history testifies this fact as it is completely ridden with instances where volunteerism has played a nation building role.)
Keynote Address: Dr. Rajesh Tandon, President, Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)

For the practical purpose and to contextualize the discourse, Dr. Rajesh Tandon defined volunteerism as an act of rendering public services or an act which is geared towards serving the larger good of the society. This practice of reaching out to others has been the hallmark of all religious and cultural traditions in India. This multidimensional characteristic of volunteerism, which has the ingredients of religious, spiritual and cultural ethos, reflects not just an external gesture of sparing some time or capacity, but it has been an outward expression of one’s deeply embedded and internalized principles and values. All religions in India underscored the practice of volunteerism and exhorted its followers to serve others in whatever capacity they could.

He further spoke about the three necessary components that are critical to make volunteerism a meaningful practice in any country and he drew a parallel with India.

1. Recognition of the Spontaneous/Natural part of Volunteerism: Recognizing and acknowledging the spontaneous aspect of volunteerism is crucial to promote such practices in any society. This informal act of volunteering where one reaches out to community and other individuals has been existing in all the societies since time immemorial. Some examples in this line could be governance and management of common property resources, citizens forming social support networks for the weaker sections of the community and even art, music and folk culture etc reflect an element of volunteerism. All these have been labeled as informal acts of volunteerism and they need be both recognized and supported.
Indian Perspective: As mentioned earlier, religious, spiritual and cultural factors play a significant role to kindle such spirit of volunteering and India is rich with such acts. However, when it comes to acknowledging them formally, we lag behind in a considerable manner. Dr. Rajesh Tandon further stated that this form of volunteering must be both encouraged and recognized so as to promote such practices within the society. It is also about preserving one of the finest traditions that our tradition and culture have imparted to us.

2. Volunteerism as an Integral part of Social Development Policy. Another aspect of volunteerism is that it ought to be an integral part of the social development policy of a given country. This is extremely critical as it is a step towards positively acknowledging the selfless acts of those who set apart their capacity, time or any other resources for the benefit of the larger society in many ways. For e.g., Social Development Policy in India expects that people play a proactive role towards the successful implementation of government-run programmes and it is true that people have played and continue to play a significant role to ensure that government sponsored programmes are carried out efficiently. Towards this, they have formed village health committee, water committee and there are various expressions of this sort. In Western countries volunteerism has been accepted and recognized as an integral part of their entire policy paradigm.

Indian Perspective: Contrary to western countries where being part of citizens’ initiatives at the community level is considered as an act of volunteerism, India does not recognize such acts as volunteering acts. One of the challenges that we face in India is to introduce the centrality of volunteerism within the Social Development Policy. Once this gets into the policy, it can get integrated into the programmes. Here, the policies ignore volunteerism completely. A meaningful and concerted effort to ensure that volunteerism is accepted and recognized as an integral part of the key national development policies is definitely a step in the right direction.
3. **One-point referral system/Resource Centre:** Many people, especially those based in the urban areas, are interested in contributing to some aspect of social development, but it is extremely imperative that there exists a comprehensive tool to connect the aspiring volunteer with meaningful avenues for engagement. In other words, resource centers for volunteerism are an important component to facilitate the practice of volunteerism in any country. The roles of the resource centre can be in the following areas;

a) Connects the aspiring volunteer with suitable opportunities and avenues
b) Provides necessary information to the institutions on all aspects of volunteering
c) Defines best practices in volunteering and as such extends capacity building to those organizations/institution focusing on volunteering.

**Indian Perspective:** *In India this is far from being ideal. Our efforts to promote volunteerism are fragmented and lack coherence. For e.g., we have the Socially Useful Productive Work (SUPW) system at the school level. One of the weaknesses of this programme is that it leaves to the individual schools to decide what the volunteerism is and act on it. It is often limited to visiting some old-age homes, orphanages or cleaning some premises. At the college level there is National Service Scheme (NSS). Again it is left to the individual colleges to decide how they shape up this programme. Our country lacks such a resource center to provide comprehensive information on volunteerism. In short, India requires Volunteer Resource Centers at different levels, city, state and the national level.*

In conclusion, he emphasized on the need to understand the practice of volunteerism more holistically; it is not just about isolated acts where one sets apart one’s time for a specific activity. Volunteerism goes beyond such external acts as they are the external manifestation of deeply internalized principles. Thus a call to preserve and promote volunteerism is also a call to preserve the rich social fabric of our nation and one of the effective ways to promote volunteerism is to integrate them in the policies and programmes.
Case Story 1 - Vikas Sathis

Vikas Sathis is a initiative of a national volunteering scheme of the National Trust under the (Ministry of Social Justice and empowerment), VSO India and North Bengal Council for the Disabled (NBCD) in North Bengal. The aim of this initiative is to mobilize community volunteers to provide care and support to persons with disabilities in the region.

Babai Chakroborty, Naxalbari, West Bengal

Babai (red shirt) with his friends at Naxalbari Handicap Society, and NBCD staff

“My name is Arindam (Babai) Chakroborty. My father’s name is Nabendu Chakroborty, I am 25 years old. I live in Bazarpara, Naxalbari, Darjeeling. I am a mentally disabled person.

“Since childhood, I used to stay all alone. I had no friends. People used to feel pity on me and say that I am marginalised. No one talked with me. Most of them never understood me. Some of them, however, tried their best to understand, although they could not.

“I was lonely till National Trust volunteers (Vikas Sathis) came to me. They pay visits to our house and often take me with them, talk to me and even play with me. My neighbours have started treating me as any other person in the locality and they no longer look down upon me. They talk to me as well. I am very happy with this. I also want every other physically and mentally disabled person to be self-confident and happy. I am thankful to the National Trust NVS V-for-India volunteer Ramesh dada.”
Volunteerism and Developmental Challenges Today:

Dr. Lalit Kumar, Secretary, National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH)

Dr. Lalit Kumar cited two examples from history to drive home a point on the critical importance of volunteerism in the process of nation building.

**Gandhiji’s ‘Shanti Sena’ and John F Kennedy’s ‘Peace Corps’**

Gandhiji was deeply interested in promoting volunteerism, hence in 1922 he thought of forming a ‘Shanti Sena’ i.e. peace volunteers with an objective to handle communal rights. Further, in 1942, when Japanese attacked, he thought of handling it with these Peace Corps. In February 1948, he decided to have a meeting to form a task force of Shanti Sena, but unfortunately he died in January and his wish could not be materialized. However, his followers Vinoba Bhawe and many others formed Shanti Sena, and even today they are working in different parts of the country like Pondhicherry, Gandhigram and Tamil Nadu.

**John F Kennedy and ‘Peace Corps’**

In 1960’s while John F Kennedy was campaigning for presidency in United States of America, he was impressed by youngsters in university of Michigan who requested him to form Peace Corps where youth can work in different countries. He carried forward the idea and chronologically 50 years of Peace Corps have been passed. It was established on 22 September 1961 by U.S. congress and 40 million dollars were given to establish The Peace Corps. It was a successful experiment. But after 9/11 first president of Peace Corps said we have failed in the vision of Kennedy which was to have one lakh volunteers which was not achieved. Thus, it was suggested that they should send the volunteers not only to different parts of the country but also internationally.
Dr. Lalit Kumar emphasized that support of media helps in highlighting the case studies of volunteering and the social sector. It is essential that these success stories are shared to showcase how the volunteers are making a difference in the lives of the people. This will have a dual purpose, to encourage the existing practices and to promote such acts of volunteering by others who have not been involved. Dr. Lalit Kumar suggested that we have to convince planning commission that there is a need for the national policy on volunteering. He stressed that data set is very important for the policy and the background work to collect the data is also crucial. Different countries in the world already have the policies on volunteering so there is a need for the same in India.

**NFCH Initiative for Peace and Harmony in India**

V for peace and harmony - It is a national platform and there are volunteers working in civil defense. More than 500 applicants have already registered under this scheme. The objective of this scheme is to have a national network of volunteers who will play the role of facilitators/change agents for promoting social harmony whenever peace and social cohesion between communities is disturbed in a particular area. Meanwhile, during peaceful times, they will take up the cause of inclusive development; spread awareness on peace and harmony in their respective communities and neighborhoods to strengthen the sense of unity in diversity amongst citizens of the country. A certificate or a volunteer card is issued to the volunteers after an annual review of their work by NFCH.

*For further details on the scheme visit: [http://www.nfch.nic.in](http://www.nfch.nic.in)*
(Concluding remarks: Both the reflections shared by Dr. Rajesh Tandon and Dr. Lalit Kumar set an ideal platform for the ensuing sessions as they touched upon the broader contours of volunteerism, right from the definition to its role towards nation-building. It became evident that there needs to be a systematic approach towards strengthening, in fact, preserving, the rich tradition of volunteerism in our country. The session also brought into light a few glaring gaps which should be addressed in our system so as to ensure that we promote volunteerism in its entirety.)
Case Story 2 - Right To Education Campaign

VSO India in partnership with Swechha (We for change) has initiated the INFLUENCE and the Delhi youth volunteers were engaged in the RTE campaign in the year 2010.

Right to Education Campaign: Aim of the Campaign - generate awareness about the Right to Education Act amongst marginalized communities and support the enrolment of children in government primary schools. The mission was to help under privileged children become aware of their rights post notification of the RTE Act 2009.

The method to reach out was through street-plays, leaflet distribution, community meetings, posters, filing petitions, advocacy activities and school admissions. The campaign was launched in association with different groups and organizations from across Delhi, namely; Pagdandi Initiative of Swechha in Jagdamba Camp (south), Shine Foundation in Chirag Delhi (south), Jaagriti in Dwarka (West) and Jamghat Ventures in Jama Masjid (Central Delhi). The team faced many road blocks during the initial ground work, ranging from loopholes in the RTE act to reluctance from the school administration. The students were denied admission on unjustified grounds such as background, socio-economic status and competence. In order to seek admissions and to fight for the rights of the children, INFLUENCE volunteers filed a Petition with more than 1000 signatures along with 54 individual cases with the DCPCR (Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights). The volunteers met Mr Amod Kanth, Director, DCPCR and persuaded him to take action. As a result, The DCPCR along with the NCPCR (National Commission for Protection of Child Rights) issued notices to schools across Delhi. The volunteers later met Mr P Krishnamurthy, Director, Directorate of education in order to pursue a few pending cases.

Forty children are now going to regular schools. Forty volunteers successfully spearheaded this two month long campaign. Thousands of citizens from Delhi were indirectly involved in the campaign. The RTE campaign now has tremendous support from the DCPCR and other government bodies including the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The RTE campaign is underway for the second successive year.
There is mounting evidence that volunteer engagement promotes the civic values and social cohesion which mitigate violent conflict at all stages and that it even fosters reconciliation in post-conflict situations. By contributing to building trust, volunteer action diminishes the tensions that give rise to conflict and can also contribute to conflict resolution. It can also create common purpose in the aftermath of war. Indeed, people bound together through active participation and cooperation at local level are in a better position to resolve differences in non-confrontational ways.

CHAPTER 2

Volunteering and Active Citizenship

(The word volunteerism is often used too simplistically and is overlooked in development discourse. However, it is to be acknowledged that the foundational basis of all the welfare related activities is rooted on this very concept of volunteerism)
Development and Volunteering

Mr. Amitabh Behar, Executive Director, National Foundation for India (NFI)

He urged the participants to look at volunteering from a broader framework. He mentioned a few contradictions that are to be taken into consideration if we want to have a meaningful discourse on volunteering in India;

1. If we look at history of civil society in India, there was a trend in 80’s where everybody talked of professionalizing the voluntary sector so there was an inherent contradiction which presupposed that whatever is voluntary is not professional enough. And therefore there is a need to have more professionals coming into the field who get paid for the service they render. It is not just about payment, but working effectively. Unfortunately this stands against each other i.e. Professionalism vs. volunteerism. We can make the volunteering a qualitative process, but we need to deliberate on the strategies to do that.

2. In a scarce economy like ours what is the role of volunteering? What is the role of volunteers? Is it limited or can it really craft movements and campaigns for social justice?

Further, it is time to introspect and see if we really need a national policy on volunteering. He argued that the voluntary sector, by its very nature, is devoid of any strict structural compartmentalization. In such a scenario, where a space for structural existence is limited, what would be the implication of such a policy? He continued to say that the challenge in formulating a national policy on volunteering is in shaping a policy that is flexible in fashion and one that respects diversity and plurality of volunteerism. We should be on guard to ensure that such a policy will not end up becoming restrictive in nature.
Mr. Harsh Jaitli, Chief Executive Officer, Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)

He shared two of his experiences - textile workers in Gujarat, Ahmedabad, and the Lote Parshuram industrial belt in Ratnagiri district – to state that potential of human beings is much beyond what we think. There are innumerable ways in which the vast resources of individuals can be harnessed to make an effective contribution to the society at large.

While advocating on the need to have a national policy on volunteerism, he cited the intervention VANI had with the Ministry of External Affairs. The ministry had mooted a proposition that only those who are earning not less than 20,000 U.S. dollars can get work visa in India. This had a serious implication to a large number of volunteers who come to India to work with voluntary organizations. The Ministry did not take into consideration that these volunteers had forfeited a great deal of financial amount in their respective countries while taking up voluntary assignments in developing countries like India. VANI did approach the Ministry with its concerns and subsequently the particular clause was deleted. These issues, in the words of Mr. Harsh Jaitli, arise fundamentally due to a lack of comprehensive national policy on volunteerism.

He further put a line of caution that we should not hurry in our efforts as developing a comprehensive and holistic national policy should involve a host of deliberations with stakeholders from across the sectors. We should not treat policies as an end in themselves; they should be corroborated with a sustained strategy to ensure that policies are translated into concrete actions.
Ms. Aditi Thorat, Chief Operating Officer, Edelgive Foundation

Expressing her discomfort with the usage of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), she stressed that there needs to be a more sustained, deeper and long-term engagement in this sector which is absolutely critical for the success of development of a policy framework. According to Ms. Aditi, there is so much left for the corporate and the voluntary sector to learn from mutual engagement and collaboration. Today, there is an increasing trend within the corporate sector to volunteer for a social cause. The voluntary sector needs to be in a position to provide a space for meaningful engagement for such volunteers.

Opinions:

We always discuss about the issues, not about the sector. There is a lack of data that showcases contribution of the sector. Therefore, we need to build such database to substantiate the existential relevance of voluntary sector itself. Secondly, the sector has constantly become a victim of negative generalization. There are black sheep in every sector. However, when it comes to voluntary sector, we are branded collectively as a ‘bunch of corrupt activists’. If ten IAS officers are found doing wrong things, the whole government is not blamed, but on the contrary, if ten NGOs are caught at the wrong end, the whole sector is blamed.

(Concluding remarks: The session witnessed a lively discussion wherein diverse perspectives were aired on National Policy on Volunteerism. While some participants contented that there should be a policy to promote volunteerism and to acknowledge the informal volunteerism, a few others shared that such a move might jeopardize the flexible nature of volunteerism. The act of volunteerism, by its very nature, is devoid of any structural dimension. Thus, it needs to be widely debated whether we need a national policy, if need one, how should it be? To facilitate a meaningful developmental process, the involvement of all the stakeholders is absolutely necessary and therefore there is a need to forge an effective partnership between government, private sector and the voluntary sector)
Case Story 3 - Influence

A volunteering initiative by VSO India and Swechha (We for change)

Pritish Ambore: V-for-India volunteer Project - Green Bio Gas Plant in Ramjas College, Delhi University, New Delhi

Pritish Ambore, a 3rd year B.Sc. (Life Sciences) student of Ramjas College along with a team of 3 more members successfully installed the ARTI biogas plant at Ramjas college. The plant is a compact digester for producing biogas from food waste. After their preliminary Research, Pritish and his team received the necessary training and technological knowledge from ARTI (Appropriate Rural Technology Institute). With support and encouragement from the college staff and adequate financial backing from the Influence Fellowship, the volunteers manually built the plant from scratch. The plant is now fully functional with a digester capacity of 2500 litres and a gas holder capacity of 2000 litres. The plant is fed with 20 kgs of food waste every day and produces biogas that lasts 5 hours a day. The Ramjas college kitchen facility caters to 150 people and all their food waste is taken care of by the plant. Out of the 80 colleges under Delhi University, Ramjas is now the first college with a biogas plant. Pritish and his team have pioneered a much needed environmental initiative. Pritish says, “Environmental conservation is close to my heart. I eventually wish to go back to my village in Maharashtra and work as a farmer. Studying Biogas Plants is a course requirement for us. Unfortunately, practical usage of this wonderful green technology is not visible. We have proved that in order to save our depleting environment, knowledge needs to be put into practice.”

Arun Krishna: V-for-India volunteer Project-Lake Restoration and Conservation, Sanjay Lake, Delhi

Arun, a student of Indian Institute of Mass Communication is an active environmentalist and has been a part of conservation projects in Chennai, Hyderabad and Lucknow. Through this particular volunteering initiative Arun
aimed at engaging young students, youth and civil society in restoring and reviving Sanjay Lake, a potential bio-diversity hotspot within the city of Delhi. The project started with the realisation that the lake was fast losing its relevance due to illegal encroachment and unregulated waste disposal. Arun and other volunteers conducted a water sampling study at the Sanjay Lake in collaboration with Arjun Associates, Delhi. The study revealed that zinc levels were way above the permissible limit and dissolved oxygen was almost nil. It was time for action:

• School workshops under the theme of “Urban Lakes and Water Bodies” were conducted with 11 schools of Delhi including Delhi Public School Vasant Vihar, The Shri Ram School and Tagore International. More than 1,700 students participated in these workshops. Most of the schools have created a Water Body and Lake Council to undertake water action projects.

• Three nature walks were organized at the Sanjay Lake to help people understand the ground realities and realize their environmental responsibility towards the lake. More than 70 people attended each walk including students, local residents and naturalists.

• Three big clean up drives were organized at the lake. More than 100 volunteers participated in each of the drives.

• A total of 1140 Kilos of garbage was cleared from the lake’s bund.

• The clean ups were covered by 13 newspapers including Navbharat Times, Dainik Jagran, Bhaskar, Punjab Kesari and 2 news channels namely Headlines Today and AajTak.

• A major tree plantation around the lake was organized with 500 volunteers.

• The volunteers also made a short documentary film on Delhi’s lakes and water bodies. The film was later screened in the same 11 schools that were a part of the sensitization workshops.
CHAPTER 3

Experiences on Volunteering

(There are a host of programmes and initiatives launched by various organizations to attract more people into the practice of volunteering. There are also diverse efforts across the country to promote the fundamental duties and active citizenship. The ensuing session aims to highlight some of those experiences draw some lessons)
Experiences on Volunteering

Ms. Neelima Khaitan, Executive Director & Ms. Priyanjana Ghosh, Programme Officer, American India Foundation (AIF)

The William J. Clinton fellowship programme for the volunteers. It’s a Mentor-mentee programme aimed to bring talented young Americans along with Indians for ten months to work in the developmental sector in India. The objective of this programme is to encourage talented young people to engage their talents for India’s benefit, build ties with India, and assist the partner organizations in increasing their capacity.

Follow this link to access the presentation of AIF http://www.vaniindia.org/Volunteerism.php

Ms. Barsha Paricha, Programme Manager, National Foundation for India (NFI)

NFI has an intern programme “Promoting the spirit of Voluntarism and Citizenship amongst young people”. The objective of this programme is to promote spirit of volunteerism and active citizenship amongst young people 18-30 years of age. The programme started in 2002 and it generated from Indians working in US. The idea is to instill volunteering spirit within young people who are yet to develop a world view and bring them together to grassroots civic action and enhance their capacity for moving beyond the individual perceptions. It also enables the youth to connect with the lives of the poor and the marginalized.

Follow this link to access the presentation from NFI http://www.vaniindia.org/Volunteerism.php
Mr. Vimlendu Jha, Executive Director, Swechha

It is high time that young people take charge of the process of change. He shared that most of the work in Swechha is driven by young volunteers. Young people should be given a chance and they should not be put in the box as they can work effectively and can bring change in the society. They should be given the space to work in their own way. Swechha started through volunteerism and today works on various initiatives to promote active citizenship and volunteering. It provides a platform for thousands of individuals to volunteer and participate in development processes with a major focus on environment.

Mr. Jerinenio Almeida, Founder Director, ICONGO

“Our concept of volunteering is something different. We do not want people to give us something, we want them to do something which is very simple. Everybody should feel that everybody is a hero in his/her own way”.

This was the core message from Jerinenio as he addressed the audience. To drive home his message, he used various presentations.

Please visit the following link to watch the movies and other related presentations from ICONGO

http://www.vaniindia.org/Volunteerism.php

Opinions:

It is important to instill a sense of volunteerism and active citizenship amongst the youth. It is high time that the youth of this country think differently and every major social transformation must be backed up by individuals who are aware of their fundamental duties.
Global Exchange

Global exchange is an initiative of VSO India, Pravah paired and the British Council. In this programme volunteers from U.K. and India are paired and live in a community in the U.K. for a period of three months and in India in a community for a period of three months. In the 2010-2011 exchange programme, the volunteers were in URMUL Rajasthan and had work placements on issues of education, health and livelihoods. There were 18 volunteers.

Monisha Vemavarupu V-for-India volunteer is a 21 year old graphic designer. A National Institute of Design graduate, Monisha was also awarded the International Climate Champion by the British Council and believes sustainability is an issue that she is passionate about and wants to continue working on.

In the first phase of Global Exchange programme, Monisha volunteered at Organiclea in the U.K. – a not for profit cooperative which works to promote sustainability, through localising the food system and re-building community. At Organiclea, Monisha helped prepare the land on the farm to grow organic crops and helped create manure using leaves and vegetable waste.

The theme of the first phase was the ‘World of Food’ which focused on the community and the need to raise awareness about unhealthy diets and importance of locally grown organic produce. As part of this theme, the volunteers led by the local community, organised a ‘Global Winter Fair’ – a local farmers market. To promote this event in the community, Monisha visualised and designed a series of posters and notices as well as promoted the various issues around food access, unhealthy diets and genetically modified food and organic produce.

In the second phase, Monisha was placed in the Income Generation Project of URMUL Marusthali Bunkar Vikas Samiti (UMBVS) - an organisation set up for the welfare of weavers in the villages of Jodhpur and Jaisalmer districts. As a result of her design experience and her interest in community development, Monisha undertook surveys, developed a website for UMBVS, created textile designs and re-arranged the layout of Kashida- the UMBVS cloth showroom.
The activities carried out by Monisha and her counterpart on the placement were considered crucial to the needs of the community partner, as some of the skills required for tasks like building online platforms and visual merchandising are not readily available.

Monisha also lived in the village of Bhojasar for three months in a host family. By residing with the Meghwals (listed as schedule castes) which traditionally face caste-based discrimination in the village, Monisha got a firsthand experience of discrimination and issues around livelihood, health, education and resource management.

Monisha and other volunteers also organised a free medical health camp where they arranged for a doctor and distributed medicines to members in the community especially the lower castes and Muslims in the village – traditionally the most disadvantaged in Bhojasar. Monisha was also part of the team which organised a health seminar targeting the women of the Bhil, Lohar and Sansi communities. To raise awareness about maternity health and immunisation schemes of the government in the above mentioned lower castes, the volunteers also involved the Primary Health Centre authorities, and shared the data collected through surveys undertaken previously in the village.

The impact of this survey can be felt through the words of a community member—"All of the volunteers went to the lower caste section of the village. No one goes there, they don’t come here. But because of the surveys and the invitations (for the women to attend the immunisation meeting), it would have made them feel good [could have meant confident...]. 4 Sansi (one of the lowest castes in the village) women have already gone for immunisations. Maybe more will go after them. This is only because of the volunteers” Ghera Ram Jaipal, Host Father.

Through the programme, Monisha has not only got a glimpse of the interconnectedness of livelihood, discrimination and governance but also how volunteering can make a positive impact on the community as well as bring about self-transformation.
When you cease to make a contribution, you begin to die.

- Eleanor Roosevelt
CHAPTER 4

Towards a National Policy on Volunteering

(India lacks a policy on volunteering and ironically there has been no talk about the need to have such a policy as well. Therefore, it was felt that before we demand for a national policy, there has to be in-depth reflections and consultations on nature, reach and relevance of such a policy in our country.)
Mr. Saurabh Sharma, Executive Director, Joint Operation for Social Help (JOSH)

Mr. Saurabh Sharma shared various issues that are to be debated and included in the policy:

- The existing structure of volunteering has to be improved before demanding the policy.
- He stressed that volunteering should not be linked with age. It’s not that only school and college students volunteer but the entire population can volunteer.
- There is a need to design the strategies to promote volunteering in India.
- Capacity building of NGOs should be enhanced i.e. how to use the skills of volunteers?
- Time of volunteers – time frame for volunteering.
- How can organizational policies on volunteering link with national policy on volunteering.
- Policy should also talk about rights of volunteers.
- How much information should be disseminated to volunteers?
- Opportunities to volunteers from the organization?

Thus, policy in itself is a very broad term and it is very essential that the focus should be on the design.

Mr. Praveen Kumar. G, Programme Manager, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO India)

“The concept of volunteering is increasingly being recognized and it is benefiting the society - but what about the rights, support, recognition and space of the volunteers?” - asked Mr. Praveen.

The policy framework should look at two aspects i.e.;
- Promoting volunteerism and active citizenship.
- Creation of legitimate space for volunteers.
Volunteers are not only youth they can be of any age; senior citizen; people from middle class; etc. Further, civic engagement can be facilitated through the platforms like National Service Scheme (NSS), Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK), Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS)

Many NGOs are recruiting volunteers but they are treated as cheap labour. Whether they are paid or not they should be recognized. Thus, there is a need to have a legitimate framework for volunteering. The debate about volunteering and active citizenship should be looked at in the context of accountability from the various stakeholder’s especially from the government and civil society. The space for volunteering should not wither away from the society. Therefore the need for the policy framework for volunteerism in India is very critical.

Ms. Amita Dahiya, National Coordinator, International Year of Volunteers+10 (IYV+10), United Nations Volunteers

There is a need to channelize the willingness of millions of potential volunteers in India to support development initiatives. Volunteers make a real difference to the places they work. However, efforts to recognise, collectively document and share the contributions of volunteers have, thus far, remains rather limited. A national level platform supported and facilitated by Government, UN agencies, civil society, media, educational institutions and the private sector to share knowledge and resources on volunteerism is crucial in creating an enabling environment for volunteerism to flourish in India. Similarly, legal frameworks are necessary to promote, regulate and to ensure the well-being of the volunteers. The volunteer...
community, therefore, should work in close collaboration to support initiatives for a favourable legal and policy environment for volunteers in India.

Opinions:

Although volunteerism and volunteers are quite popular and widespread in India, but still there is need to work towards systematizing, and recognizing it. There is need to work on the following areas:

1. Working with voluntary organizations to develop institutional guidelines for the engagement of volunteers. Many times volunteers are seen as the extended hands available at low or no cost. We need to focus on institutional engagement as well as design instruments for the personal growth of the volunteers. The institutions should not only recognize the contribution of the volunteers but also contribute in empowering them, so that even if the volunteer is not regularly engaged for the long run, he or she becomes sensitive towards the sector and issues.

2. There is a need to work with private and public sector as well as with educational institutions, so that volunteerism does not become an ornamental activity. There is need to develop strategies wherein volunteerism is promoted in these institutions. There is need to build bridges between sectors which provide volunteers and with those who engage volunteers.

3. The voluntary sector has not till date taken its efforts of “National Policy of Voluntary Sector” to the logical end. There is need to work with Indian Planning Commission to update and add detailed section on volunteerism. The final objective of this exercise should be to get this policy document approved and adapted by the Indian parliament.

(Concluding remarks: The session witnessed some lively discussions on whether there has to be a national policy on volunteerism. The assertions for having a national policy stressed on the need to contextualize the efforts to promote volunteerism and one of the ways in this direction would be a formal recognition of volunteerism at the policy level. On the other hand, some observed that such a formal approach needs to be taken up very cautiously as it might jeopardize the very nature of spontaneity and volition from volunteerism. There was a general agreement that wide range consultations are a necessity to figure out the nature and content of such a national policy.)
Approach Towards Accountable Active Citizenship

– Praveen Kumar G., Programme Manager, VSO India

Background

India has witnessed many forms of volunteerism from the ancient period, religious volunteering, through the freedom movement and more so in the recent times in the development sector. However, there has not been much trend towards streamlining structured volunteerism. There lacks sufficient platforms for volunteering, appropriate management systems, policies to support and appreciate volunteers, recognition of volunteer action and active citizenship. There is an urgent need to look at the space for volunteerism in India in the context of the changing development paradigm.

The voluntary sector in India deploys a large number of volunteers and a significant issue facing volunteerism in this scenario is the lack of efficient systems and standards. The voluntary sector policy 2007 mentions volunteering which is very limited in scope and needs more improvisation and attention.

State and non-state actors are working to enhance the development pace of India and there is more stress on capital and human resources. There is much to be done with the increase in digital divide, inequality in resource distribution, high level of poverty, poor human development index in terms of infant mortality and maternal mortality rates, large number of children malnourished and people going hungry to bed each day. This situation calls for civic action and citizenry response. It is undisputed that Active Citizenship can contribute to better development and bring in more effectiveness in development process and reach out to the poorest and excluded communities.

“Undisputedly, one can argue that the state has its duty towards citizens. Citizenry have their responsibility to society and contribute to change.”

India has a large corporate base and most of them have initiated corporate social responsibility which has a large resource pool. These structures need to focus on meaningful engagement which contributes to development effectiveness; capacity
building efforts in the development sector and this can be done through volunteerism. Partnerships between the non-profit and corporate sector can also productively increase the number of volunteers and their effectiveness. A Brookings Institution study on the best practices in international corporate volunteering studied the effectiveness of the corporate volunteering programmes of fourteen companies including Starbucks, IBM, Pfizer, and Timberland. The study recommended the following as best practices;

• Set goals before identifying specifics. The motivations and business reasons for developing volunteer programmes must fit the company’s goals. The volunteer program should be designed according to the motivations and strategic goals of the company.
• Leverage the skills of the workplace. The impact of volunteers will be greatest when the employees’ skills are leveraged for development.
• Pair volunteer work with ongoing efforts in corporate social responsibility and philanthropy. Funds and other resources can increase the impact of the volunteer program. Aligning the two will also allow to better publicize and prioritize the program.
• Partnerships can bring resources and opportunities that a company may not have.
• Infrastructure is important. The management of volunteering programmes must have adequate resources and funds. Logistics, coordination, and training contribute to the social impact.
• Communicate goals and motivations. The benefits and goals of the volunteer program must be clearly communicated to internal and external stakeholders.

Experiences of Effective Volunteerism

Many countries have realized the need for active citizenship and role of volunteers in enhancing development effectiveness. Governments, corporate and civil society have initiated volunteering programmes which are often supported by a national policy on volunteering. It is pertinent to acknowledge such initiatives and learn positive impacts for improvising the volunteering scenario in India.

The success of encouraging volunteerism on the basis of active citizenship can be seen in the United Arab Emirates. The government-affiliated Emirates Foundation
launched a volunteer symposium, “Takatof”. It is the National Programme for Social Volunteering which encourages volunteerism as an expression of national solidarity and citizenship. It identifies Emirati citizens as volunteers and beneficiaries. Encouraging active citizenship can require change in the cultural context of volunteerism so individuals associate volunteerism with economic development. This program was very successful in recruiting large numbers of volunteers, more volunteers than available volunteer placements. The Emirati example is demonstrative of a larger trend in the Arab states to undertake ad-hoc volunteer initiatives under a partnership between the government, private sector, and civil society.

The Lebanon Government has set up summer camps for 18-25 year-olds to encourage volunteerism through NGOs in addition to their traditional religious and familial responsibilities. Every year 500 youth attend an eighteen-day camp to promote volunteerism and volunteer in communities emphasizing non-religious and non-sectarian volunteerism. Additionally, 40-50 students are picked by the Ministry of Social Affairs to a weekend camp with the same objectives. The Ministry of Social Affairs has requested the Ministry of Education to add a “day of volunteerism” to the curriculum to learn about volunteerism and to encourage individual volunteering. By encouraging volunteerism from a young age, the Association for Volunteer Services, an NGO, is hoping to educate children that volunteerism can extend beyond familial obligation.

In India, the National Youth Policy 2003 lays emphasis on the youth to learn democratic principles through “Citizenship Programmes” through special camps, National Service Scheme camps, Nehru Yuva Kendra campaigns, and the awareness efforts promoted by NGOs and CBOs. References to Active Citizenship are made in terms of ideals and goals based on principles and do not mention practical directions or guidelines for promoting active citizenship.

The following is a policy directive from the National Youth Policy;

“Embodying instruction in the values like respect for teachers and parents, adolescent and the aged besides religious tolerance, and compassion towards the poor and the needy. The concept of family as the basic and most important asset of Indian Society will be strengthened.”
The guideline posits that the “concept of family... will be strengthened” but does not mention how or what would constitute a strong concept of family. A National Policy on volunteering should be aimed towards developing a framework for measurable, practical policy directives.

In Egypt, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood states in their April 2008 Working Paper on the Reality and Prospects of Volunteer Work that one challenge for formal volunteerism is the understanding of formal volunteerism’s value and the idea that it would negatively affect education by distracting them from studying. To increase the appreciation of volunteers, the Council aimed to focus public awareness on the benefits and social value of formal volunteerism. It worked with the schools, media, and clergy to include messages about volunteerism. It worked with parents and students to illustrate how volunteerism is an individual and national benefit.

Philippines and South Korean Governments are able to encourage formal volunteering and guide the management of volunteers via a national volunteer center. The national volunteer center coordinates policy and planning to effectively manage volunteers on key issues that will contribute to development.

In 2007, Philippines enacted Act No. 9418 on Strengthening Volunteerism, which sets the guidelines for the Philippines National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA). The PNVSCA coordinates volunteer efforts, delineates policies for foreign volunteers and systematically registers local volunteers. The Act strengthens the PNVSCA and gives it power to manage the implementation of the Act. The PNVSCA works with the Multi-Sectoral Advisory Body (MSAB), which is composed of representatives from the government, corporate, academic, and non-profit sectors. The MSAB advises on the national volunteer service and acts to strengthen the relationships between voluntary organizations and local
Volunteerism and Active Citizenship

Volunteering England is a charity that acts as the “lead national volunteering development agency for England.” Among its multiple activities, it works to support the infrastructure of volunteering and promote best practices. It also researches the state of volunteering and cooperates with the government if there are legal barriers to volunteerism. Volunteering England is the secretariat of the England Volunteering

The Act also created a national Volunteer Services Promotion committee, which is responsible for voluntary policy, coordination, and management.
“Report on the Role of volunteering in Contributing to Economic and Social Cohesion” for member states to allow VAT exemptions for voluntary organisations when making purchases that are toward their objectives. Because of the EU’s continuous support for volunteerism, there have been various successful volunteer policies in Europe.

Development Council, a high-level advocacy group made up of representatives from the public and private sectors. It works with the government and political parties to lobby for policy and community efforts towards good volunteerism. Furthermore, the documents that outline laws and policies affecting volunteers and the state of volunteerism are produced by these organizations or coalitions. Volunteering: Compact Code of Good Practice defines what a volunteer is, as there is no legal definition, and offers a starting point for secondary documents. It includes the “understanding the concept of volunteering, the importance and scope of volunteering, overcoming barriers to volunteering, valuing volunteer contributions, the volunteering experience, the volunteering infrastructure and taking the Code forward.” Additionally, Building on Success: Strategy for Volunteering Infrastructure in England 2004 – 2014 is a ten-year strategy developed by Volunteering England, with inputs from the voluntary sector. The strategy builds on the code definition of the volunteer and infrastructure and defines the differences between volunteer “infrastructure and the organizations that provide it.” Finally, the Manifesto for Change focuses on the voluntary infrastructure and is written for volunteers, non-volunteers, and voluntary organizations. Volunteering England, the England Volunteering Development Council, charities, and government bodies, its recommendations are to “raise the profile of volunteering,” ensuring that anyone can volunteer, modernize volunteering, and reward volunteer efforts, and it includes the government funding that is needed to meet these guidelines. As a result, the government invested £4 million for volunteer and management training and £2 million for a volunteering fund for disabled.
In addition, it decided to produce guidance to help avoid unnecessary criminal records checks being carried out, improve coordination of volunteering by civil servants, support existing events to promote volunteering and undertake further work on the viability of the recommendation to include volunteering in the inspection of public services.

In the larger European Union, there have been laws and policies for the promotion of volunteerism since 1997. European Union institutions have conducted multiple studies and made recommendations to member states on how to remove legal and social barriers to volunteerism. In March 2008, the European Parliament recommended in its, “Report on the Role of Volunteering in Contributing to Economic and Social Cohesion” for member states to allow VAT exemptions for voluntary organizations when making purchases that are towards their objectives. Because of the EU’s continuous support for volunteerism, there have been various successful volunteer policies in Europe.

For formal recognition of volunteers, the Estonian Government has implemented a policy that includes several methods for rewarding volunteers. The first is to celebrate International Volunteers Day with a National Volunteer Awarding Event with the President of the Republic of Estonia as its patron. It also includes promoting a “Volunteer Pass,” a document that illustrates the volunteer’s skills and experiences from volunteering.

The drafting of Tanzania’s National Volunteer Policy was a collaborative process. In 2001, the government commissioned a study that resulted in a recommendation for a National Volunteer Policy. Tanzania also recommended a National Volunteer Policy after a study in 2005. The government worked with UNV Tanzania, civil society, and the donor community to draft a policy. In addition to the appropriate government ministry, other national government ministries, regional and local governments, civil society organizations, and donor community have planned to work together in the policy’s implementation.

As a result the government invested £4 million for volunteer and management training and £2 million for a volunteering fund for disabled.
Conclusion

The spirit of volunteerism is increasingly gaining recognition in many countries around the world. There are appropriate spaces created for civic action and active citizenship, further funding allocations are made, management are systems created and there is a higher recognition and value system for volunteering. To enhance volunteerism these aspects are very crucial and only a robust national policy on volunteering backed with government willingness and resources will create legitimacy to volunteerism in India. This will further strengthen existing structures including the National Service Scheme (NSS), Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK) and also create more spaces and opportunities for active citizenship through collaborations with various stakeholders in India. This will also give a boost to corporate volunteering, international volunteering, community volunteering, diaspora volunteering, mass volunteering, youth volunteering and the likes; this will recognize volunteers and will bring about a structural framework for volunteerism and valuing volunteers. As an ultimate result, this platform and framework will act as a pivotal force in enhancing development effectiveness and will benefit society at large.
About VSO India

Vision

One in which individuals and communities are mobilised to get involved and become Active Citizens, and the socially excluded are empowered to participate in their own development and access essential basic services, crucial to inclusive growth.

“Active Citizenship can tackle social exclusion, support the participation of poor people in decisions that affect them and their communities, and empower them to demand their rights. It also has the potential to enhance the responsiveness of those in decision-making, service delivery and policy-making positions to ensure that their decisions and actions benefit the poor and most vulnerable in society”

Mission

Mobilise people to participate actively in the development process through volunteering, active citizenship, collective action and advocacy.

V for India

VSO India works through the V for India program and active citizenship to address Governance processes which will bring about a change and development in the thematic areas of Social Security, Health, Education, Livelihood and Environment. V for India is envisaged to be achieved through sustainable and long-term partnerships with various stakeholders including civil society organizations, corporate, UN and government agencies, as well as national and international organizations through the following Approaches:

1. Community volunteering: The aim is to enhance the collaboration between citizens and government so that there is enhanced delivery of quality services to poor and marginalized sections including disadvantaged women, scheduled caste, scheduled tribes, Muslim minorities and persons with disabilities in society and they are able to exercise their rights and have access to their entitlements, basic services including primary education and health, livelihood opportunities and have a greater awareness on environment.

2. Youth volunteering: motivate youth from all sections to become aware of their immediate surrounding and relevant development issues and enable them to take action to bring about a change in society.

3. Mass volunteering and campaigns: Mobilization of large scale active citizens to be Engaged in campaigns and movements; Promote awareness on development issues Through street theatre, folk media and events; Promote Advocacy and address issues through collective action and policy influencing.

4. Corporate Volunteering: Working with corporate to promote employee volunteering, linking them to NGOs where there is a need; establishment of robust volunteer management systems, build capacity of business relations management, development of best practices model. Encourage NGOs to develop placements and build pro-bono relationships with corporate firms thereby enabling a process of sharing human resource support to NGOs and build their capacity.

5. Diaspora volunteering: Aims to pool in resource talent from non-resident Indian Communities and people of Indian origin to experience the diversity of the rich culture and have a meaningful engagement in the development processes in India by their significant contributions.

6. International volunteering: promote the culture of global active citizenship through fostering international technical co-operation and create opportunities for global citizens to volunteer in India and encourage Indian nationals to volunteer in middle income and less developed countries.

VSO INDIA

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About VANI

Voluntary Action Network India (VANI) is an apex body of the Voluntary Organisations.

- Founded in 1988 to act as a promoter/protector and collective voice of the voluntary sector
- Base of 5000 non-governmental organisations spread in 25 states of India
- Resource centre for publications, research work, articles, important documents and information about and related to the voluntary sector
- Works towards sensitisation of the government, private sector

Objectives:

- As a platform, to promote voluntarism and create space for voluntary action
- As a network, attempt to bring about a convergence of common sectoral issues and concerns for building a truly national agenda of voluntary action in India. In addition, facilitate linkages of various efforts and initiatives of the Indian voluntary sector, which succeed in strengthening a united and sustainable movement of change
- As an association, work towards fostering value based voluntary action and long term sustainability especially amongst our members

Areas of Work

- Promoting practices of good governance in the voluntary sector
- Strengthening networks
- Articulating independent voices of the sector
- Research and advocacy of policies and laws effecting the voluntary sector.

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