

Workshop on

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING: BETTER SOCIAL CAPITAL. STRONGER BUSINESS.

24 March 2023, New Delhi



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India@75 Foundation's Corporate Volunteering

India@75 Foundation, an industry-led people's movement leverages the power of collaboration between individuals, institutions and industry to shape an inclusively developed India. Volunteerism is amongst the most effective collaboration mechanism and provides an opportunity for people to understand and engage with India's development challenges.

Industry especially can play a pivotal role by encouraging its workforce to help build the capacity of civil society to run grassroots programme more efficiently. Civil society is a critical last mile link in service delivery and lacks the skills needed for effective implementation; professionals can make all the difference by offering their skills pro bono.

The Foundation has been advocating extensively for institutionalisation of volunteering in the country. It runs several programmes to demonstrate the power of volunteering one of which is the Functional Literacy Programme (FLiP), an easy to run free training programme designed to help the informal sector learn how to navigate the digital world for better social and economic opportunities. Any corporate can run it as a volunteer programme for its employees to help the informal sector in its vicinity and reduce the digital divide in the country.

India@75 Foundation has also set up the National Volunteering Grid (NVG), an online portal that brings together the industry, civil society, and individuals to collaborate on projects that can help create an inclusive society.

Since 2014, it has also been holding the National Volunteering Week (NVW). The intent has been to mainstream volunteering in India by illustrating the power of collaboration between groups that share the same social interest. The event draws enthusiastic participation from corporates, NGOs, institutions, and individuals.

Every year during NVW, corporates and NGOs open up their projects for volunteer engagement. Individuals, institutions, corporates, and the civil society collaborate in pursuance of common social goals. This builds a very strong case for participative development. Over the years, NVWs have resulted in clocking millions of volunteering hours and impacting several millions of lives.

As a part of its ongoing efforts to up the ante on volunteering, especially among corporates, India@75 Foundation organised a workshop at The Lalit, New Delhi on 24 March 2023. It was held under the broad theme of **Corporate Volunteering: Better Social Capital. Stronger Business.** The workshop aimed at bringing together development practitioners and CSR experts to deliberate on how corporate volunteering can be leveraged for the purposes of inclusive and holistic growth.

The workshop witnessed active participation from 35 corporates and civil society organizations who use volunteering to meet common social goals.

India@75 Foundation Workshop Corporate Volunteering: Better Social Capital . Stronger Business

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Panel discussion on Creating Equitable Workplaces and Influencing Social Impact through Corporate Volunteering

The workshop was flagged off with a panel discussion that sought to set the context for the break out sessions. The panel consisted of: **Mr Ravi Pahuja**, CEO, Raman Kant Munjal Foundation; **Mr Anurag Krishna**, CSR Regional Head North India, TCS; **Mr Suryadeep Verma**, Chief Marketing Officer, Comviva Technologies (Tech Mahindra Company); **Ms Talish Ray**, Managing Partner, TRS Law Offices; **Mr Vinay Kumar**, Director, Transform Rural India Foundation (A Tata Trust Initiative) & Village Square and **Mr Sushil Mishra**, Regional Coordinator North India, Youth For Seva.

Conversation synopsis

On how digitization can help strengthen the volunteering ecosystem in the country:

- The concept of volunteering has evolved over the years,

moving from the realms of charity to becoming more focused on impact.

- The explosion of digital technologies and a change in demography have been contributing factors.
- A large number of young people are volunteering across the country in different ways – there is merit in collectivization for greater impact.
- Technology can play a big role by creating a streamlined volunteering ecosystem that connects people to opportunities.
- Technology can also ensure better volunteer management systems. Tech companies can help create such resources for volunteer organizations.
- Technology can also increase the visibility of volunteering and bring more people into the fold.

On the need for making organizations more conscious of their social capital:

- Apart from financial and human capital, it is important for organizations to build their social capital because it is an important leverage for both business and community.

- Industry can bring important resources to the table for the benefit of the larger community. Digital and human capabilities, especially, can be very important resources in helping converge and increase the impact of different interventions for communities.
- Corporates need to build the culture of volunteering and community engagement in their organizations. Leaders have to walk the talk and set an example.
- The business, social and human values of an organization need to be aligned.

On how a sustainable volunteering ecosystem can be created:

- When corporates begin to connect social capital with their bottom line, important components of community engagement and corporate volunteering will begin to fall in place. A shift in perspective is needed.
- Projects too need to be implemented in an efficient, milestone-driven manner where the impact is clearly evident. Impact motivates people to volunteer their time and skill.
- Volunteering needs to be seen not as an act of charity but a

tangible and intelligent way of making a change, however small.

- Urban youth have a very limited understanding of rural India. This needs to be addressed urgently. When youth understand the potential and existing realities of rural India, volunteering could become as much an opportunity for self-growth as for doing good. In a young country, volunteering definitely needs to be repositioned.

On how to bridge the gap between the civil society and industry so that they can work towards their common goals:

- It is important for both to understand each other and realize they have common goals. For this, there has to be common vocabulary and trimming away of sector jargon.
- It is also important for the industry to appreciate that there's an intangible impact of volunteering that cannot be captured in numbers. Organizations need to understand that the true RoI will not always be reflected in the data being presented.
- Both the industry and the civil society will need to be more consultative and less transactional for true impact.

Breakout Group 1 Leveraging the industry to mainstream the culture of volunteerism

- Leaders should lead by example: their role in volunteering should be compulsory.
- Employees should be encouraged to form their own Employee Voluntary Group
- Organizations should help employees maintain their levels of commitment. They should help orient them culturally and set their expectations.
- Beneficiaries should be allowed to have a voice and choice.
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) should transform into Individual Social Responsibility .

Breakout Group 2 Remote Volunteering and its role in influencing social impact

- Pandemic and digitalization has changed the volunteering landscape and therefore remote volunteering is here to stay.
- NGOs need to change their approach to programme implementation and volunteering in order to be relevant and impactful in an increasingly virtual world.
- Clearer metric for example will show clearer impact and serve to motivate the volunteers.
- NGOs also need to prioritize skill matching – volunteers should be assigned opportunities that match their skill sets. In case skills do not match, NGOs should invest in building relevant skills in the volunteers.
- NGOs also need to communicate with the youth in the language that the latter understands.
- Visibility, recognition are important incentives to keep the volunteers motivated. We need to work more in that area.

Breakout Group 3 Institutionalizing the culture of volunteering in our country

- Government can play the important role as an enabler by anchoring volunteering in a Ministry.
- Policy frameworks and legislations need to be put in place.
- Digital technologies can be leveraged to converge different stakeholders.
- Civil society must proactively engage with aggregators and help publicize the portal in order to increase engagement. The aggregators must equally publicize the portal.
- Large corporates should also be a part of these platforms.
- Corporates should also make public their volunteering engagements and the impact created through these interventions.
- The Economic Value Add (EVA) of volunteering is an important discussion and must be actively pursued.

Breakout Group 4 Role of Corporate Volunteering in reducing the digital divide and fostering social inclusion

- Digitization can broaden the volunteering landscape considerably by enabling remote engagement.
- Capacity building of volunteers on tech platforms like Haqdarshak should be encouraged.
- Social media and outreach campaigns can help promote volunteering.
- Corporates should consider multi-stakeholder consultations while developing applications / platforms. This will lead to more informed design.
- Quality of volunteering is important. There is need for self-motivated volunteers working in a country like India
- Companies will have to internalise the fact that volunteering benefits them as much as it does the community.



The India@75 Foundation Journey

India@75 was taken up by CII as the flagship initiative toward its Nation Building agenda. In order to give it a larger mandate, India@75 was instituted as a Foundation Trust on 13 July 2012.

India is celebrating the 75th year of its Independence this year. CII's work on India@75 started when India turned 60 in 2007. Enthused with the thoughts shared by late Prof CK Prahalad at the India@60 celebrations in New York, CII adopted the idea since then under India@75 has been working on what India needed to do to shape up as a Morally, Economically and Technologically Advanced Nation.

In 2008, 14 years ago, CII facilitated a public visioning exercise, led by experts, and interviewed over 6000 people from 17 states to find out what they thought India needed to do to become such a country. These people ranged from simple fisherfolk to Ministers and Bureaucrats. The findings were synthesized into a vision document called India@75: The People's Agenda.

This vision gave rise to an eponymous movement called India@75. This was an industry-led, multi-stakeholder movement that sought to catalyze strategic collaborations between groups on issues critical to the holistic development of the country. One of the first people to understand and appreciate the intent of the movement was the Honourable Prime Minister, who was then the CM of Gujarat. Many of the India@75 vision elements found their way into the development discourse under his leadership. Skill India, Digital India, Smart Cities Mission and Startup India are some examples.

India@75 Foundation extensively working towards seven vision elements - Skill Development, Urbanisation, Health-care, Inclusive Development, Technology, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Business and Economy.

These helped inform mission mode schemes such as 500 million skilled manpower, 500 developed cities, 175 GW of new and renewable energy, housing for all, affordable & accessible healthcare and participative urbanization.

India@75 Foundation has been working to accelerate India's development journey by catalysing important collaboration between Industry and other stakeholder groups in areas critical to the nation's development such as the Volunteering initiative, Functional Literacy Programme (FLiP) and Aspirational District Programme etc.

It started working extensively to establish the culture of both general and pro-bono volunteering. Technology was seen as a vital enabler to scale up people engagement by catalysing more collaboration and thereby elevating the pursuit of India@75 to a movement mode. This led to the development of robust online platforms like the National Volunteering Grid (NVG) to connect NGOs with citizens and Industry so that they could collaborate on issues of common interest.

CII has been aggressively advocating the India@75 vision on strategic platforms. This has contributed to a conducive environment for indigenisation, skilling, digitalisation and financial inclusion.



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