

Giving it back to society : Escalating Volunteerism for social development

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Abstract - In Indian ethos, “art of giving” (making efforts to do good to people) have substantially been positioned as one of the supreme karma of every individual’s life. The idea of bringing change to society through engaging and involving youth volunteers is not a new one. It is evident from the fact that our country has manifested the spirit of unity by community participation long back ago out of philanthropic beliefs, religious allegiance, societal commitments and values which are intrinsically en grained into the fabric of Indian society. There is no doubt that the millennial generation is playing an avid and prominent role in bringing change to society by addressing the issues and meeting challenges through effective solutions. It is imperative to understand too the motivational needs of volunteers to join the NGO sector who impart their time, knowledge and energy despite of no provision of economic stability. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to understand what motivates volunteer to devote their time and energy for social development. It also discusses the challenges faced by them while conducting awareness programs. Research Methodology which is applied in the study is descriptive in nature. A sample of 96 volunteers working in different NGOs were taken. Primary data of the study has been collected through well-structured questionnaire developed by Clare. et. al. (1998) Volunteers Functions Inventory (VFI) which measures the volunteering motivation using six motivational functions namely values, understanding, Career, Enhancement, Social and Protective.

Keywords — *Social Development, Social work ,Volunteers Functions Inventory, Volunteer Motivation, Youth Motivation, Youth Volunteering.*

I. INTRODUCTION

“Remember that the happiest people are not those getting more, but those giving more.” Volunteering in simple terms means generous activity conducted by an individual or group of individual who actively engage themselves for social betterment of society and renders their services for no economic rewards. On the one hand, it is an expression of a certain set of values imbibed from society values that enable an individual to locate her or himself in relation to others (Kundu, 2005 & 2010). Today, a strong indian civil society with myriad NGOs- large, medium and small with an increase from 1.2 million in 2002 to 3.3 million in 2009, and perhaps the largest in the world complement the government’s macro social safety net using volunteers in many ways to tackle many of India’s crying needs in human and social infrastructure (PRIA 2002) *The Non-Profit Sector in India*. Many non-government organisations who exist to impart their services works and operates through both part-time and full-time staff in meeting their clientele needs. Part-time volunteers consists of those individuals who take out time from their busy schedule and utilize it effectively by associating with non-government organizations. Full-time

staff are those compassionate people who are self-motivated, committed and possess empathetic attitude towards others. They believe in the theory of “Giving it back to society”. Thus, it is not wrong to say that majority of field-based voluntary organizations depend on the local volunteers. Recruiting suitable and skilled candidates are still one major challenge faced by such institutions and due to unavailability of specialized people they often end up hiring candidates who lack necessary skills, competence required by the organization. Also, the infrastructure and organizational structure of small and medium-sized NGOs are quite weak because of unavailability of funds. Therefore, performing different tasks by a single person at one go can be seen like bookkeeping, maintaining records, executing campaigns thereby helping them in becoming a multitasker in respective areas. Also, it provides a platform to volunteers who strives to make a change to society by helping those who are in need, by educating the illiterate, by providing effective solutions to problems through different awareness programs and campaigns. Despite the fact that the overall volunteer participation rate is estimated to be high in India, the absence of any precise statistics and impact assessment of efforts of volunteers makes it difficult to estimate the number of

volunteers and staff engaged in the NGO sector or their contribution. Majority of people who are involved in volunteering work are either a studying scholar or a college student. On one hand it intends to improve the quality of life of less privileged people while on the other hand it provides volunteers with immense opportunity to serve society, develop their skills, talent and prospective career. Hastings et. Al (2007) argue that encouraging adolescents enrollment in volunteer work may be an effective way of promoting their pro social development, as youths may incorporate their pro social activities as an element of their selves. The Millennial generation is a great source of opportunity for the voluntary sector and npo's. Youth in particular are targeted, for evidence suggests that young people are likely to be socialized into pro-social behaviour (Hooghe & Stolle 2003). The active participation of youth in delivering awareness programs, reaching to wider population and sensitizing people over the issues makes them an important part of the organization. Without them, non government organization either have to recruit staff or to employ resources for effective execution of programs leading to deployment of limited resources. It is not easy to quantify the efforts of volunteers. However, the question why people volunteer or what triggers them has no one specific answer rather there are multiple dimensions to it. There exist no one reason but individual tend to do volunteering for numerous reasons. One can say that the influence of traditional values, culture and ethics play an instilling role in motivating them to take that extra step. Other might do this for helping others i.e. a kind act of selflessness. Some pursue this out of circumstances, when something unfavourable happens to people of respective community they come forward to support each other. Religion also play a motivating factor when it comes to volunteering. People take privilege when they associate themselves with institutions that exist for doing social good. Hence 'feel good factor' is also one reason which motivates volunteers to provide their services. Since the economic support is a missing variable it seems necessary to evaluate volunteer's gratification (Vecian et. Al 2009) by examining their motivation and fulfillment.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation is a set of forces that causes a person to approach a particular act. In practice it includes the needs, wants, desires and the inner forces of that person stimulate him to have a specific activity. One historical way of understanding volunteer motivations has been based on theories of altruism and selflessness (Philips, 1982; Rehberg, 2005). Decision to volunteer or continue volunteering possibly resulted from satisfying volunteering experience and the crucial key to understanding volunteer satisfaction is the motivation to volunteer (Monga 2006). With this, volunteers are seen as people who give their time and energy to help others in order to receive benefits in return that are either intrinsic or

extrinsic (Cnaan and Amrofel 1994 ; Gidron 1978). Motivation associated to development and learning and altruism are the ones inducing intrinsic satisfaction, so volunteers reported greater satisfaction the more their experiences complemented their reasons for volunteering, confirming the results of some important works presented in the literature (Sherer 2004 ; Finkelstein 2008). The motivations related to belonging , protection and career recognition are the ones influencing extrinsic satisfaction (Doherty & Carron 2003). McClelland theorized that individuals of all cultures are motivated by one of three needs: Achievement, power, or affiliation. Rokach and Wanklyn (2009) also found enjoyment to be a source of motivation for some volunteers. Volunteers may also have expectations of tangible rewards or benefits associated with volunteerism, meaning that they want to increase their own welfare (Batson et al. 2002). The private benefits model and functionalist approach to volunteering illustrate how people may choose to volunteer to obtain skills, contacts, or some other personal benefit (Binder & Freytag, 2013; Hustinx, Cnaan, & Handy, 2010; Meier & Stutzer, 2008; Snyder & Omoto, 2008; Wilson, 2000). Some motives relate to factors outside of volunteers immediate control, including being appreciated by family and friends, and in some cases they might be asked to volunteer by family and friends or they did so because their family or friends were also volunteering (Edwards 2005). Social incentives encourage volunteering, where an individual is more likely to give up his or her time when the person asking has a close relationship with the potential volunteer (Bekkers, 2010). Out of many, the major salient factors found to have significant positive effects on volunteers' intention are altruistic value, ego enhancement, personal development, and community concern (Kwang-Ho Lee, Amanda C. Alexander & Dae-Young Kim 2013) . As NGOs lack financial rewards (Kamery, 2004; Rahman & Sultana, 2012), the amount of remuneration seems to be less important to NGO workers (Bunchapattanasakul, Wiriyaosol & Ya-anan, 2012; Mitra, 2011). Clary et. al (1998) theorized that the answer to the complex question of what motivates an individual to volunteer could be unveiled by understanding the processes in the domains of attitudes and persuasion, social cognition, social relationships and personality. Thus, following an analytical review of existing literature and conducting a series of empirical testing, Clary et al. (1998) designed an instrument, i.e., Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) with six motivational functions in order to assess volunteers' motivation. The six functions and their description with regard to volunteer behavior (motivation) are Values, Understanding, Social, Enhancement, Career, Protection. Widjaja (2010) proposed that organizations should utilize the VFI to determine the motivations of their volunteers and attempt to match the type of roles they fill with their personal motivations. Also, it can

assist organizations to promote the ongoing nature of volunteering (Clary et. al, 1998).

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To study what motivates volunteers to devote their time and energy for the social development.

To study the challenges faced by volunteers while serving their purpose to society.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

➤ Sample Area

Research methodology which is applied during the research is descriptive in nature. The population for this study was the volunteers of different NGO's namely Praayas, Robinhood Army and Rise All Foundation. A sample of 96 volunteers were taken. These volunteers were chosen randomly through convenience sampling.

➤ Data Collection Sources

The primary data required for the study has been collected with the help of well-structured questionnaire and it was distributed among volunteers working as part-time/ full-time in various NGOs . The secondary data collection sources for the study consists of national as well as international journals which is collected through reviewing the existing literature, books and online articles.

➤ Research Tool

The questionnaire used in this study is Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI) developed by Clary et. Al (1998). It has three sections. The first section gathers demographic information regarding age, experience, gender. The second section asked questions regarding reasons for volunteering. A 5-point Likert scale was used which was ranged from strongly disagree, followed by disagree, followed by neutral , after that agree and finally strongly agree. It was divided into six different subscales namely **values** (Questions 3,8,16,19 and 22), **understanding** (questions 12,14,18,25 and 32), **social** (questions 2,4,6,17 and 23), **protective** (questions 7,9,11,20 and 24), **enhancement** (questions 5,13,26,27 and 29) and **career** (questions 1,10,15,21,28). Also, challenges faced while doing social good is included in the third section.

➤ Data analysis

The data which was collected with the help of distributed questionnaire was analyzed through SPSS software and Microsoft Excel. For identifying most influential variables which motivates volunteers and for demographics descriptive statistics were used. Each volunteer's response were totaled to find their individual subscale totals, then an average of all subscales totals was gathered. Average responses for each statement were also calculated. The findings are shown in Table 1, Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4:

V. FINDINGS

➤ Demographic Profile of Respondents (Table 1)

The majority of volunteers who are associated with NGOs were observed to be male (58.3%). People who are into volunteering work are either 20 years of age and above (63.5%) or 19 years (20.8%). Less represented were female (41.6%), and those who are of 18 years. Majority of respondents are either fresh graduates or studying in class 12th.

➤ Volunteering Attributes (Table 1)

About 45.8% of students have been doing volunteering work for 6-8 months (less than 1 year), whereas 34.3% of respondents reported doing social work for 1-2 year. Majority of people i.e 84.3% are part-time volunteers. On the contrary 15.6% are working as full-time. 55.2% volunteers possess prior experience of working in the social sector.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	56	58.33
Female	40	41.66
Age		
Less than 18 years	1	1.04
18 years	14	14.58
19 years	20	20.83
20 years and above	61	63.54
Educational Qualification		
Secondary	0	0
Senior Secondary	43	44.79
Graduate	35	36.45
Post Graduate	18	18.75
PhD	0	0
Tenure of Volunteering		
Less than 1 year	44	45.83
1-2 year	33	34.37
2-3 year	10	10.41
3 years and above	9	9.37
Kind of Volunteer		
Part-time	81	84.37
Full-time	15	15.62
Any Previous Volunteering experience?		
Yes	53	55.20
No	43	44.79

Table 1 : Demographics of volunteers

➤ Volunteering Motivations (Table 2 , Table 3, Table 4)

Out of six motivational functions the values function ranked highest among volunteers with a mean subscale score of 21.6. Followed by understanding with mean subscale score of 20.7.

After that Enhancement function (M=19.9), Protective Function (M= 17.7), Social Function (M= 17.4) and Career function (M=15.4) respectively. It was observed that 68% volunteers cited they feel it is important to help others. Volunteering allows people to gain new perspectives on things (66 %) is the next factor upon which volunteers strongly agreed. 42% of the respondents agreed to the fact that they feel compassionate for the people who are in need.

Also, they want to contribute to the society by doing something for a cause they hold in high regard (42%). It was also observed that 24% of volunteers strongly disagreed on the statement “I can make new contacts that might help my business career.” 34% of volunteers were of the view that their friends don’t volunteer and had strongly disagreed with the statement.

Variables	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Volunteering can help me get my foot in the door at a place where I would like to work. (Career)	96	21%	29%	28%	6%	16%	100%
My friends volunteer. (Social)	96	8%	19%	23%	16%	34%	100%
I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself. (Values)	96	54%	34%	10%	1%	0%	100%
People I am close to want me to volunteer. (Social)	96	47%	38%	11%	3%	1%	100%
Volunteering makes me feel important. (Enhancement)	96	38%	25%	22%	9%	6%	100%
People I know share an interest in community service. (Social)	96	36%	42%	20%	1%	1%	100%
No matter how bad I have been feeling, volunteering help me to forget about it. (Protect)	96	47%	36%	14%	3%	0%	100%
I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving. (Values)	96	53%	28%	16%	2%	1%	100%
by volunteering I feel less lonely. (Protect)	96	24%	30%	33%	9%	3%	100%
I can make new contacts that might help my business career. (Career)	96	15%	13%	32%	17%	24%	100%
Doing volunteer work relieves me for some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others. (Protect)	96	21%	20%	30%	15%	15%	100%
I can learn more about the cause for which I am learning. (Understanding)	96	34%	32%	23%	5%	5%	100%
Volunteering increases my self-esteem. (Enhancement)	96	39%	34%	23%	2%	2%	100%
Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspectives on things. (Understanding)	96	66%	29%	4%	0%	1%	100%
Volunteering allows me to explore new career options. (Career)	96	20%	23%	29%	18%	10%	100%
I feel compassion towards people in need. (Values)	96	49%	42%	6%	2%	1%	100%
Others with whom I am close place a high value on community service. (Social)	96	19%	27%	39%	5%	10%	100%
Volunteering helps me learn through direct hands-on experience. (Understanding)	96	38%	32%	29%	0%	1%	100%
I feel its important to help others. (Values)	96	68%	22%	6%	2%	2%	100%
Volunteering helps me work through my own personal problems. (Protect)	96	25%	26%	31%	11%	6%	100%

Volunteering is a way to make new friends. (Enhancement)	96	29%	27%	31%	7%	5%	100%
I can explore my own strengths. (Understanding)	96	50%	34%	13%	2%	1%	100%
I have learned how to deal with a great variety of people through volunteering at this organisation. (Understanding)	96	42%	35%	19%	3%	1%	100%
volunteering makes me feel needed. (Enhancement)	96	64%	28%	6%	1%	1%	100%
volunteering makes me feel better about myself. (Enhancement)	96	41%	33%	23%	2%	1%	100%
Volunteering experience will look good on my resume. (Career)	96	22%	17%	36%	10%	15%	100%
Volunteering will help me to succeed in my chosen profession. (Career)	96	16%	16%	35%	25%	8%	100%
i can do something for a cause that is important to me. (Values)	96	36%	42%	20%	1%	1%	100%
Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know best. (Social)	96	26%	26%	23%	10%	15%	100%
volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles. (Protect)	96	11%	32%	41%	14%	2%	100%

Table 2: Data showing various motivational factors and reasons for associating with NGOs as a volunteer.

Statement	Mean Response
Volunteering can help me get my foot in the door at a place where I would like to work. (Career)	3.3
My friends volunteer. (Social)	2.5
I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself. (Values)	4.4
People I am close to want me to volunteer. (Social)	4.2
Volunteering makes me feel important. (Enhancement)	3.7
People I know share an interest in community service. (Social)	4.1
No matter how bad I have been feeling, volunteering help me to forget about it. (Protect)	4.2
I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving. (Values)	4.3
by volunteering I feel less lonely. (Protect)	3.6
I can make new contacts that might help my business career. (Career)	2.7
Doing volunteer work relieves me for some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others. (Protect)	3.1
I can learn more about the cause for which I am learning. (Understanding)	3.8
Volunteering increases my self-esteem. (Enhancement)	4
Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspectives on things. (Understanding)	4.5
Volunteering allows me to explore new career options. (Career)	3.2
I feel compassion towards people in need. (Values)	4.3
Others with whom I am close place a high value on community service. (Social)	3.3
Volunteering helps me learn through direct hands-on experience. (Understanding)	4.05
I feel its important to help others. (Values)	4.5
Volunteering helps me work through my own personal problems. (Protect)	3.5
Volunteering will help me to succeed in my chosen profession. (Career)	3.05
i can do something for a cause that is important to me. (Values)	4.1

Table 3: Volunteer Motivations

Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know best. (Social)	3.3
volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles. (Protect)	3.3
I have learned how to deal with a great variety of people through volunteering at this organisation. (Understanding)	4.1
volunteering makes me feel needed. (Enhancement)	4.5
volunteering makes me feel better about myself. (Enhancement)	4.1

Volunteering experience will look good on my resume. (Career)	3.2
Volunteering is a way to make new friends. (Enhancement)	3.6
I can explore my own strengths. (Understanding)	4.3

Volunteer Function Mean Sub scale Score

Values	21.6
Understanding	20.7
Enhancement	19.9
Protective	17.7
Social	17.4
Career	15.4

Table 4 : Volunteer Functions

VI. CHALLENGES FACED BY VOLUNTEERS WHILE SERVING THEIR PURPOSE TO SOCIETY

This study further explore the thoughts of volunteers about volunteerism and examine their experiences and challenges faced at various points in their volunteering career. For this, qualitative approach was used.

- There is a constant problem of regular training programs and motivation for volunteers.
- Unavailability of resources and lack of proper facilities are some of the problems faced by volunteers in dealing with day-to-day activities which hampers their efficiency.
- Volunteers are not registered as on roll employees due to which they face problem of identity crisis. While conducting awareness campaigns and educational drives, people show neglective attitude towards them.
- At times due to lack of direction ; contribution of volunteers are not aligned with the expectations of the organization which leads to non attainment of goals on one hand and wastage of efforts of volunteer on the other.
- Understanding and comprehending language of people served is yet another challenge faced by volunteers.

VII. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES

- Providing access to training programs and motivational sessions by supervisors so they can learn and grow.
- Interactive sessions with volunteers should be organized once in a week to address program pitfalls and possible solutions.

- Providing volunteers with the resources they need so they can successfully excel the opportunity in hand.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Through this study, it was observed that majority of volunteers who are actively engaged in volunteerism holds Value Function in high regard followed by Understanding. On the contrary social function and career function has ranked the lowest; this seems contradictory. It was interesting to note that 84.3% people are part-time volunteers who are contributing immensely and evolving gradually as a team irrespective of time constraints. So, voluntary organizations must tap the pro-social behaviour of individuals by giving them platform to explore new opportunities and help them in developing skills and personality for future career growth. This will satisfy the needs of volunteers and will lead to improved retention ratio of volunteers. There exist no one specific reason as to what motivates people to volunteer but there exist many. The act of selflessly helping others is sheer bliss for them. They believe in the theory of “we rise by lifting others”. All in all we can say that, youth nowadays are making conscious choices when it comes to their duties towards society, their rights and know well in advance how to make things happen through the power of team work. While serving social good to society, volunteers do face various challenges viz., unavailability of resources, lack of supervisor support and no access to training programs are some of them. Despite of all the challenges, the percentage of people participating for social cause is growing rapidly who are motivated enough to serve the society.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should focus on identifying various determinant factors which effects volunteer’s motivation. Also, an ambitious research could be conducted on effect of career development programs on volunteer motivation.

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