## Case Study on Volunteerism: ① India

Background

India is one of the most rapidly growing economies in the world. Culturally rich, with abundant soft power potential, India is committed to democratic institutions, the rule of law and human rights. Along with a large workforce, it has a huge and talented diaspora. Ambitious programmes have been launched by the Government of India, aimed at boosting socio-economic development in the country. However, in keeping with the global dichotomy, India is also home to the largest population of poor in the world. With regard to achieving the SDGs, India has also ranked 110th out of 149 nations assessed on where they stand, and despite significant progress, the country continues to face major challenges across all SDGs.

Population Demographic, 2017
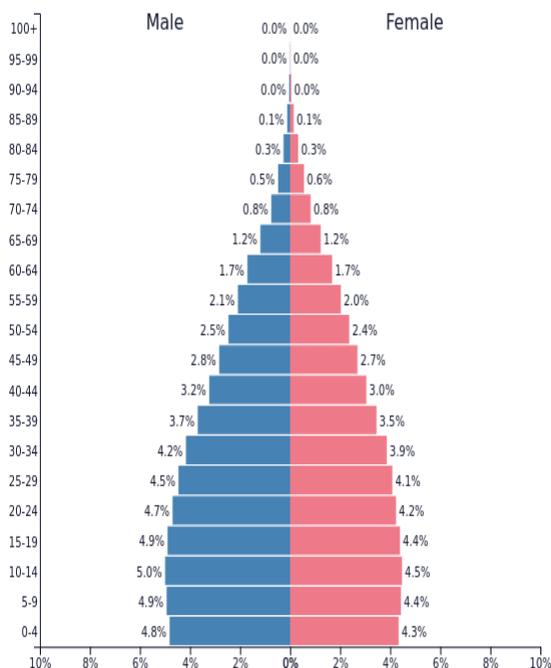
Source: www.PopulationPyramid.net

The challenges that India faces are inter-generational issues for which today's young generation are future custodians. Therefore, the importance of the Indian youth as key stakeholders cannot be taken out of the equation as their ownership and participation in achieving the SDGs is critical.

Volunteerism in India

With India projected to be the youngest nation in the world by 2020, there has been a renewed focus on youth in the country in recent years; engaging with youth and encouraging their participation across sectors has been seen as essential for national development and enabling inclusive growth.

India is seeing an increasing trend where structured volunteering programmes may pay stipends, provide scholarships, offer opportunities for travel / employment within the organization and / or cover living expenses of volunteers. This is a motivating factor for many to volunteer and serves to create an inclusive environment where young people from all backgrounds can volunteer.

Case Study 1: Service delivery and Philanthropy

Renjit Joseph, 48, runs a study circle supported by Matrabhumi a local newspaper. His study circle provides support to the community in terms of nutrition, medicines, sanitation and cultural activities. "Most of my tuition students are involved in these activities" he says, "and after they get a job, 90% of alumni provide us with a sum of Rs. 1000 each. This money that is collected helps us to provide scholarships to deserving students in the community." Apart from donating financial resources, many alumni who work in the area provide their time and involvement as and when they can.

This form of volunteerism has had a great impact in India and globally. As mentioned earlier while tracing the evolution of volunteerism in India, several individuals and faith-based organizations began service delivery

to serve under-served populations and those in need, prior to and after independence. Over the years, this has become more organized, with several NGOs and private foundations providing services across domains – health, education, water and sanitation etc. in the country.

Case Study 2: Paheli's eco-friendly sanitary pads

Seeing the lack of hygienic and biodegradable sanitary pads in Goa's villages, Jayshree Parwar and three other women started Paheli, an SHG in Goa's Bicholim taluka, two years ago. The SHG manufactures and sells eco-friendly sanitary pads. Today, about 50 packets a day manufactured at Jayshree's home and sold at a cost of Rs 40 per packet. Till date, 1,000 pads have been sold. Seeing the SHG's commitment, many organizations have come forward to help market the product. One such organization is the Goa Institute of Management (GIM), Sakhali, which under its initiative, Abhigyan GiveGoa, will help Paheli brand, promote and market these cost-effective and biodegradable pads.

Mutual aid is also found in professional affiliations such as trade unions, where the primary motive is to protect the interests and promote welfare of group members. They also address the social concerns of society.

Another form of volunteerism is civic participation. Examples of civic participation include – local advocacy campaigns / lobbying with local authorities for issues such as provision of street lighting, cleanliness, noise reduction during social functions and marriages etc. Usually, civic participation volunteerism is limited to local, small-scale campaigns of limited duration and is led by strong leaders, mentors or organizations.

Actions to Take

- **Policy drafting:** Participation of key stakeholders from Government, civil society and youth groups (formal and informal) across states.
- **Implementation of volunteering initiatives:** Developing task forces on youth volunteerism which promote partnerships among Government, civil society and the private sector to support implementation of volunteerism initiatives.
- **In-capacity building:** Sharing of good practices, contextualizing replication of successful models of volunteering across states, awareness creation and training
- **Coordination and facilitation:** The role of international agencies was observed to be particularly important in terms of bringing different categories of stakeholders together for discussions over important issues and in facilitating knowledge-sharing and alliances.
- **Creating visibility:** Media partnerships and outreach programmes which spared across India's urban and rural communities.

Source: State of Youth Volunteering in India 2017

http://www.in.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/UNV/State%20of%20Youth%20Volunteering%20in%20India-compressed.pdf