



# Voluntary Sector in India Scale, Impact & Potential

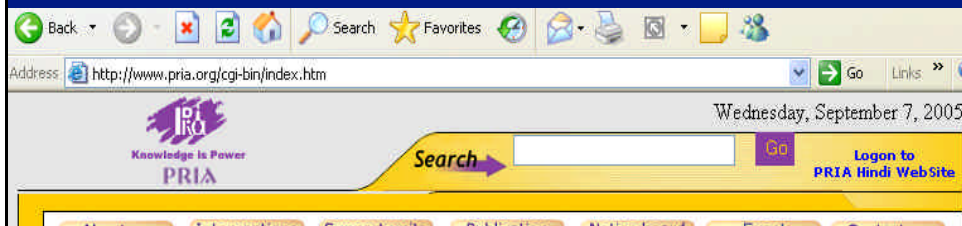
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Planning Commission  
Govt. of India, New Delhi

**PRIA is an International  
Centre for Learning and  
Promotion of Participation  
and Democratic Governance**



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- **Development & promotion of Participatory Methodologies in development projects & Programmes** - applied to education, health care, natural resource management, women's livelihood, etc. 1981 onwards
  - **Capacity building of voluntary organizations** in internal management & governance, and programme planning and monitoring 1983 onwards
  - **Occupational & environmental health & safety** - promotion & advocacy 1983 onwards
  - **Knowledge on Voluntary Sector** in India/internationally 1986 onwards
  - **Strengthening Institutions of Panchayati Raj** - voters' awareness campaigns, gram sabha mobilization, participatory micro-planning, training of elected representatives & government functionaries, support to state govts in devolution 1994 onwards
  - **Reforming Municipal Governance** in small & medium towns - Birth registration, sanitation & water 2000 onwards
  - **Current Coverage** - 12 states, 26 districts, 37 municipalities

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## Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

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- **Pan – Commonwealth NGO** focusing on advancement of **human rights**
  - **Primary focus** in our access to justice, which comprises of
    - ⇒ **Police reform**
    - ⇒ **Prison reform**
    - ⇒ **Judicial education**
  - **In recent year, focused on Right to Information** registrations and implementation, specially in India
  - **Citizens groups** facilitated to monitor elections, candidates and performance of elected representatives

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# **Voluntary Sector :** **Post-independence History**



## **1. Relief and Rehabilitation**

- Bihar Famine
- AP Cyclones
- Bhopal Disaster
- Koyna Earthquake
- Latur Earthquake
- Uttarkashi Earthquake
- Kutch Earthquake
- Orissa Cyclones
- Tsunami

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## **2. Innovations - which Multiplied**



- Literacy & non-formal education - NAEP 1978
- Primary health care - National Policy 1979
- India Mark II Handpump 1980
- Women's livelihoods - DWCRA 1981
- Bio gas - Non-conventional Energy 1985
- Social & community Forestry – 1986
- Self-help groups - Micro finance 1990
- Early childhood Nutrition - ICDS 1995
- Environmental Protection - Ministry & programmes
- Water conservation - Watershed development

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### 3. Development Policies – Effective Advocacy

- Displacement due to development
- Tribal rights
- Dalit empowerment
- Rights of Children
- Violence against women
- Electoral reforms
- Human rights
- Right to Information

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## Voluntary Sector : Present Realities

### 1. Vast Non-profit Sector - Mostly Invisible (2002)

- 1.2 million organizations
- Mostly rural and small, half unregistered
- One-fourth religious identity, 21% community/social service, 20% education
- 2.7 million paid employees (full-time equivalent), 82% of all central govt employees, 31% of employees in organized private sector
- Nearly Rs 20, 000crores annual turnover; foreign funds only 7.5%, nearly half self-generated
- Nearly 40% of all households give for charity, poor give more

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## 2. Voluntary Development Organisations

(Neither community-based organizations, nor formal institutions in health & education)



- More than 20, 000 active organizations, half a million professionals
- Uneven presence in the country, though can identify 5 good organisations per district
- More than 100 organisations/professionals from such organizations received international awards & recognitions
- More than 200 such organizations and their staff have been involved in supporting development projects in other developing countries
- Approaches, analysis, methods & tools developed by many such organizations being regularly utilized by Governments & NGOs in other countries
- Most incisive and respected voice in regional & global forums of UN, WB, WTO etc.

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## Voluntary Development Organisations NEED



### 1. Overhaul Archaic Regulatory Frameworks

- a) Registration in Society's Act (1860) or Trust Act (1882) no national framework, variations across states causing harassments, lack of transparency & accountability
  - ⇒ NEED A SIMPLE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK BASED ON MODERN PURPOSES AND IT ENABLED REPORTING
- b) Income Tax (1961) has outdated definitions ("relief to the poor, education, medical relief and the advancement of any other object of general public utility"); treats all Charities alike ( religious, self-help, etc);  
NEED NEW SECTIONS TO ENCOURAGE
  - ⇒ Tax-exempt charitable giving
  - ⇒ Corpus & own resource development

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**c) FCRA (1976) attempts to regulate foreign funds; now proposing FCMC Bill (2005)**

- ⇒ Attempt to control management by specifying conditions (30% on administration);
- ⇒ Deregister after five years
- ⇒ Restrict change in Governing Boards
- ⇒ **NEED ABOLISHMENT OF FCRA AND MINOR AMENDMENT IN FEMA TO INCLUDE VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS**

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**2. Vigorously Enhance Voluntary Sector's involvement in National Development**

- ⇒ Crucial role in implementing and monitoring Govt. initiatives like Bharat Nirman, Employment Guarantee, Rural Health etc.

**a) Announce the Policy Framework**

- ⇒ Encourage state governments to develop similar frameworks
- ⇒ Inform all govt. departments about the New Framework
- ⇒ Include in curricula of training of govt. functionaries
- ⇒ Formally designate 3-5 NGOs per district as sources of expertise and feedback

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## **b) Inform bilateral & multilateral donors re New Framework**

- ⇒ Remove current controlling regimes on their funding to NGOs in Finance Ministry
- ⇒ Include all OECD countries in that regime (Australia, Norway & Switzerland missed out presently as it includes only G8 & EU)

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## **c) Encourage Ministries to Involve NGOs in International Cooperation**

- ⇒ As part of delegations (PM's visit to Afghanistan)
- ⇒ As Partners in Global Dialogue (at WTO, UNEP, UN Reforms, ASEAN, SAARC, Commonwealth)
- ⇒ As Implementers of Third Country Development Projects (in Africa & Asia)

## **d) Recognise Indian Voluntary Sector as Global Knowledge Centre on Development & Democracy**

- ⇒ Encourage systems of global knowledge sharing
- ⇒ Remove Obstacles to Organise Global Conferences & Training Programmes
- ⇒ Enable Policy to Start Institutions in other Developing Countries

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