

The Fight of Voluntary Organizations: The Pillars of Social Change

India is a land of immense diversity in culture, language, religion, and social strata. There are still many villages, settlements, and urban corners in our country where the needs are immense and resources scarce.

In this context, when government mechanisms fall short, a crucial role is played by voluntary organizations often referred to as NGOs Non-Government Organizations. ('अ सरकारी संस्था')

But in reality, these are *impact-driven* organizations ('असरकारी') effective, transformative, and committed to creating positive change in society.



NGOs: Not Just Service Providers – But Enablers

These organizations work at the grassroots level. They don't merely provide food, clothing, or material aid to the needy, they strive to give them self-awareness, dignity, and a voice. They help dreams take flight, driven by the goal of creating foundational social change.

Their role is vital across areas like women's empowerment, environment, health, education, and child rights. However, they also face several serious challenges.

#1. Financial Struggles

The most significant challenge for voluntary organizations is funding.

Due to strict regulations under the **Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA)**, many NGOs

have lost vital international funding sources. At the same time, competition for domestic CSR funds has intensified.

Organizations with strong branding and marketing machinery often lead the race. Meanwhile, those working in rural areas are frequently overlooked. As a result, many initiatives remain incomplete.

Another major issue arises when the NGO's work doesn't align with the government's agenda they're conveniently ignored. While there may be public statements of support, actual implementation receives little attention. The funding available through government schemes is often meagre.

Compared to other nations, India still lags significantly in philanthropic giving. While a lot of money flows to temples and religious institutions, donations for development work remain very low.

#2. Decline in Human Resources

Previously, social workers were looked up to with respect. They brought idealism and passionate dedication to their cause.

Today, however, working in an NGO often invites snide remarks "Still didn't get a real job?" Even parents are hesitant to encourage their children to enter this field.

This sector rarely offers clear career growth. As a result, educated and talented youth often move to other industries. It's not uncommon for young NGO professionals to struggle even in finding life partners.

Additionally, the value of *service-mindedness* is gradually eroding. Instead of thinking about what they can contribute, people are increasingly focused on what "returns" they'll get. Sacrificing comfort, staying in rural areas, and working without basic amenities these ideals are fading.

Dedicated grassroots workers who genuinely connect with people are becoming rare.

There's also a prevailing belief that NGOs have "hidden agendas" or operate with some secret motives. This creates suspicion and mockery toward social workers. In such a climate, it's harder to inspire new people to join the movement.

As a result, NGOs are struggling to find trained, committed, long-term staff.



#3. Operating Under Suspicion

In recent years, a few NGOs have been accused of fund misuse. Though these were isolated incidents, the entire sector has had to face the consequences. Due to such suspicions, NGOs are constantly under pressure to prove their credibility.

This directly impacts well-meaning initiatives that then struggle to find support.

The solution lies in encouraging citizens to evaluate NGOs objectively not paint all with the same brush.

The real question is do we view these organizations as *beggars of donations*, or as *responsible social partners*?

Because true social development is not limited to government action it happens through *citizen participation*. And voluntary organizations thrive on that participation.

Even among beneficiaries, there's sometimes a perception that NGO workers come just because they earn high salaries or get benefits. The mutual trust between institutions and communities is weakening.

Unfortunately, NGOs themselves are not immune to comparison or rivalry. Often, the perspective toward one another is not very positive either.

#4. Legal and Bureaucratic Hurdles

Frequent legal changes, numerous reports demanded by various departments, and the complex web of permissions consume significant time and resources especially affecting smaller organizations.

#5. Digital Divide

Technology is now a vital tool for social transformation. However, many rural NGOs lack digital devices, social media presence, or training, and hence, their work fails to reach a wider audience.

Yuva Rural Association: A Journey of Trust, Change, and Commitment



Against all these challenges, **Yuva Rural Association (YRA)** stands as a positive example.

For the last **23 years**, YRA has been working tirelessly in rural Vidarbha on a variety of social issues.

Grounded in Core Values

YRA's approach is not just about completing targets. It is deeply rooted in foundational values that reflect in every initiative:

- **Transparency**

From fund utilization to project execution and beneficiary selection, YRA follows an open process.

- **Accountability**

The organization is accountable not only to donors but also to the local community.

- **Respect for Community Voices**

YRA operates with transparency and dignity, valuing villagers' opinions in all decisions.

- **Participation**

"Helping people help themselves" is the guiding principle of the organization.

Every initiative is carried out with active community involvement.

- **Commitment to Equality**

Every action of YRA ensures equal opportunities for women, marginalized groups, and youth.

- **Root-Cause Based Transformation**

YRA doesn't just address symptoms — it identifies the root causes and works toward fundamental change.

Example of "Helping People Help Themselves": Women's Development Councils

Self-help groups (SHGs) were formed to empower women.

But YRA went beyond just group formation — it focused on developing leadership, boosting confidence, and encouraging women to raise their voices against injustice.



🎥 (Watch this video on the initiative) <https://youtu.be/Wc9FzmBUZM4>

Anubhav Shiksha Kendra – Making Youth Responsible

YRA's flagship initiative, *Anubhav Shiksha Kendra*, provides leadership training to young people. It sensitizes them to social issues and prepares them to fight for the rights of the poor and marginalized.



🎧 ([Watch the video on this initiative](https://youtu.be/YkHPxkufex4)) <https://youtu.be/YkHPxkufex4>

The Soul of the Organization: Value-Driven People

YRA believes that true social change doesn't come only from resources — It comes from *people driven by strong values*.

With limited resources, the organization continues its work with dedication, persistence, and deep-rooted community connections.



You Are a Part of This Change

YRA is not about flashy branding it's about consistent, genuine action.

For the past 23 years, it has worked quietly but effectively with honesty, consistency, and trust.

Every action is driven by the belief that *society can change*.

What can your role be?

- Understand
- Recognize
- Support wherever possible

“You are not just a witness to this change — You can be an active partner in it.”

Yuva Rural Association, Nagpur

Website: www.yraindia.org