

Volunteering in 100 Top Companies in India




August 2023



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Report Objectives

 Create and stimulate new **research** on corporate volunteering in India


 **Share** key insights & trends on corporate volunteering

 Encourage **scale-up** of volunteering initiatives in corporate India

Research Methodology

 **100** large companies selected in India

 **12+** different sectors

Foreign 26%  Indian 74%
Mix of Indian and foreign cos. in India

 **Public** sources of data used

Key Insights and Takeaways

1 Need for greater reporting and disclosure of volunteering data

 **26%** report annual volunteers

 **39%** report annual volunteering hours

INR 7,500 CR potential value of corp. vol. in India





5x-10x potential to scale

2 Significant opportunity to scale volunteering in corporate India

3 Formalizing volunteering policies and incentives can facilitate scale-up

 **16%** have formal volunteering policy

% of companies in India vs. U.S. that offer:

		
Vol. time-off	22%	66%
Vol. matching grants	7%	40%

 **9%** have public targets for volunteering

4 Setting public volunteering targets can make volunteering a “cultural asset”

5 Integrating employee involvement within CSR projects can bring synergies

 **49%** involve employees as volunteers in CSR projects

 On-boarding

 Training

 Engagement

6 Volunteering programs can be designed as an end-to-end HR solution

7 Conducting impact studies can help link benefits of volunteering to business outcomes

 Improved Well-being

 Improved Skills

 Improved Retention

Executive Summary

Volunteering in corporate India is an INR 7,500 CR socio-economic opportunity. Employees and companies can become more deeply involved in development issues and make a significant societal impact beyond CSR funding, through volunteering.

But more than just creating an impact to society, volunteering can also yield **substantial benefits for employees and businesses**. Studies have shown that volunteering can improve employee well-being and skills, while corporates can also benefit from increased employee productivity, engagement and retention.

Given the scarcity of industry information for volunteering in corporate India, the report aims to provide insights and create benchmarks for volunteering scale, policies and programs by studying 100 large companies across different sectors in India.

In aggregate, the 100 Top companies in India employed 5M+ employees in India, reported 400K+ annual volunteers and 5M+ annual volunteering hours. At these levels, **we estimate there is a 5x-10x potential to scale volunteering in corporate India.**

Our study has shown that while **78%** of the 100 Top companies disclosed employees participating in some form of volunteering programs or activities, only **26%** of the 100 Top companies reported number of volunteers and **39%** reported number of volunteering hours – indicating that there is a greater need for reporting and disclosing volunteering data in corporate India.

Additionally, it is observed there is **fewer volunteering incentives provided** in corporate India compared to companies in the U.S. 22% of the Top 100 companies provided volunteering time-off compared with 66% of companies in the U.S. and only 7% of the Top 100 companies provided volunteering matching grants compared to 40% of the Fortune 500 companies.

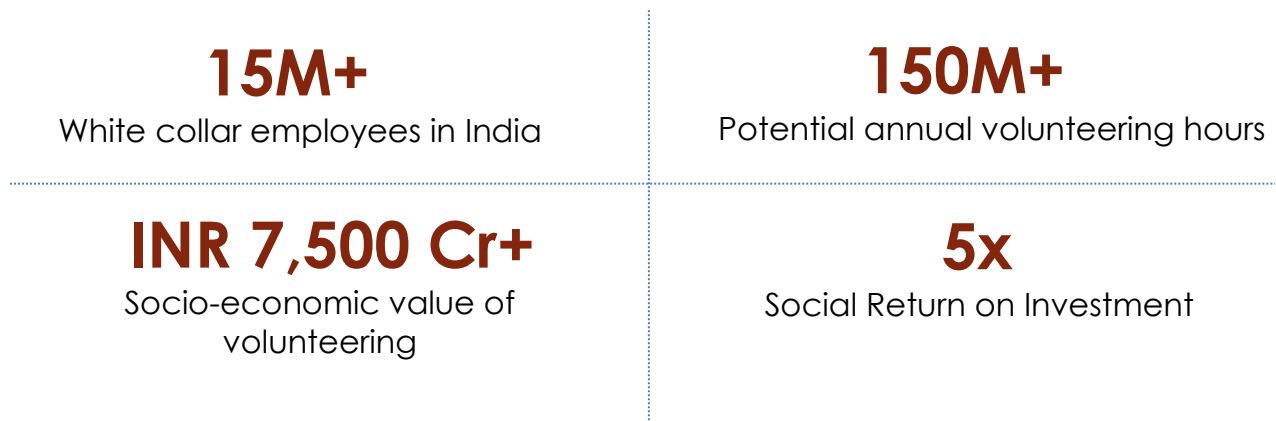
Yet considerable progress has been made with several companies demonstrating significant scale and employee participation in their volunteering programs through a range of different initiatives. These include formalizing volunteering policies & incentives, setting public volunteering targets, involving employees as volunteers in CSR projects, designing volunteering programs for end-to-end employee engagement, and linking impact of volunteering programs with business outcomes. We have tried to share some case studies and best practices.

We hope this report stimulates more volunteering in Indian companies and also more research on corporate volunteering in India.

Potential of Volunteering in Corporate India: An INR 7,500 CR Socio-Economic Opportunity

With ~15M¹ white collar employees in India, a potential of 150M+ hours² can be volunteered annually by corporate India towards social & economic development. This would represent a significant socio-economic contribution of >INR 7,500 CR³, which can be unlocked by promoting volunteering in Indian corporates (~30% of the overall CSR spending in India), potentially generating a 5x social return on investment for companies⁴.

Fig 1. Potential of volunteering in corporate India



The Business Need for Volunteering: A Value-Additive Tool in the Workplace



Volunteer programs boost productivity, increase employee engagement, and improve hiring and retention. For example, the more people volunteered the better they performed on work tasks... volunteers also tended to be better citizens at work (helping others, voicing ideas, and so on...)” – Harvard Business Review

The Covid pandemic has fundamentally changed the workplace. With **80% of Indian employees reporting mental health issues** in 2021-2022⁵, the pandemic has highlighted the need for organizations to prioritize employee health & well-being.

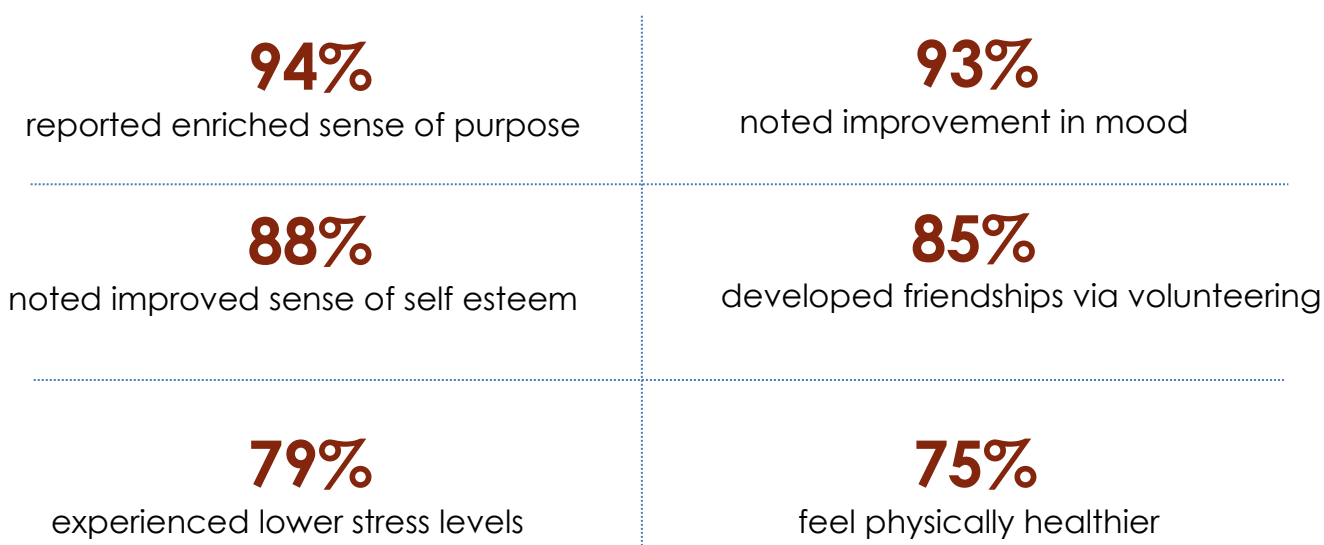
According to Aon India’s 2022 National Wellbeing Survey, investment in well-being is rising with 81% of companies in India reporting that they have increased their well-being investments compared to the previous year. In addition, 78% of companies in India agree that there is greater need to provide emotional and well-being support in the workplace⁶.

Given this need, volunteering can be an effective addition in workplace offerings. Studies have shown that volunteering can improve our overall well-being by improving our physical and mental health, providing us with an intrinsic sense of purpose, and fostering better social relationships.



Doing a kindness produces the single most reliable increase in wellbeing for the doer of any exercise we've tested.”- Dr. Martin Seligman, Director of Penn Positive Psychology Centre

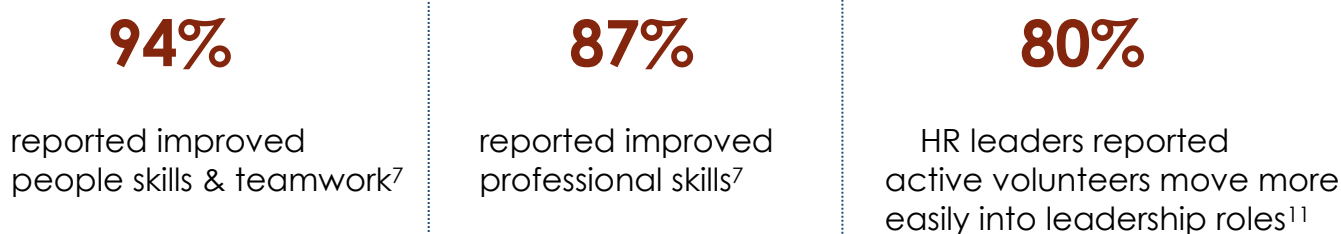
Fig 2. Volunteering can improve holistic well-being⁷



Another increasing concern in the workplace is the rise in AI and automation, and the uncertainty around how it will impact the relevance of our skills and jobs. McKinsey predicts that the demand for soft skills and emotional skills in the workplace will increase by 24% by 2030⁸. Deloitte has predicted that **two-thirds of all jobs will require soft- skills intensive occupations by 2030**⁹. With 6 in 10 workers requiring training¹⁰ over the next 5 years, it is clear that learning & development programs in the workplace will need to evolve to build an employee's soft skills in addition to their technical skills.

Volunteering can also become an effective learning & development program, as it helps people gain crucial people and professional skills. A 2019 survey in India titled 'The Impact of Volunteering', conducted by CRY – Child Rights and You - noted that volunteers improved their soft and business skills like empathy (94%), respect (91%), creativity (85%), teamwork (85%), communication skills (77%) and leadership skills (77%).

Fig 3. Volunteering can improve people & professional skills



Improved employee well-being and skills can ultimately be translated into tangible business outcomes, in the form of improved employee productivity, engagement and retention. Deloitte has suggested that the issues of “retention and engagement” have risen to No. 2 in the minds of business leaders, second only to the challenge of building global leadership¹²

This is no surprise, given that currently **only 25% of Indian employees are engaged in the workplace**¹³. Interestingly, **96% companies have found that employees who volunteer are more engaged than those who don't volunteer**¹⁴. This shows that volunteering can become a useful tool for employee engagement as companies and employees continue to deal with high rates of stress, attrition¹⁵ and continued preferences to work remotely¹⁶.

It is also observed that employees today are increasingly driven by societal impact and purpose at work. More than 70% of Millennials today expect their employers to focus on societal or mission-driven problems¹². Creating a culture of volunteerism can help to create a better employer perception. According to Deloitte's “2017 Volunteerism Survey”, 89% of employee volunteers believe that companies that sponsor volunteer activities offer a better overall working environment than those who don't, while 70% also agree that companies that sponsor volunteer activities have a more pleasant work atmosphere.

Additionally, recent studies have also shown that volunteering can help retain talent, and reduce attrition by 39%¹⁷. In fact, 93% of employees who volunteer report being satisfied with their current employer¹⁸.



As the battle for talent continues, volunteering can be a strong leg-up on the competition for both prospective employers and employees. Companies that create a culture committed to making an impact and to tapping into their employees' sense of purpose have the ability to attract and retain top talent.” - Deloitte

Fig 4. Volunteering can improve business outcomes

96%

companies find that employees who volunteer are more engaged

93%

employees who volunteer are satisfied with their current employer

89%

employees believe that companies that sponsor volunteer activities offer a better work environment than those who don't

39%

lower attrition rates for employees who volunteer

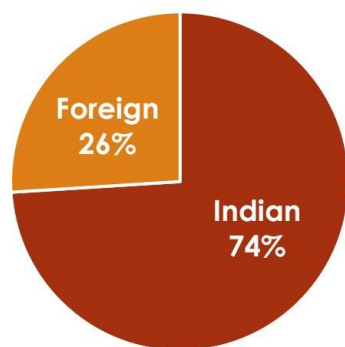
Research Context & Methodology

While there are significant business benefits for volunteering, the amount of available data and coverage on volunteering in Indian corporates is scarce. So, we have undertaken this research to get insights into benchmarks, key trends and best practices for volunteering in corporate India.

We shortlisted 100 large companies across different sectors in India and evaluated their:

- 1) **Scale of volunteering programs** (number of volunteers, number of volunteering hours)
- 2) **Volunteering policies and incentives** (including volunteering time-off & volunteering matching grants)
- 3) **Key developments, targets, case studies of volunteering initiatives in India**

Fig 5. Overview of 100 selected companies in India



23,260

Median number of employees

The 100 companies selected are a mix of Indian and foreign companies in India.

They cover a range of sectors across IT, pharma, banking, energy, telecom, real estate, automotive, business services, retail & hospitality, manufacturing & construction, conglomerates and start-ups. All information is primarily sourced from publicly available records including annual reports, sustainability reports, CSR policies, volunteering policies, websites and news articles.

Sector	#	%
Technology & IT services	20	20%
Banking & Financial services	15	15%
Consumer Goods	10	10%
Start-ups & Young companies	10	10%
Health & Pharma	8	8%
Professional & Business services	7	7%
Automotives	6	6%
Energy	6	6%
Diversified & Conglomerates	5	5%
Manufacturing & Construction	5	5%
Retail & Hospitality	4	4%
Telecom	2	2%
Real Estate	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Summary of Volunteering in 100 Top Companies in India by Sector

	Company	Employees	Annual Volunteers	Annual Vol. hours	Paid leave for vols.	Social sabbatical?	Vol. matching grants?	Vol. policy?	Key vol. program/ activities	Comments / Targets
Diversified / Family Groups (Indian)										
1	Tata Group	750,000+		3,000,000+	8 hours (Tata Vol. Week)			Yes	Tata Vol. Week (event-based) & ProEngage (skill-based)	
2	Reliance Industries	340,000+							Teaching, tree planting	
4	Mahindra Group	260,000+	55,873	4,53,884					"Employee Social Options" & "My Seva" (e.g., community development)	Recently launched "Mahindra Volunteering Day" on Dec 5th
3	Adani Group	23,000+		3,000 days					Tree plantation, blood donation	
5	Piramal Group	13,684		60,569 (In FY2019)					"Employee Social Impact" (e.g. mentoring, wall painting)	Volunteering program currently being revised
Financial services (Indian)										
1	LIC	1,04,036								
2	Bajaj Finance	43,147								
3	SBI Life Insurance	18,515								
4	ICICI Lombard	12,865	3,000						"Caring Hands" (eye screening)	"Caring Hands" is a 100% employee-led CSR initiative

	Company	Employees	Annual Volunteers	Annual Vol. hours	Paid leave for vols.	Social sabbatical?	Vol. matching grants?	Vol. policy?	Key vol. program/ activities	Comments / Targets
IT services (Indian)										
1	TCS	6,14,795	1,50,000	2,800,000	8 hours (Tata Vol. Week)				"HOPE" (Tree planting, cleaning, mentoring, blood donation)	Aims to do 1 million hours per quarter
2	Infosys	3,43,234				6 mos.-1yr.			Education, plantation drives	
3	Wipro	2,57,311	5,005	18,615					"Wipro Cares" (Blood donation, developing soft skills of students)	
4	HCL Technologies	2,09,000	8,000	45,000				Yes	"Power of One" (Mentoring, awareness drives)	
5	Tech Mahindra	1,52,400	6,538	57,515					School wall painting, blood donation, tree planting, education	Target of 180,000 vol. hours by FY25-26
6	LTI Mindtree	84,546	3,000	12,500					Tree plantation, cleanup drives	
Manufacturing & Construction (Indian)										
1	Tata Steel	77,000	3,659	18,494	8 hours (Tata Vol. Week)				Tree plantation, cleanliness drives, mentoring	
2	L&T Limited	55,202	6,313						"L&T-eering" (e.g., teaching, mentoring, blood donation, wall painting, recording stories, tree planting, community awareness)	
3	UltraTech Cement	22,916							Teaching/Coaching	
4	JSW Steel	13,800							"IDEA" (community development)	
5	Ambuja Cement	4,361								

	Company	Employees	Annual Volunteers	Annual Vol. hours	Paid leave for vols.	Social sabbatical?	Vol. matching grants?	Vol. policy?	Key vol. program/ activities	Comments / Targets
Health & Pharma (Indian)										
1	Sun Pharma	38,000							Plastic awareness, cleanliness	
2	Apollo Hospitals	35,000								
3	Aurobindo	31,371								
4	Cipla	26,615	21,000	70,000				Yes	"Cipla for Change" (e.g., education, audiobooks)	
5	Dr. Reddy's	24,832							"Spirit of Giving" (e.g., teaching)	
6	Zydus Lifesciences	23,026								
7	Biocon	16,500							Tree plantation, cleaning	
8	Glenmark Pharma	15,415	6,800						Record audiobooks, tree planting	Launched a 450-day campaign to achieve 45k vol hours for 45th ann.
Fashion, Retail & Hospitality (Indian)										
1	The Indian Hotels Company	35,816	6,600 (FY 18-19)	90,000	4 hours			Yes	Cleanliness drives; workshops for skill development	Aims to do 12 vol. hours per capita by 2030
2	Grasim Industries	23,591							Tree plantation	INR 4.1L value of time contributed during paid working hours in FY22
3	Trent Ltd	19,716	8,276	45,244	8 hours (Tata Vol. Week)			Yes	Via Tata Vol. Week and ProEngage	
4	DMART	12,108								

	Company	Employees	Annual Volunteers	Annual Vol. hours	Paid leave for vols.	Social sabbatical?	Vol. matching grants?	Vol. policy?	Key vol. program/ activities	Comments / Targets
Consumer Goods (Indian)										
1	Asian Paints	32,036							Blood donation	
2	ITC	23,725								
3	Tata Coffee	14,441	11,590	63,593	8 hrs. (Tata Vol. Week)				Teaching, plastic segregation	
4	Titan	7,857		39,000	6 days			Yes	"Titan Footprints" (cleanups, tree planting)	
5	HUL	6,697							"Swachhata Doots" (WASH awareness); Project Prabhat (skilling)	Till date, 4K vol. for "Swachhata Doots"; 5K vol. for "Project Prabhat"
6	Britannia	4,467								
7	Tata Consumer Products	3,040		6,640	8 hours (Tata Vol. Week)				"Swachhata Hi Seva" (Plastic waste collection)	
8	Godrej Consumer Products	2,768			1 day (Godrej Vol. Day)				"Brighter Giving" (skills-based)	
Business services (Indian)										
1	Mphasis	30,000+	800	1,500					Wall painting, teaching	
2	Hinduja Global Solutions	21,000	1,253	2,864	8 hours				"Work to Give" (e.g., skill development)	

	Company	Employees	Annual Volunteers	Annual Vol. hours	Paid leave for vols.	Social sabbatical?	Vol. matching grants?	Vol. policy?	Key vol. program/ activities	Comments / Targets
Energy (Indian)										
1	ONGC	27,165								Recently expressed interest to create vol. program for CSR
2	Tata Power	23,025	18,000	1,00,000	8 hours (Tata Vol. Week)			Yes	"Arpan" (e.g., tree planting)	
3	NTPC	15,786						Yes	"EVOICE" (e.g., coaching)	
4	HP	9,065							Cleaning drives	
5	BP	8,594							Cleaning drives, teaching	
6	Bajaj Electric	2,500	1,700	3,083 (days)					Tree plantation	
Automotives (Indian)										
1	Tata Motors	27,125	9,495	35,756	8 hours			Yes	"Seva"	
2	Mahindra & Mahindra	23,495	10,587	55,272					"Employee Social Options" and "My Seva"	Recently launched "Mahindra Volunteering Day" on Dec 5th
3	Maruti Suzuki	16,025								
4	Hero MotoCorp	9,215			4 days				Tree planting	
5	Bajaj Auto	6,831							"Arpan" (tree planting, school painting)	
6	MRF	6,804								

	Company	Employees	Annual Volunteers	Annual Vol. hours	Paid leave for vols.	Social sabbatical?	Vol. matching grants?	Vol. policy?	Key vol. program/ activities	Comments / Targets
Telecom (Indian)										
1	Bharti Airtel	18,000		8,312	1 day				"A Caring Touch"(e.g., education)	
2	Vodafone Idea	9,226								
Real Estate (Indian)										
1	Lodha Group	4,200	1,200	8,400					"Guardians of Change" (e.g., reading program)	
2	Godrej Properties	2,391		1,574					"Good and Green" (e.g., mentoring)	
Start-ups / Young companies (Indian)										
1	Byju's	55,000							Tree planting, wall painting	
2	Indigo	26,174			3 days			Yes	Distribute goodies at orphanages, awareness sessions	Half day volunteering as part of training module
3	Paytm	17,964								
4	Flipkart	15,000							Donation drives	
5	Zoho	12,000								
6	Swiggy	6,000								
7	InfoEdge	4,049								
8	Zomato	3,517								
9	MakeMyTrip	3,500								
10	Zerodha	1,100							Tree planting, cleaning	

	Company	Employees	Annual Volunteers	Annual Vol. hours	Paid leave for vols.	Social sabbatical?	Vol. matching grants?	Vol. policy?	Key vol. program/ activities	Comments / Targets
Banking (Indian)										
1	SBI	2,35,858							"Gram Seva" (Tree planting, awareness drives)	
2	HDFC	1,73,222		72,000					"Parivartan" (Blood donation, mentoring)	
3	ICICI Bank	1,30,542								
4	Axis Bank	91,898							Blood donation	
5	IndusInd Bank	29,661	213	1,470	2 days			Yes	"Sattvam" (Tree planting)	Had set a target for 10hr/staff volunteering
6	Yes Bank	27,517	2,000	3,000				Yes	"Evolve" (financial literacy)	25% senior/middle managers vol. in 22-23
Professional services (Foreign)										
1	Deloitte	~100,000	58,000 (in 2021)	410,200 (in 2021)	1 day (Impact Day)				Content development, teaching	
2	PwC	50,000		14,000 (in 2022)	2 days				Mentoring	
3	KPMG	40,000		65,000						
4	E&Y	38,000							Mentoring, cleanup drives	
5	Thomson Reuters	~4,500			2 days		\$500 (min 20 hrs.)	Yes	Creating learning aids, supporting teachers	

	Company	Employees	Annual Volunteers	Annual Vol. hours	Paid leave for vols.	Social sabbatical?	Vol. matching grants?	Vol. policy?	Key vol. program/ activities	Comments / Targets
Banking (Foreign)										
1	JPMorgan	45,000			1 day			Yes	Jobs, skill-building, environment, animal welfare	
2	HSBC	39,000		100,000 (in 2016)	2 days				Cleanliness drives, creating study materials, supporting elderly	Also have a 1-week on-site vol. "Sustainability Leadership & Teamwork Programme"
3	Standard Chartered	25,000		19,440 days (in 2017)	3 days			Yes	Financial literacy, mentoring	
4	Bank of America	23,000								
5	Barclays	23,000							Teaching sessions (weekly basis)	Study done on volunteering; 56% managers said staff leadership skills improved
Consumer Goods (Foreign)										
1	Coca Cola India	25,000			4 days			Yes	"SWAYAM" (e.g., beach cleanups, waste management)	
2	Nestle India	8,069				Up to 1 month for 10 emp.			Hygiene awareness activities in schools	

	Company	Employees	Annual Volunteers	Annual Vol. hours	Paid leave for vols.	Social sabbatical?	Vol. matching grants?	Vol. policy?	Key vol. program/ activities	Comments / Targets
Technology (Foreign)										
1	Accenture	3,00,000		95,000 (in 2020)					“Skills to Succeed” (teaching IT skills)	
2	Cognizant	2,58,500		67,000 (in 2019)					“Outreach” (training & education)	Outreach vols. had 11% lower attrition rates than others
3	Amazon	1,00,000							Mentoring, cleaning drive	“Global Month of Volunteering”
4	IBM	1,00,000				1 month			Teaching, mentoring	
5	Oracle	38,000	5,294	22,274	Yes (40 hrs. global)				Cleaning, teaching	
6	Bosch	30,000							Tree plantations, cleaning	Aims to reach 100k+ vol. hours
7	Dell	25,000		1,90,882			\$150 (min. 10 hours)		Tree plantation, food donation, mentoring	Target by 2030, 75% of emp. participate in giving or vol.
8	Microsoft	20,000			3 days		\$10/hour	Yes	Distributing literacy kits	
9	CGI	19,000+	8,000	17,000+					Mentoring, skill-based vol, tree plantation, blood donation	100% business units to implement pro bono projects by 2026
10	SAP	14,000	8,450	62,324		4 weeks			“Code Unati” (digital literacy)	
11	Intel	13,500					\$5/hour (min 20 hrs.)		Tree plantations, school painting	150,000 vol. hours done in 5 years
12	Cisco	12,700			80 hours		\$10/hour		“Time2Give” (e.g., work with orphans, children)	
13	Google	10,000+				6 months	\$10/hour		Pro-bono project	
14	Salesforce	7,500			6 days		\$1,000 grant to top volunteers		Teaching, cook meals for underprivileged	Founder of 1% Pledge

Key Findings and Takeaways

1) Need for greater reporting and disclosure of volunteering data

While 78% of the 100 Top companies disclosed employees participating in some form of volunteering programs or activities, only 26% of the 100 Top companies reported number of volunteers, 39 % reported number of volunteering hours, and 23% reported both.

This could be due to low-priority of disclosing volunteering data as part of annual reports, or limited capturing of volunteer data due to lack of volunteering data systems.

In May 2021, SEBI mandated the 1,000 largest companies in India by market capitalization to submit a “Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report” (BRSR) from FY 22-23¹⁹.

The BRSR is closely aligned with ESG parameters, and has 9 governing principles for companies to disclose, including employee well-being and equitable development. Consequently, we believe that **volunteering can become a useful initiative for companies to report as part of their overall ESG disclosures.**

A study by Goodera and People Matters has further revealed that 91% of companies in India are not using any form of technology for employee volunteering²⁰. Consequently, **investing in technology-driven volunteering platforms will also enable more companies to accurately capture and report their number of volunteers and volunteering hours.**

2) Significant opportunity to scale volunteering in corporate India

The 100 Top companies in India collectively employ 5M+ employees in India.

Based on the 26% of the Top 100 companies that disclose annual volunteers, their collective annual volunteers is 400K+, with a median of 6K+ annual volunteers per company.

Based on the 39% of the Top 100 companies that disclose annual volunteering hours, their collective annual volunteering hours is 5M+, with a median of 45K+ annual volunteering hours per company.

This shows that significant progress has been made by companies in building their volunteering programs in India.

However, at an aggregate-level, this also implies that only 8% of employees are currently reported as volunteers, with a median “per capita” of 1 annual volunteering hour per employee.

Fig 6. % of 100 Top companies that discloses/reports:

Employee participation in volunteering activities



Number of volunteers & volunteering hours



Number of volunteers



Number of volunteering hours



Considering that majority of the companies still do not report their volunteers or volunteering hours in India, there is a **5x-10x potential for further scaling-up volunteering in corporate India.**

3) Formalizing volunteering policies and incentives can facilitate scale-up

A volunteering policy is a set of guidelines that outline how a company's employees can participate in volunteering programs, including the nature and types of volunteering activities. As the volunteering program scales in an organization, a formal policy also helps to ensure greater synergies with other major company initiatives, resulting in more meaningful and impactful volunteer work.

Volunteering policies may also include volunteering incentives like volunteering time-off and volunteering matching grants. While, volunteering time-off allows an employee to volunteer during company hours, a volunteering matching grant includes a company's donation of money to a non-profit to match an employee's contribution of time.

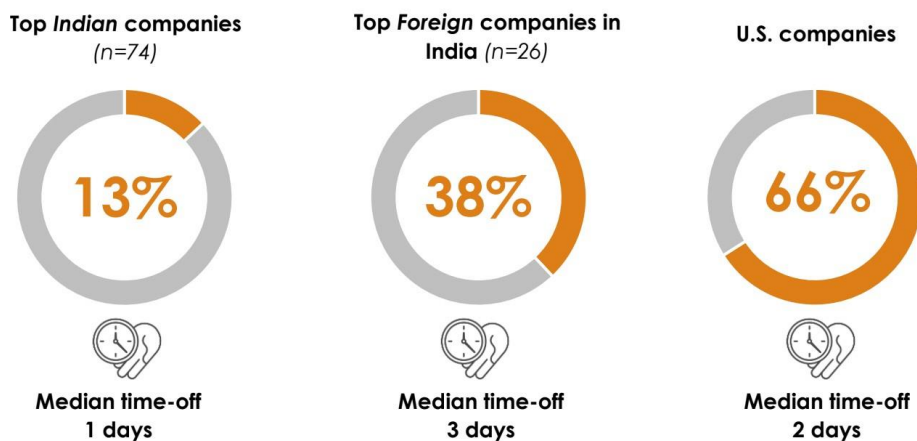
However, **formalizing volunteering policies and incentives in corporate India is currently in its nascent stages.** Only 16% of the 100 Top companies have a formal volunteering policy.

Further, only 22% of 100 Top companies provided volunteering time-off. The difference between the Top *Indian* companies and the Top *foreign* companies in India is particularly worth noting.

Fig 7. % of 100 Top companies have a formal volunteering policy



Fig 8. % of companies that provide volunteering time-off



13% of Top *Indian* companies provided volunteering time-off vs. 38% of Top *foreign* companies in India provided the same. In comparison, 66% U.S. companies offered volunteering time-off to their employees²¹.

Interestingly, the difference between Indian and U.S. companies is less stark in terms of the duration of volunteering time-off.

The median time-off for Top *Indian* companies is 1-day, Top *foreign* companies in India is 3 days, and for U.S. companies is 2 days²². This difference between the foreign companies in India and U.S. companies can be explained due to the fact that our data set includes only the larger multi-national corporations which tend to include more generous days off for volunteering.

Some of the companies with the most generous volunteering time-off policies in India include **Cisco** (10 days), **Salesforce** (7 days), and **Titan** (6 days).

When it comes to volunteering matching grants, only 7% of the Top 100 companies in India provided this incentive to their employees.

Again, the difference between the Top *Indian* companies and the Top *foreign* companies in India is worth noting.

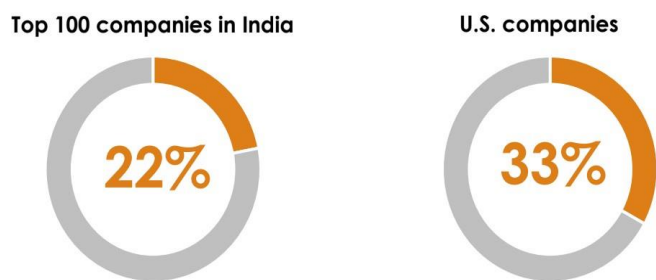
While, 27% of the Top *foreign* companies in India provided volunteering matching grants, none of the Top *Indian* companies were noted to provide such incentives to their employees.

This shows that volunteering incentives, especially volunteering matching grants is still a novel concept for *Indian* companies. In comparison, 40% of the Fortune 500 companies provide volunteering matching grants²¹.

Fig 9. % of companies that provide volunteering matching grants



Fig 10. % of employee participation in volunteering



Finally, the median volunteering participation rates is 22% in the 100 Top companies in India, compared with 33% in U.S companies²⁴.

This shows a **positive correlation between volunteering incentives and employee participation** rates.

Companies with the 2x the median participation rates in India (>45%) include **Cipla, Tata Coffee, Tata Power, SAP, Deloitte and Mahindra & Mahindra**.

One initiative implemented by companies in India to promote a company-wide engagement and participation towards community service is having dedicated corporate volunteering days, weeks or even months.

Mahindra Group has recently introduced Dec 5th (International Volunteer Day) as “Mahindra Volunteer Day” to encourage employees to generate an impact on the lives of those in need.

Since March 2014, the **Tata Group** has celebrated “Tata Volunteering Week” twice a year, in March and September, to inspire employees to spend 4-8 hours in volunteering activities in their respective geographies.

Amazon also launched its “Global Month of Volunteering” in India in 2022, to further a culture among employees to give-back to their local communities.

Case Study 1

Cisco's volunteering policy in India – 80 hours per year and \$10 per hour vol. matching grants

Cisco supports employee's efforts in India to give back through:

- **Time2Give:** Employees receive 80 hours every year to give back
- **Volunteering matching grants:** For every hour an employee volunteers with an approved organization, Cisco pays \$10 to the nonprofit
- **Donation matching grants:** Cisco also matches 100% of employee donations to approved organizations up to \$10,000

Globally, Cisco's volunteering policy has yielded high participation rates from employees. In 2022, >80% of its employees were engaged in its community participation activities, with over 1.3 million volunteering hours recorded²⁴.

With nearly 80,000 employees worldwide, this represents a per capita of ~16 hours volunteered per employee per year.

Case Study 2

Deloitte and "Impact Day" in India – 58,000 volunteers and 410,200 in 2021²⁵

Deloitte's annual "Impact Day" in 2021 saw more than 58,000 volunteers came together for virtual, skill-based volunteering benefitting those with restricted access to learning.

The day involved working together with 28 NGOs in streams such as virtual learning sessions, environmental content development, education resource transformation, stories for children, employability bites, audio books, and worksheet creation. The initiative reached more than 700,000 beneficiaries across 16 states in India.

Through the day, the cumulative time invested in skill-based volunteering was more than 410,200 hours.

As seen through these case studies, formalizing corporate volunteering policies in India, including providing volunteer time-off and volunteer matching grants can become an important lever to enable, incentivize and promote greater employee participation in volunteering programs.

4) Setting public volunteering targets can make volunteering a “cultural asset”

It is noted, that 9% of the 100 Top companies have a set a public target towards their volunteering initiatives. Targets have been set around achieving a certain number of volunteering hours or engaging a certain % of their employees or business divisions to volunteer.

Fig 11. % of Top 100 companies have public volunteering targets



Tech Mahindra has a target to achieve 180,000 volunteering hours by FY 26.

Dell India has set a target of 75% employee participation in giving or volunteering by 2030.

CGI India has pledged that 100% of its business units will implement pro-bono projects by 2026.

Tata Sustainability Group has set a group-wide volunteering target in order to integrate its volunteering efforts and build greater synergies across its group companies. Its targets are set in terms of Per Capita Volunteer Hours (PCVH), with an ambition of reaching 4 PCVH by 2025²⁶.

Globally, **Salesforce** has co-founded Pledge 1%, a movement to create a new normal whereby social impact is integrated into the core DNA of a company. The pledge involves contribution of 1% of equity, product or employee time to the community. Through this model, Salesforce has generated more than 3.5 million volunteerism employee hours²⁷.

Case Study 3

Glenmark Pharma’s Impact@45 initiative²⁸

In order to celebrate its 45th anniversary and embody its culture for giving back, Glenmark Pharma launched an initiative under CSR called Impact@45. The theme of the initiative revolves around the number 45.

- 45 NGOs
- 450 days of volunteering
- 4,500 trees to be planted
- 45,000 volunteering hours

As part of this initiative, It has also created a public webpage tracking the target with progress made along with showcasing a leaderboard with its top performing locations.

“Thank you for organizing this CSR activity and including us in a wider group. Giving to those who are less privileged gives me a deeper meaning to my life. I am really proud of our CSR Team. Love and joy are contagious, keep spreading it.”- A Glenmark Volunteer

Thus, setting public targets for volunteering can help mobilize wider organizational participation and become a differentiating, “cultural asset” for companies.

Case Study 4

Tata Consultancy Services and #amillionhoursofpurpose – 2M+ vol. hours in one quarter²⁹

As part of its Hours of Purpose by Employees (HOPE) volunteering program, TCS launched #millionhoursofpurpose in 2022 as a collective effort by its employees to volunteer 1 million hours every quarter. Its employees “accepted the challenge” and exceeded the target by a significant margin contributing 2 million hours in Q4 alone.

Owing to their contribution, TCS has claimed that it has “achieved the status of the world’s number one company for volunteers, with the highest recorded number of volunteer hours.”

5) Integrating employee involvement within CSR projects can bring synergies

On April 1, 2014, India became the first country to legally mandate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The rules in Section 135 of India's Companies Act make it mandatory for companies above certain turnover and profitability thresholds to spend 2% of their average net profit for the past three years on CSR projects.

In our list of Top companies researched, **49% of the Top Indian companies disclose/involve employees as volunteers in CSR projects.** These projects typically included supporting the company’s environmental efforts (e.g. tree plantation, cleaning drives) or spreading awareness in their local communities (e.g. better hygiene practices, waste segregation).

With annual CSR spending in India crossing INR 26,000CR in FY 2023³¹, corporates have a possibility to involve employees as volunteers in their CSR projects, build Individual Social Responsibility (ISR), and also develop an employee’s pride in a company’s social and environmental activities.

Fig 12. % of Top Indian companies involve employees as volunteers in CSR projects (n=74)



Case Study 5

ICICI Lombard and “Caring Hands”: A 100% employee-driven CSR initiative

“Caring Hands”, launched in 2011, is a CSR initiative by ICICI Lombard that is 100% implemented by its employees as a part of their volunteering activities. Annual eye screening camps are organized in government and municipal schools for underprivileged children with the help of ophthalmologists. In FY 23, 3,000+ employees (~25% of all employees) helped in eye screening of 35,000+ students in 40+ cities across India³⁰.

“The program is outstanding and there is nothing that I would like to change about it. Taking out one day from the busy schedule and being able to work towards a societal cause, especially children, feels amazing. The program has also been able to enhance the leadership and managerial qualities within the team.”- Aman Kapoor, Dehradun

6) Volunteering programs can be designed as an end-to-end HR solution

Volunteering can be an end-to-end HR solution across **employee on-boarding, engagement and retention**. And, it is noted that companies in the 100 Top companies list have also been curating volunteering programs that touch upon these benefits.

In **Indigo**, all the new hires - its cabin crew, pilots, engineers and ground staff employees - have half day of volunteering activity as part of their training modules. Activities include preparing sandwiches, visiting orphanages, old age homes or schools for the underprivileged. This helps to keep the IndiGoReach culture alive across its network and also share its CSR philosophy with its new employees³².

Case Study 6

HSBC's Sustainability Leadership Program in India

In 2009, HSBC launched the global Sustainability Leadership Programme (SLP) as a unique professional development experience for senior leaders. The program gives senior managers the opportunity to understand sustainability and critical human-driven environmental change as core to their business, challenging them to identify opportunities that will make positive and responsible change at HSBC.

In India, HSBC has run the “Kemri Conservation – Sustainability Leadership and Teamwork Programme”. At this one-week on site volunteering initiative, employees from HSBC work in the community in Kemri village, Udaipur and engage in activities related to reforestation, fresh water conservation, community awareness, education and biodiversity surveys³⁵.

Some companies are also using volunteering as a senior leadership development tool. iVolunteer, one of India's leading corporate volunteering organizations, runs the “Whiteboard” program in India, that connects senior professionals with diverse skills with NGOs who are trying to scale up or improve the governance of their Board. Companies send their high-potential managers to volunteer their time, and practice a *different* kind of leadership. **Titan** and **Bosch** are some of the companies that have sent their senior professionals to this program³⁴.



It has been my privilege along with other members to interact with several committed and passionate leaders in the non-profit space. Their ability to make a meaningful change in society, with a fraction of the resources available to other sectors, is indeed very inspiring and humbling”³³

- Gopinath Govindan, A Whiteboard participant

Further, some of the companies - especially in the IT sector, are also using “social sabbaticals” to retain top talent. Social sabbaticals can take selected employees away from their desk roles and immerse them in an intriguing development challenge or agenda.

At **Infosys**, employees volunteer with charitable, governmental or para-governmental organisations in public interest areas. Employees are eligible for a fellowship from the company based on their role, and they get time off from their normal work schedule for a minimum of six months and a maximum of one year³⁶.

SAP and **IBM** also offer employees 1 month off for social sabbaticals, while **Google** offers the same for up to 6 months. In 2018, **Nestle** also started a programme in India in which 10 employees applied for a programme where they got a month of paid leave to volunteer³⁷.



It (social sabbaticals) has a significant impact on employee engagement. We have seen the figures on our end: there is higher retention among social sabbatical participants”.

- Alexandra van der Ploeg, SAP's global head of Corporate Social Responsibility³⁸

7) Conducting impact studies can help link benefits of volunteering to business outcomes

While volunteering can yield significant business benefits (see section on “The Business Need for Volunteering”), companies may not always draw the linkage between volunteering & business outcomes, or may not conduct impact studies to realize the business benefits from volunteering.

By measuring impact of volunteering programs on employee skill and well-being, as well as employee engagement and retention, companies will be able to design more powerful and effective volunteering programs in the workplace that are beneficial to all stakeholders – society, employees and companies.

Case Study 7

Cognizant’s “Outreach” program; 11% lower attrition rates for volunteers

Since launching in 2007, Cognizant’s employee volunteering program has clocked over three million hours of volunteering across 20 countries³⁵.

In India, Cognizant has over 50,000 active Outreach volunteers, and achieved 67,000 volunteering hours part of the Self4Society initiative³⁵. It has partnered with over 160 government schools to conduct additional classroom sessions in science, computing, mathematics, English and other subjects to help increase learning levels among children³⁶.

In its 2021 ESG Report, Cognizant has disclosed that over the last six years, Outreach volunteers had 11% lower attrition than other associates.

Ultimately, benefits from volunteering will only be appreciated once it has been experienced – so companies are encouraged to gather more impact data on their volunteering programs to ascertain if / what business benefits are accrued from their volunteering programs. Additionally, **publicly sharing of these learnings can also help facilitate greater adoption, collaboration and innovation for volunteering in corporate India.**

Case Study 8

Barclay's study of impact of volunteering in the workplace - Team building, skills, pride³⁹

In 2004, Barclays surveyed 2000 volunteers, 800 managers and 800 staff who had not volunteered through the company, and released a research report on the impact of its volunteering programs in the workplace. It noted the following benefits:

Improved team building: 68% of volunteers felt that their understanding of colleagues increased as a result of employee volunteering, while 61% reported that their team-work skills had grown.

Improved leadership & communication skills: Managers saw the greatest impacts on staff in terms of increased communication and leadership skills: 61% reported that staff communication skills had improved; 56% felt that staff leadership skills had improved.

Skills tended to increase with the frequency of volunteering: Over half (56%) of had volunteered four times or more reported that their decision-making skills had increased, compared with only 37% of those who had volunteered once or twice.

Greater pride in the company: More volunteers than non-volunteers would recommend Barclays as an employer (67% of volunteers compared with 58% of non-volunteers).

“Although I get head hunted a lot... for me, [employee volunteering is] one of the main reasons I have stayed with Barclays.” – Volunteer

Conclusion

As corporate India continues to tackle evolving workforce dynamics & technological advances, volunteering can become a potent tool in the workplace for HR, CSR and corporate leaders – across sectors - to achieve both, societal impact and business results.

We sincerely hope that the report is useful in establishing benchmarks and highlighting leading initiatives & best practices for volunteering in corporate India.

Given that the report relies primarily on public information, there is a possibility that all information would not be available to us. We hope to continue to refine our study and benchmarks through more conversations, and cross-sharing of information.

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India Welfare Trust (IWT) is a philanthropic foundation that aims to see #EveryIndianVolunteering. It runs initiatives like **eivolve** (India's first volunteering incubator), **eivesdrop** (India's only volunteering newsletter), **eivebinars** to promote learning and supports many other volunteering programs in India. IWT collaborates actively with over 150 organizations across India that form the bedrock of volunteering in India's social sector.

IWT is founded by Venkat Krishnan N., who earlier founded GiveIndia, and has incubated several other philanthropic initiatives in India.

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