



## Role of Volunteer Tourists in Community Development Initiatives in Hyderabad Area of South India

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### **Abstract**

*Volunteer tourism has grown exponentially in recent years. The phenomenon records the volunteers traveling from developed countries to the developing countries to engage in community development and other humanitarian work. The purpose of this study is to critically evaluate the type of volunteers, their motivations to travel, activities they engage in, their role in tourism development and their interactions with the host community. The research uses primary and secondary data and is undertaken in Hyderabad, the capital of recently formed state of Telangana in India. The study uses mixed qualitative methods of respondent interviews, observation on field and some questionnaires. Fifteen respondents were interviewed. Participants were mostly European, the majority of them saw volunteering as a learning experience or for personal development and as a means to experience cultural immersion. There were limitations including the unwillingness of NGOs to let their volunteers accessed and spoken to, seasonality of visiting volunteers to India*

**Keywords:** Volunteerism, charitable engagement, cultural immersion, Volunteer Tourism, Volontourism



## **INTRODUCTION**

Traveling for leisure, business or visiting friends or family have been the major reasons for travel for decades. Traveling abroad of volunteers, aid workers or gap year students to work on projects associated with humanitarian purposes has been a niche but hugely growing trend in the travel and tourism sector. Pearce & Coghlan (2008) suggest that the push force of alternative tourism and the pull force of the urge and need for volunteering has promoted this form of tourism. Several travel organisations, environmental and humanitarian NGOs and academic groups have started to promote volunteer tourism for community development projects, scientific research or restoration (Wearing, 2004), which vary in size, provision and scope (Callanan & Thomas, 2005; Tomazos & Butler, 2009). In the last four and odd decades, for example, Earthwatch alone has involved over 90,000 volunteers on 1400 projects in 120 countries contributing USD 67 million to scientific fieldwork (Earthwatch Institute, 2014). During the United Nations General Assembly in 2001, 126 nations have adopted a resolution recognising volunteerism as an important factor in the development (UNV, 2011). As the interest and focus expanded on the subject, the debate as to whether traveling volunteers are truly motivated by altruism or self-development or partially both have arisen (Wearing and McGehee, 2013).

Confirming this perspective, Tomazos & Butler (2010) argued that volunteer tourism promotes self-development. However, the contribution of volunteers to development activities in some of the world's poorest regions cannot be understated (Callanan & Thomas, 2005). Based on the debates in the literature regarding the motivations of the volunteer tourists, this study to understand intended the underlying pull and push factors for the volunteers traveling to Hyderabad in South India. Analysing the motivations and activities of volunteer tourists enables them to understand the destination choice too (Moscardo et al, 1996). There is an immense need for a match between volunteers' skills and needs of the host community. (McGehee, 2014). The researcher tries to ascertain the type of volunteers traveling and the type of activities they undertake while at the destination Hyderabad. While significant literature on the benefits of volunteer tourism to the tourists themselves exists, there is limited literature on perceived impacts of volunteer tourism on the host community. The researcher tries to bridge this gap by enumerating the relations and impacts between the host community and volunteer tourists, establishing volunteers' role in community and tourism development in Hyderabad, India.

The motivations of the volunteers to travel abroad to participate in different activities and development projects may be self-directed than philanthropic. Ellis (2003) elucidates that traveling abroad for volunteering serves two-fold purpose of altruism and egoism i.e. offering something back to the social and natural environments of host communities and, engaging in personal



development and self-discovery and re-aligning personal values. The relationship and interaction with the host community during their stay would give insights on the impacts of the volunteer tourists on them. Volunteer tourism has been the fastest developing segment with a considerable body of literature academically (Conran, 2011). More research is needed in the area of how community residents and volunteer tourists interact with each other. Most volunteer tourism work also takes place in the areas of marginalised and impoverished communities (McGehee and Andereck, 2009). There are a few critical studies that cover opinions and views of host communities on volunteer work (Guttentag, 2011). Therefore, the interaction and relationship between volunteer tourists and host communities must be explored to ascertain the socio-cultural and economic impacts. Volunteer tourism encompasses aspects of ecotourism and cultural tourism (Stoddart and Rogerson, 2004). Thus, it enables planning and achieving sustainable goals for the community, which in turn forms part of tourism development.

### **Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of the study is to investigate and critically analyse the motivations of volunteer tourists, examine their background and activities, and understand how they contribute to the tourism development of the Hyderabad area. The study will contribute to critically evaluate their role and impact on host communities.

### ***Case Study***

Indian culture had always been an interest in western minds. Besides being the cradle of ancient civilisation, she is a melange of different performing arts, handicrafts, cuisine and languages. As a former British colony, some kind of development has always been identified and undertaken, be it missionary work or community-based projects. The research took place at Hyderabad. The area lies in South India and is now part of the newly formed state of Telangana. Hyderabad (along with its twin Secunderabad) is a popular destination in South India for its rich history, non-extreme weather and excellent connectivity. Though the city of Hyderabad is dubbed as the centre of economic development of erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh that attracted considerable Foreign Direct Investments into real estate and infrastructure, many outskirts areas in Greater Hyderabad are still rather poor in terms of education (schools), health care (hospitals), social welfare (child labour, safety, access to drinking water etc.) and employment. As the place is a seat of multinational companies, marginalised communities from surrounding villages arrive for better living and do modest jobs. Many smaller colonies of people have hand-to-mouth existence which ekes out their living on meager daily wages. Hyderabad therefore receives volunteers from abroad for development work. Due to this paradoxical combination, it makes a good case study on



international volunteers from developed countries and what their role and activities are in developing countries.

### ***Why Tom Holloway***

NGOs often use volunteer tourism as a social and economic development strategy (Mostafanezhad, 2013). There are several organisations operating in the Hyderabad area including well-known groups such as Engineers Without Borders, Green Peace, Bhumika, Allipuram etc. Upon examining google listings and specific NGO websites, the researcher found that most of them were operating in the medical, construction and conservation sectors. While conversing with friends from other educational establishments, researcher came across Tom Holloway working in Hyderabad for children from marginalised communities. The founder of the organisation is a British national living in Banjara Hills in Hyderabad for the past 16 years and makes an excellent key informant for the research purpose.

## **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

Volunteer tourism (or Voluntourism) is the meaningful engagement of tourists in volunteer work doing worthwhile tasks (Alexander and Bakir, 2011). In contrast to other forms of tourism, volunteer tourism encompasses an active examination of cultural, environmental and social problems of a destination (Wearing, 2013). However, critics argue that there is a 'self-centered' motive in this much publicized selfless pursuit. Also, while most volunteer tourists are inexperienced, less or semi-skilled to carry the jobs, whether the quality of work complies with the development objectives remains a question.

The intent of the research is to understand the type of volunteer tourists, their motivations, activities and subsequent impacts on the destination and on host communities. This develops the research hypothesis. The summary of the reviewed literature is then presented at the end.

### ***Background and Types of Volunteer Tourists***

Conran (2011) observes that most volunteer tourists are from prosperous global north traveling to developing areas of the global south to work in poverty relief, restoration projects or engage in research. This phenomenon probably began as a result of nations in the south aspiring for development post their freedom from colonial rule (Sachs, 1992). Raymond & Hall (2008) contend that the majority of volunteer tourists are white, Western and have relatively privileged backgrounds. Mostafanezhad (2013) strengthens this argument and adds that the First World giver and the Third World receiver is normalised in volunteer tourism especial in the post-colonial backdrop. A pilot study on 28 volunteer sending organizations in the US by Lasso (2009) also confirms the highest volunteer receiving destination countries are all developing countries in the



global south (Figure 2 in Appendix). However, there is an emerging trend of South-to-South (in Latin America, Africa, and Asia) and South-to-North assignments in recent years (UNV, 2011). Cummings (2002) contends that the phenomenon of taking a year off after secondary or tertiary studies for increasing tolerance of cultural diversity has been constantly growing in importance and popularity. In line with this, Lyons et al (2012) contend that Generation Y is recognised as avid consumers of gap year volunteer tourism. However, some such as West (2005) criticise that it is a form of escapism and dropping out of school curricula. In this connection, Lyons & Wearing (2008) add that the short-term gap year volunteer tourism is the most popular phenomenon. However, recent research suggests that the percentage of 16-24-year-olds in the UK engaging in formal volunteering activities is lesser than those in the age group of 35-64-year-olds (Low et al, 2007).

Wearing et al. (2008) dub the phenomenon of volunteer tourism as “Rite of Passage” and add how an increasing number of young and internationally mobile people are taking to it. This indicates that the volunteer tourists may not actually be effectively helpful to the members of the host community due to their insufficient knowledge and skills or inadequate qualifications. According to Callanan and Thomas (2005), shallow volunteers devote shorter time to a project and are more likely to be interested in self, while deep volunteer tourists on the contrary work longer to improve conditions in host communities and usually possess project specific skills. Many volunteers also pay hefty sums for their volunteer tour.

Another significant type of volunteers are diaspora volunteers. They include experts from emigrant communities undertaking short-term assignments in their counties of origin to transfer knowledge, for ex: medical professionals conducting health camps, eye surgeries, awareness workshops etc. The UNV report (2011) highlights diaspora volunteers as agents of change, geographically separated but culturally linked, who help enhance the capacities of civil society networks, engage with issues of poverty alleviation, medical care and disabilities and environmental sustainability. Additionally, employee volunteering programs in the private sector as part of Corporate Social Responsibility is also prevalent. Studies suggest that 80% of all volunteer tourists are women (Mostafanezhad, 2013), and that women are more inclined to engage in formal volunteering (Einolf, 2011). Mostafanezhad further explains that celebrities championing humanitarian causes make up a small but powerful segment in volunteer tourism. A brief google search and survey of Facebook profiles show stars of western background often holding hands off, shopping with or laughing and surrounded by children, usually dark-skinned and from third world countries.

### *Motivations of Volunteer Tourists*

In understanding tourist behaviours, travel motivations play a critical role (Li et al, 2010). Different pull and push factors motivate people to take up overseas volunteer travel. Stoddart and Rogerson (2004) establish that the volunteer tourists are motivated to travel to develop their skills, develop relationships with others and experience a unique destination. Compounding this view, Sin (2009) concludes that the key motivations for volunteering are experiencing something exotic or the Other. Except for the desire to give back, all other factors seem to be thematically self-centred, much contrary to the whole nucleus of volunteerism or selflessness. Callanan and Thomas (2005) put forward a different finding that ethical values are an important motivating factor for deciding



to volunteer. Although altruistic motive remains one of the chief motivations in voluntourism, scholars such as Weinger (2012) are of the school of thought that many individuals engage in volunteer tourism to increase cross-cultural competence that is useful in future professions. According to Wearing & McGehee (2013), there is a continued debate whether altruism or self-interest is more dominant theme in volunteer tourist motivations. They, however, contend that this motivational dichotomy of altruism and self-development form part of singular volunteer tourism experience. Some volunteers also see it as a cheaper form of tourism (Sin, 2009). In the research carried by Mody et al (2014), nature, rurality and responsibility seem to be the top motivations for international travellers. Wearing (2001) consolidates that altruism, personal and professional development, cultural exchange, learning and the type of volunteer program itself are common motivations for volunteers. Furthermore, Wearing also explains that individuals seek volunteer experience based on push factors that are intrinsic and psychological. Handy et al (2010) observe that in countries where CV building or overseas experience is the norm, the rate of volunteering may be high as people engage in volunteer activities with a view to improve their employment prospects and give positive signals to employers. Furthermore, such people would then exhibit lower intensity of volunteering. One significant motivation for volunteering, especially prevalent among the young, is the celebrity involvement. Mostafanezhad (2013) observes that female celebrity humanitarians fuel the growing excitement around international volunteering and humanitarian work among young people. Anti-poverty NGOs often press celebrities into championing causes such as AIDS, poverty, war crimes and genocide who carry social campaigns through TV interviews, concerts and autograph signing (Goodman, 2010). This brings more awareness and increases consciousness, which acts as a motivator for others to get involved and take up Volunteering.

Based on the literature examined, it can be summarised that the motivations of volunteer tourists can be classified into three categories. 1. Material: Reward seeking 2. Social: Seeking social interaction and 3. Purposive: Driven by altruism and humanitarian concerns. Fitting into Maslow's theory of motivation (1943), volunteering seems to gratify the intrinsic and highest need of self-actualisation.

### ***Activities of Volunteer Tourists***

There is no accurate information or statistics available on volunteering destinations and the range of activities carried by volunteer tourists. A pilot study on 28 volunteer sending organisations in the US by Lasso (2009) summarises the most popular activities as humanitarian work, conservation, teaching, community development (including caring for children) and building (See Figure 1 in the Appendix). The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) report (2011) enumerates volunteer activities as engaging in the elimination of poverty, provision of health, education, sanitation & water supply, reducing the risk of disasters, and combating social exclusion stemming out of poverty & marginalisation, and violent conflict. Volunteers thus contribute to peace and development for communities, improving quality of life and well-being. The report further lists mass SMS communication to raise awareness on local issues, education and health, as a key micro-volunteerism activity. Furthermore, well-trained volunteer election monitors efficiently maintain

democratic voting systems and are used extensively in many countries. Rothwell (2013) indicates that the activities of volunteer tourists have a three-dimensional perspective- individual, community and environmental. He further elucidates that activities include working in the field with the team(s) for individuals, improving health and hygiene and school facilities (infra structure development) for community and improving science and tourism facilities for the environment. Wearing (2001) also observes that volunteer tourism work may involve alleviating the impacts of poverty, restoration of environments, or teaching while on holiday. Diprose (2012) consolidates this view and elucidates that volunteers typically engage in development work including infrastructure building, conservation and education projects. On a different note, Tomazos & Butler (2009) highlight foreign language teaching among the volunteer activities, beside those in supporting scientific research studies, working for environmental conservation and participating in community welfare programs. Volunteers may also help build institutional shelters for abandoned & abused girls, and victims of gender-based violence (UNV, 2011). Research by Lough et al (2011) indicates that volunteers offer extra pair of hands and especially come handy for help with childcare and companionship & care for the elderly.

## **Relationship Between Host Communities And Volunteer Tourists**

### **The Tourism Encounters**

Volunteer tourism is said to lead to social consciousness and provide an opportunity to develop cross cultural understanding (Hall, 2014). The volunteers often come with a basic understanding and notions of the place and the people, either through their own curiosity and reading, or through the pre-travel briefings at the point of origin, which they may confirm through their actual experiences at the destination. Adding to what Hall said, Lyons and Wearing (2008) puts forward the view that the exchange between local community and volunteer tourists aids in sustainable tourism development practices. However, McGehee and Santos (2005) argue that volunteer tourism exposes social inequalities, environmental and political issues which subsequently increases social awareness and support. Guttentag (2009) contends that short-term volunteer tourists have limited interaction and may be only exploitative of the host communities.

There is a resentment that low-skilled short-term volunteers also contribute to increased unemployment among locals who are unable to compete with the arriving and experience seeking volunteer tourists (Tomazos & Butler, 2012). Raymond & Hall (2008) claim that volunteer tourism does not always result in an improved cross-cultural understanding of the participants involved. They further add that their study showed volunteers did not change their perceptions about the culture of host community (social distance persisted).

On the contrary to these views, Lyons et al (2012) opine that volunteers usually act in minority and disadvantaged groups and may further marginalise them. In many developing countries, having a white person in the community is regarded as a status symbol, as they are regarded to have a superior background and abundance in education and finances (Pink, 1998). Intense and intimate encounters between tourists and their hosts may lead to attitudinal changes in participants (Pizam et al, 2000). Study by Uriely & Reichel (2000) suggest that working tourists such as



volunteers oriented towards social exchange with their hosts are more likely to develop positive attitudes towards them. That is to say the non-economic motives enable an expressive host-guest relationship. Further to this, Zahra & McGehee (2013) highlight the dependence and over-reliance of the host community on volunteer tourists coming for development projects and point out that this undermines the dignity of local residents.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Research Methodology and Philosophy*

Given the nature of the topic, the researcher chose the interpretive paradigm to study the activities of volunteer tourists in order to understand their relationship with the host community in their natural settings. For the research objectives chosen, a phenomenological research approach and qualitative research methods have been used for their potential to draw insights and inferences from the study respondents centring on their perspectives and experiences. Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were conducted.

### *Qualitative Research method*

Issues within the volunteer tourism sector focusing on participants' perspectives and their views were explored using a qualitative research method. Collecting and analysing measurable data from a large number of participants using statistical techniques and surveys was not required, given the seasonal nature of volunteering, particularly in the Hyderabad area. Also, rather than impersonal surveys typically used in quantitative research, close encounters were used for ascertaining first-hand information on the motivations of volunteer tourists, their relationship and experiences with the host community and their decision to travel to India, in particular to Hyderabad. There is no database available with the Government or any NGOs about volunteer numbers arriving to work in Hyderabad and how they select their area of work. In the absence of this information, key informants were identified and views, experiences, perspectives and concerns to understand the motivations of volunteers were collected over three months. Also, Tom Holloway was visited in Hyderabad, work of volunteers in their natural settings observed. Study universe included volunteers in Hyderabad area, the rationale of selecting the place was chiefly the ease of access, language and familiarity due to it being the place of origin of the researcher. This besides, a lot of development work boomed lately as a consequence to formation of new Indian state of Telangana (to which Hyderabad now belongs). Several social projects took off to develop and enhance the area and quality of life of communities.

### *Research Techniques*

Triangulation of interviews conducted and own observations to understand and interpret lived experiences, therefore data collection and survey methods chosen were semi-structured interviews using key informants, volunteers, questionnaires and observation in their work setting, as opposed





to focus groups. Through free-wheeling conversations with respondents, insights into the nuances of their work were gained. 15 volunteer participants were included. Based on the clues given by key informants, other sets of study respondents using a simple random sample were identified using snow ball sampling technique. Qualitative data thus collected has significantly helped to conduct the exploratory study. Some NGOs were not fully cooperative to take part in the research due to an ongoing crackdown and audits. After explaining and establishing the research objectives and intent, and after assuring the privacy and confidentiality of the data collected, Tom Holloway has agreed to cooperate.

Questionnaires/Semi-structured Interviews with open-ended questions were used so that the participants could describe their perceptions and experiences. Interview transcripts and field notes were used. Informal conversations took place over coffee and on skype chat as the widespread internet connectivity in India knows no demarcation between urban and outskirt areas. People perceived the researcher as one among them and treated very friendly.

#### *Semi-structured interviews*

Semi-structured interviews included a combination of open and closed questions. To aid in content analysis, open-ended questions sought responses on volunteering experiences, their opinions, and views on the host community. Some natural and unstructured conversations also took place with the host community members to get their perspectives and feelings. Follow up and probing questions were asked to provide clarification of responses Interviews were recorded on Dictaphone recorder when conducted in person, which were later transcribed. For those who were out of town, interviews were conducted using video Skype calls. The researcher learned the volunteers carry their smartphones with skype installed on them to be in touch with their families back home and update them on their safety or share their experiences on the foreign soil. Each interview has taken about 30 minutes in duration. Most respondents have shown their willingness to participate.

#### *Questionnaires*

For the purpose of ascertaining the type of volunteers and their background, and for those respondents who were off site elsewhere, questionnaires were circulated through emails and also in-person to analyse demographics. Questions were on demographic details i.e. age, educational background, gender, and whether it was first time volunteering or repeat volunteering, on volunteering experience, on the duration, type of project, reasons to decide to volunteer, how the volunteering opportunity came, how important it was for them to volunteer abroad, using 5 points Likert scale, and finally on host community experiences, their receptivity, expectations, and communication barriers.

#### *Observation Of Respondents*

Observation involves attempting to understand and interpret the meanings and experiences of a group of people, possible only through participation with those individuals (Silverman, 2006). The



process is closely similar to in-depth case studies underpinning a holistic examination of a particular setting (Ritchie et al, 2008). Ethnographic approach was used to get closer to the respondents and be connected with the environment where the study took place. Their level of commitment and involvement of volunteers towards their undertakings was noted. Ritchie et al (2008) argue that participating with the interviewees influences the data and interpretation and respondent validation ensures validity. Therefore, cross checking with the participants was done to avoid any bias. Some may have proved more data-rich than the others. In order to critically analyse the phenomenon of volunteer tourists, their interactions with the host community, it was necessary to contrast values, attitudes and experiences of the host community members with them.

#### *Data Collection and Ethics*

The data in this qualitative method was in the form of transcripts, conversations and questionnaires. Questions about their volunteering experience and charitable engagement were asked. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The data was gathered and analysed over a period of three months between July 2015--February 2016. Content analysis was carried out to interpret the primary data collected, a thematic approach for analysis identifying patterns in the data collected in interviews and questionnaires. Quotes from the interviewees were also used to analyse the data. Themes were identified and under each theme, some specific points were listed.

Ethical considerations have been observed, research objectives, aims and confidentiality clauses were explained to all research respondents in advance and obtained their verbal consent for participation before questionnaires were given and interviews were taken.

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

There were 15 responses, of which 80% were female and the rest were male. This confirms the discussion in the literature that women take up volunteering in much higher proportion than men. About 80% were in the young age group (18-25). 10% being in the age group of 50-70, and 10% in the age group of 25-35 years. This again established the discussion point in the literature that most of the volunteers are young belonging to Generation Y. 73% of the respondents had a European background, 13% American and rest were Asian. This proves the most popular notion that the phenomenon of volunteerism encompasses affluent, young white people from the north traveling to less-developed south. 47% have claimed to be in the gap year, 26% were in the High School while 7% were retired and 7% of the respondents are looking for jobs. Again, the phenomenon of gap year students opting for volunteering is evident.



Table 1 below presents the respondents' details with regard to their age, occupation and their origin. Pseudonyms were used (V1, V2, V3 and so on) to keep their names confidential and to protect their privacy.

Table 1: Profile of participants

Respondent	Age	Gender	Country of origin	Occupation
V1	65	M	UK	Retired Director
V2	20	F	Israel	University student
V3	22	F	Germany	University student (gap)
V4	20	F	UK	University student (gap)
V5	18	F	Israel	High school student
V6	26	F	Germany	In between jobs
V7	20	M	UK	University student (gap)
V8	18	F	US	High School Student
V9	18	F	US	High School Student
V10	20	M	UK	University student (gap)
V11	22	F	Romania	Finished studies
V12	21	F	UK	University student (gap)
V13	21	F	France	University student (gap)
V14	22	F	France	University student (gap)
V15	19	F	Switzerland	High School Student



Table 2 shows the responses for the motivations to volunteer

Motivational factor	No. of responses	Percentage
CV enhancement	5	33.33%
Learning/ enhancing skills	2	13.33%
Peer pressure	1	6.6%
Philanthropy/Altruism	4	26.66%
Cultural experience	8	53.33%
Other	1	6.6%

The majority of the respondents report that cultural experience was the motivation for their international travel to volunteer. CV enhancement was cited by 33.33% as their motivation. To volunteer for altruistic or civic engagement was cited by 26.66%. This establishes the fact that the philanthropic or altruistic motives are taken over by the self –directed motives.

One volunteer who participated says “The experience would be a turning point for me, and I am now ready to take up a job in a big corporate company and work effectively with diversified workforce“ (Transcript 4).

Another respondent says” It was transformative. I had absolutely no idea that many people below the poverty line are struggling to survive in small jobs but want to give their best to their children. I have a better understanding of have’s and have not’s and hopefully, I integrate this experience which adds weight.” (Transcript 9).

Objective Activities: One of the respondents said “I could not have volunteered in construction or similar work. My female instincts naturally directed me to interact with children, teach and take care of them. I knew I could naturally make a difference to them” (Transcript 2).

Objective Motivations: The chief motivations were found to be experiencing a different culture, way of living and CV building. One volunteer says was motivated to volunteer following the work done by a favorite Hollywood actress. This confirms the importance of celebrities in influencing the youth as highlighted by Lindstrom (2003).

Objective Host-guest relations: Most of the volunteers felt they established bonds with children. Volunteer V2 says “The children were really cute and enthusiastic. Every morning they would greet me with full energy and show a huge interest in their learning. They made small cards for me when they knew it was my birthday” (Transcript 14).



Volunteer V3 says” It was such stress to work with a community which is so much different to that of ours, though the very cultural difference was my reason to travel here” This proves what was said by Weinger (2012) that encountering new cultures is stressful (Transcript 10).

Table 3 Activities of volunteers

Activity	No. of responses
Education (children)	11
Conservation	2
Poverty alleviation	5
Infrastructure/building/construction	0
Fundraising	1
Health and Sanitation	3
Other	1 ( mobile technology)

Of the 15 interviewed on the activities of volunteers, an overwhelming 73.33% have said they like engaging in children’s education. As the sample had a majority of female respondents, there was nil inclination towards building and construction. 13.33% were interested in environmental conservation, 20% were inclined to health and sanitation work. 6.6% responded on fundraising activity for community work and another 6.66% showed interest in the use of mobile technologies.

**DISCUSSION**

The present study examined the types of volunteers and their background, their motivations, activities, role in tourism development and interaction with host community. There are push and pull factors behind the decision to travel abroad to volunteer. The themes analysed reflect the motivation factors of improving the CV and experiencing a different culture (cultural immersion). Most favoured activities of the volunteers were identified as teaching and caring for children. This finding is not surprising as a huge body of the literature concludes the same point. However, as the majority of the sample of this study are youngsters from developed countries with High School or gap year background, whether they are qualified enough to go and teach or care for children in developing countries is a big question.

Their consumption of accommodation, local goods, and services, visiting nearby sight-seeing attractions demonstrate their role in tourism development. The hero-worship of western volunteers in under-privileged communities in the developing nations, their perceived affluence in the mind-set of marginalized people enable a positive receptivity by the host community, the bonds that they form and separation anxieties the children undergo are the indicators of host-guest relationship.



## **CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The purpose of the study was to investigate and critically analyse the motivations of volunteer tourists, examine their background and activities, and understand how they contribute to the tourism development of the Hyderabad area. The study therefore critically evaluated the volunteer's role and impact on host communities in the Hyderabad area. The results reveal that the respondents were of much predominantly white origin, were below 25, with either high school or gap year background. Their chief motivation was to experience a different culture and enhance their CV for better employability.

### ***Limitations And Recommendations***

There were issues and challenges for carrying out the proposed research. Due to alleged financial and process mismanagement of some reputed NGOs in India and in Hyderabad, there was a crackdown on many not-for-profit organisations especially those who receive volunteers from abroad. Therefore, many NGOs that were contacted after scouting the internet and making inquiries were apprehensive about their volunteers being interviewed. Additionally, the Directors/Heads of the concerned volunteer organisations were extremely busy in meetings, audits and supervisions, hence to reach them or to get appointments to speak to them was a challenge. This was necessary to access and identify the sample of volunteers to speak and interview. To top it all, huge holiday spells in India between September and November, when people tend to be in a celebratory mood due to Ganesha festival, Navaratri and Diwali celebrations meant closure of many projects for the season. Reluctance from some respondents to share their opinions, prejudices and views also was a stumbling block. The findings, therefore, are drawn from a small-scale, exploratory and interpretive study undertaken on 15 participants who volunteered in Hyderabad in South India. Hence, the findings may not be generalised to a wider context. There is a substantial potential to explore the relations between volunteers and the host community. Examining the experiences of volunteers who engage for a longer time and on different projects may enable us to explore that aspect.



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#### Appendix A

Figure 1 Lasso Report on Activities of Volunteer Tourists originating from the US

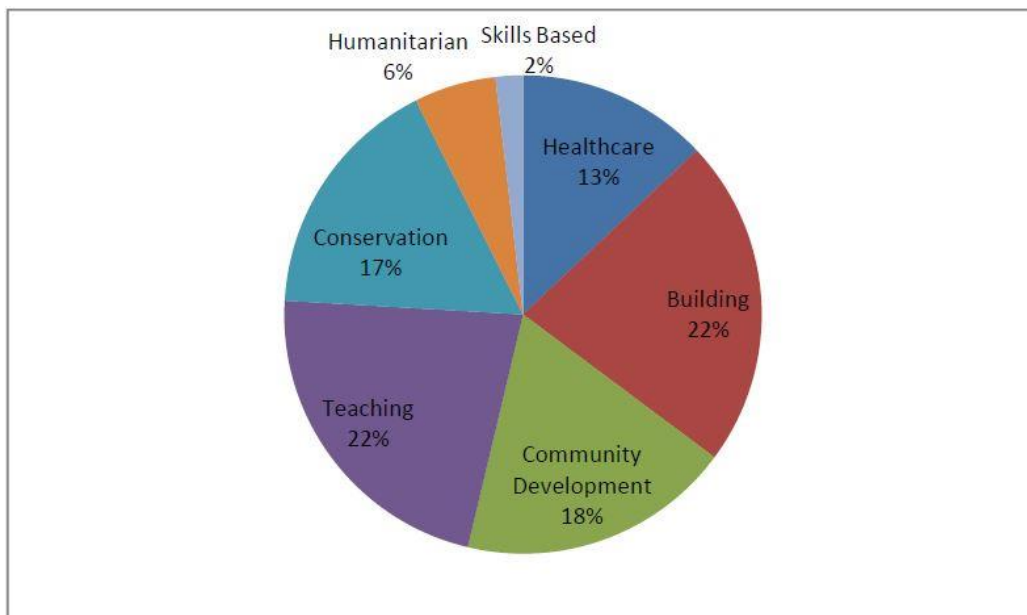


Figure 2: Top Volunteer receiving destinations from America (Lasso, 2009)

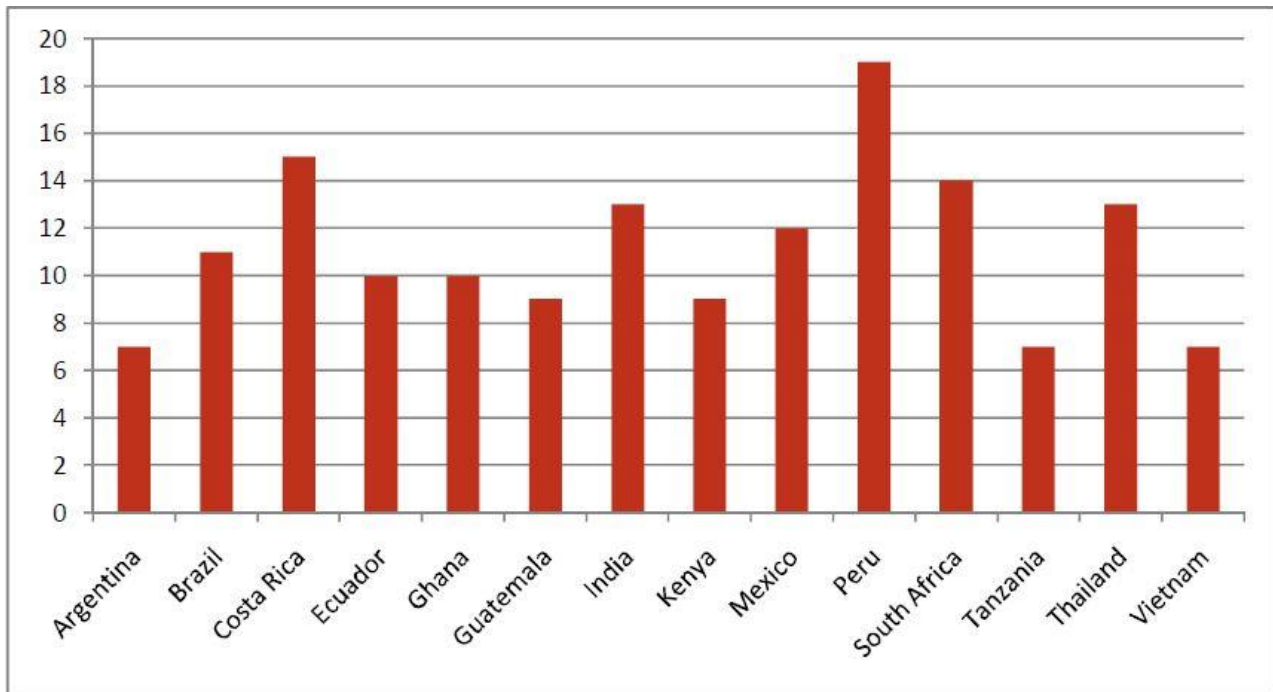
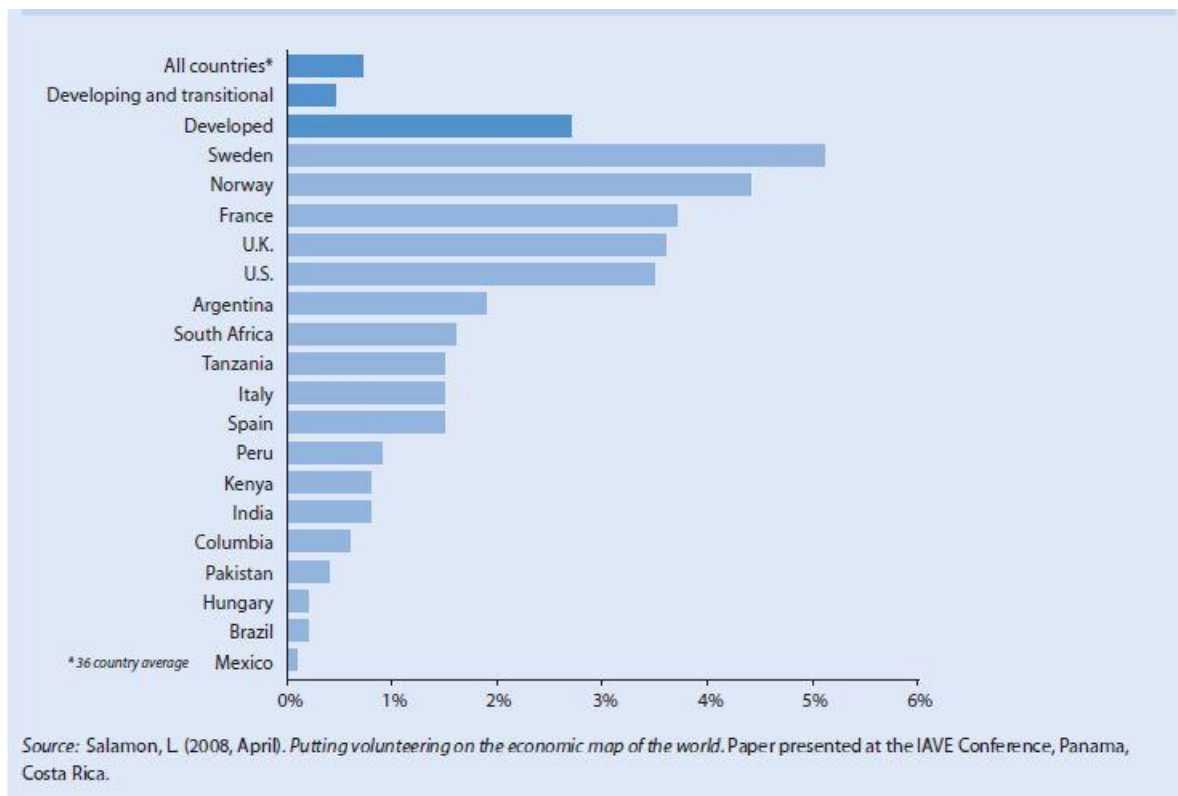


Figure 3: Value of volunteer work as share of GDP



## Appendix B

### Interview Schedule

#### I. Demographic Information

**Q1. Gender**       Male                       Female

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**Q2. Age**             18-25                       25-35                       35-50                       50-70

**Q3. Marital St.**    Single                       Married/In relationship

**Q4. Educational Background**    Higher Secondary School    Graduate or equivalent    Post Graduate or equivalent

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**Q5. Ethnic Background**    European                       American                       Australian                       Asian                       African



**Q.6**

First time volunteer

Repeat volunteer

**Volunteering**

**II. Volunteering Experience**

**Q1.** How did you know about the volunteering opportunities?

- Internet organisation
- Educational Institution
- Previous participation
- Reference of friends
- Advert/Sending

**Q2.** What is the duration of the volunteering?

- Less than a month
- 1-3 months
- 3-6 months
- 1 year or over

**Q3.** What is your motivation for volunteering?

- CV enhancement
- Learning/enhancing skills
- Peer pressure
- Philanthropy/Altruism/Civic engagement
- Desire for Cultural experience/cross cultural awareness
- Other

**Q4.** How important do you consider a volunteering experience is?

- Totally unimportant
- Not too important
- Neither unimportant nor important
- Fairly important
- Very important

**Q5.** Would you want to volunteer again?

- Definitely
- May be
- Not again

**Q6.** How do you rate the experience?

- Excellent
- Good
- Did not meet expectations
- Disappointing

**Q7.** What type of volunteer projects interest you?

- Education (children)
- Conservation
- Poverty alleviation
- Infrastructure (water/electricity, waste management)



- Fundraising/donations
- Health and Sanitation
- Other (Please mention which)

**Q8.** Were there any barriers to interaction with the host community?

- Yes
- None

**Q10.** Was your volunteer experience safer than imagined?

- Yes
- No

(In case of no, briefly state the issue)

**Q9.** What was the barrier(s) to social exchange with the host community?

- General fear of intrusion/prejudice
- Lack of prior knowledge
- Language and communication
- Other (Please mention which)

### III. General

**Q10.** How would you spend your spare time/weekends?

- Prefer working
- Mingling with local people and establishing rapport
- Visit site-seeing attractions and socialize with other volunteers
- Relax and rest at home

**Q11.** What type of accommodation did you opt for?

- Independent
- Shared accommodation
- Paying Guest
- Organisation provided

**Q12.** Did you prefer to stay in the vicinity to your host community?

- Yes
- No

**Q13.** How was the encounter by and with the host community?

- Courteous and meaningful
- Not very friendly
- Completely non-receptive



- Maintained contact even after the project

**Q14.** What would have helped improve interactions with the host community?

- Cross cultural communication
- Pre-visit training
- More time to observe and opportunity to understand
- Other (Please mention which)

**Q15.** Which of the following applies to you?

- You have paid for the volunteering experience
- You were paid out of pocket expenses during volunteering stay
- You have worked completely free, borne your own expenses
- Other (Please mention)

How do you think you have benefitted the local host community through your volunteering?

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What is your anticipation of the volunteer experience and whether it matched with the actual experience?

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How did you benefit from your volunteer experience?

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Are there any final comments you would like to make on this subject?

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