



## A STUDY ON VOLUNTEERISM AND POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN KOHIMA, NAGALAND

**Ketseinuo Tungoe**

Student, School of Youth Studies and Extension, Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development

**S.Sudharsan\***

Assistant Professor (2015), School of Youth Studies and Extension, Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development. \*Corresponding Author

### KEYWORDS :

#### 1.1. INTRODUCTION:

The desire to help is an essential aspect of human nature. One particular type of helping behaviour is volunteerism. Butcher and Smith (2010) explain volunteerism as "a positive channel for the simple desire to help others". The world's attention is increasingly shifting to young people as a force for social change and progress. According to the United Nations (2012), there are more than 1.2 billion young people in the world today.

India has one of the world's youngest populations today. Young people are vibrant, energetic, and creative and have much to offer. To channelize the energy of the youth in productive activities and to engage them in nation-building activities, the government of India in its twelfth year plan recognizes the importance of the inclusion of young people in the development process (Planning Commission). Youth involvement in voluntary service not only engages but also empowers them and allows them to step up and take charge of their own destiny. Voluntary activities allow young people to demonstrate their skills, talents and potential where they are able to demonstrate a sense of autonomy and belief in their own abilities. The National Youth Policy 2014 puts emphasis on instilling the spirit of volunteerism amongst youth, and creating appropriate platforms to involve them in community service activities. The policy emphatically gives importance to employment and skill development of young people. When the young people are afforded opportunities for guidance and mentorship, they are able to reflect on how they can help develop other young people in the same way. In India, there are several schemes to enable youth to engage with their community as well as to participate in grassroots development like NYKS, NYPAD and the NSS. There are a variety of other government as well as community based schemes running and together these schemes target varying youth segments, and have different models of participation.

Every young people have talents, strengths, and interests that offer them potential for a bright future. The field of positive youth development focuses on each and every young people's unique talents, strengths, interests, and future potential (William Damon, 2004). Negative stereotypes perceive youth as problematic and youth is seen as a period filled with hazards, and many young people are seen as potential problems that must be straightened out before they can do serious harm to themselves or to others. The Positive Youth Development approach envisions young people as resources rather than as problems for society (O'Donohue et. al., 2013). Youth development provides young people with opportunities to enhance their development and realising the full potential of the youth development approach requires community commitment and the support of enthusiastic volunteers. This approach benefits all young people, whatever their starting points or circumstances. Development is a process, not a goal and people continue to develop throughout their lifetime (Hamilton et.al. 2004). Therefore, promoting youth development is an enduring, over reaching purpose, not a goal that is finally achieved.

Young people have much to offer societies from innovation to creativity to new thinking. Their participation in democracy

promotes active citizenship, strengthens social responsibility and can enhance democratic processes and institutions. And today's young citizens are tomorrow's leaders and decision-makers. In this study, we will be taking a closer look into volunteerism in Kohima. Voluntary services in Kohima can be found in a large scale and it is popularised on the whole by the faith based organisations-Nagaland being a Christian State. Many young people are actively engaged and participate in activities involving their church such as volunteering to teach in the Sunday school, or just volunteering on the whole as church youths and the activities entrusted as such. However, these voluntary services of the youth mostly unorganised and therefore they are not often given due recognition. The Naga society is shaped by the tradition of giving, and the people place deep value systems in helping one another. It is so deeply rooted that volunteerism has become a part of the living culture in Nagaland. This belief also has roots in religious and spiritual practice where the people believed in the ideals of selfless service. Volunteerism has evolved and has seen several forms. The people and the government have come to realize the importance and need for volunteering in nation building. Citizen engagement through volunteering is an idea that is being employed to build a more inclusive and holistic society.

The young people of Kohima render their services and volunteer everyday like the rest of India and the western countries. In general, voluntary works are found in abundance in Kohima, but we do not know what the motivation behind them to volunteer is or what their perception or attitude is towards volunteerism. We know that the young people of a nation are its most precious resource. Why so because they are the driving force behind a nation's development. And we cannot ignore this wealth anymore. The potential among the young people is numerous and we cannot ignore this largely untapped asset that can be a powerful force for the future of development as the youths of today are ready to be called upon for the right cause. The power of the young people must be harnessed to bring peace, development and equality.

#### 1.3. Statement of the Problem:

India has the world's largest youth population with 356 million 10-24 year-olds and the young people are India's most valuable resource, now and in the future. Opportunities for learning and skill development are critical if young people are to take their place in the community and be active citizens in all aspects of their lives. Volunteering has become the major means by which individuals and communities connect and engage with significant social issues. While at the same time helps young people to gain skills and experience as well as come forward and make purposive choices for their future. Youth volunteerism is emerging as a global focus with consultations on integrating it in peace and development in the next decade and beyond. Volunteerism is considered as an important tool for involving young people in developmental issues and for youth development itself. There are many organizations working for youth volunteerism in the rest of the country but there is little information on volunteerism in Kohima. Many young people are volunteering and volunteerism is taking place but we do not know enough. Volunteerism in Kohima is mostly thriving but many voluntary acts go unnoticed and as such, understudied. Today the

energy of the youth is needed as ever and volunteerism is a source providing the energy needed to bring development with far reaching effects. As youths in Kohima represent a large segment of the population that can be mobilised for community service and development programmes, the youths need a stage for them to develop into strong individuals, responsible and patriotic.

To achieve a good rate of young volunteers in a place like Kohima, new and enthusiastic voluntary organizations and other such community development organizations need to be introduced; at the same time the existing organizations need to be promoted and encouraged. Doing so will persuade the youth to come forward confidently as volunteers ready to serve. Furthermore, the creative dynamism of young people must be channelled to promote communal harmony and environmental protection in order to sustain a healthy community.

#### 1.4. Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study was to understand youth volunteerism in Kohima and to determine if there is any positive youth development taking place among the youths after volunteering. The study explores how different factors like self interest, family influence, peer influence etc. influences a person to volunteer. The study also aims to find out the views and attitudes of young people regarding volunteering and helping others. Moreover, the study will explore the different areas and avenues where young people engage themselves and lend a hand which will help us understand why young people decide to volunteer and also explain how by volunteering the young people are able to develop themselves.

#### 1.5. Research Objectives:

The objectives of the study were:

- To identify the motivating factors behind volunteerism among young people;
- To study the attitudes of young people towards volunteerism;
- To ascertain any positive youth development among the volunteers.

#### 1.6. Hypothesis:

The researcher formulated hypotheses to find possible answers to the research questions.

- H<sub>1</sub>. There is no significant relationship between the age group and motivational factors for volunteerism.
- H<sub>2</sub>. There is no significant relationship between type of organization and gender.

#### 1.7. Significance of the Study:

This study was designed to determine if there is any positive youth development through volunteering. The study generated information on how factors such as family, peers, society, self-interest and career motivate people to participate and help others who are in need. The study further tries to understand how people perceive voluntary works. The study findings will therefore be of benefit to various stakeholders in the developmental sector and will enable Policy makers and civil society organizations to understand youth volunteers better and also to lessen the gap between them, while at the same time contribute to the wealth of existing volunteerism research.

### 3.1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.2. Area of Study:

The study was carried out in Kohima Block in Kohima, Nagaland. Kohima is a hilly district of India's North Eastern State of Nagaland. Kohima village, also called 'Bara Basti' which is the second largest village in Asia forms the North-Eastern part of Kohima Urban area today. As of 2011 Census, Kohima district has a population of 270,063. Males constitute 140,118 of the population and females 129,945. Kohima has an average literacy rate of 85.58%, higher than the national average of 74.04 %: male literacy is 89.28 % and female literacy is 81.56 %. In Kohima, 36,157 of the population are under 6 years of age.

#### 3.2.2. Relevance of the area of study:

This study will help us understand the views and attitudes of young people regarding volunteering and helping others. Furthermore, the study will explore the different areas and factors which influence and motivate the young people to engage in meaningful and worthwhile activities.

#### 3.3. Methodology:

##### 3.3.1. Research Design:

The Researcher had selected descriptive research because it undertakes the study to ascertain and be able to describe the characteristics of the research topic. Based on the design this study will identify the various characteristics of the young people in the community as the descriptive research methods are used when the researcher wants to describe specific behaviour as it occurs in the environment.

##### 3.3.3. Sampling Method

In this study, the researcher must guarantee that every individual has an equal opportunity for selection and this can be achieved if the researcher utilizes randomization. Simple Random sampling is the purest form of probability sampling. In this study the researcher takes Kohima youth and they are given equal chances to be selected for the respondent. Sample size determines the act of choosing the number of observations among the universe. It is the size in number of respondents from the whole population. In its simplest form this involves comparing samples between one regime and another. The sample size for the study is 40 from Kohima youth aged between 15-35 years in Kohima Block.

##### 3.3.4. Tools for Data collection

The study employed two techniques during the process of data collection and these are as follows;

**Self-administered questionnaire:** The questionnaire tool was formed of both open ended and closed ended natures and this was self-administered while the researcher was allowed to fill the questionnaire in the study field as per respondents' responses. The questionnaire method of data collection was used because of being cheap and that the method collects responses with minimum errors and high level of confidentiality.

**Structure of questionnaire:** The researcher followed a structured interview where the researcher-administered study based mainly on quantitative questions. The aim of this approach is to ensure that each interview is presented with exactly the same questions in the same order. This ensures that answers can be reliably aggregated and that comparisons can be made with confidence between sample subgroups.

#### 3.4. Limitations of the study:

Following are some limitations of the study:

- The study is limited to the youth of Kohima district of Nagaland and cannot be generalized with the youth of other districts in Nagaland and other states.
- Since the study is conducted with the limited sample size, the sample may not represent the whole population. The findings of the study cannot be generalized.
- Due to time constraints the study could not cover all the aspects of participation of youth in volunteerism.

### 4.0. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

#### 4.4. Factors Motivating Volunteers:

The functional theory of volunteerism states that many people give their time and volunteer for the same cause but they do it for different reasons and their motives differs from each other. There are several factors which motivate a person to volunteer. Five factors are used for the present study. The following table illustrates the five factors motivating a volunteer to invest his time and engage in voluntary works.

**TABLE 4.4.1.**  
**Descriptive Statistics for Motivations by Age Group (N=40)**

Motivations	Age Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
Personal	15-20	2.95	1.35
	20-26	2.83	1.36
	26-29	3.01	1.62
	30-35	2.91	1.37
Family Influence	15-20	5.89	0.85
	20-26	5.71	1.11
	26-29	5.54	0.85
	30-35	5.36	1.46
Peer Influence	15-20	3.21	1.31
	20-26	2.91	1.21
	26-29	1.31	1.30
	30-35	3.01	1.34
Career Influence	15-20	3.01	0.86
	20-26	2.71	1.27
	26-29	2.61	1.84
	30-35	3.85	1.74
Societal Influence	15-20	3.4	1.72
	20-26	2.3	0.65
	26-29	4.7	1.40
	30-35	3.1	1.11

Hypotheses:

H1 – There is no significant relationship between the age group and motivational factors for volunteerism.

The present study has shown that volunteerism is an activity that permits to satisfy very different motives over the life course. The motivations of people can change with the persons at times, but volunteerism can fit these changes. The means and standard deviations for each motivation factor and age group are presented in the above table. The most significant motivation across all the age groups is the personal factor. From 26 years onwards, career influence is a special attention among the respondents. The socio-emotional selectivity theory, (Curtler, 2004) states that people volunteer for different reasons and motives, depending on their life stage or their perceived time left to live. In connection with the theory of socio emotional selectivity, career and understanding motives were associated with knowledge seeking. This has also been reflected in the study.

Hence, the hypothesis is rejected as there is a significant relationship between age and motivational factors for volunteerism.

**4.7. Positive Youth Development**

This study attempts to find out the end product of volunteering among the respondents, to find out if the effects of volunteering have had a positive impact on their development.

**TABLE 4.7.1.**  
**Ascertaining Positive Youth Development Post Volunteering**

	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a.	Volunteering changed my self-perception and I look within and analyze myself more critically.	9(23%)	25(62%)	6(15%)	0	0
b.	I Feel more positive in my outlook and approach and I can address my personal issues and conflicts.	10(25%)	19(47%)	9(23%)	2(5%)	0
c.	I am now able to work better in a team	11(28%)	25(62%)	4(10%)	0	0
d.	It improved my self esteem and self-worth.	14(35%)	20(50%)	6(15%)	0	0
e.	It changed my earlier beliefs, views or stereotypes about social issues and disadvantaged groups positively	8(20%)	22(55%)	7(17%)	3(8%)	0
f.	I am able to relate better with the issues and communities with whom my organization works.	8(20%)	26(65%)	4(10%)	2(5%)	0
g.	I am now able to take feedback from others on my performance and my style of doing things	3(8%)	26(65%)	7(17%)	4(10%)	0
h.	I am able to take the initiative and lead in my team after volunteering.	6(15%)	19(47%)	14(35%)	1(3%)	0
i.	I have started helping and supporting others in difficult circumstances directly or indirectly.	7(17%)	24(60%)	6(15%)	3(8%)	0
j.	My motivation level has gone up.	10(25%)	24(60%)	6(15%)	0	0

Source: Primary Survey

From the table provided above, it is gathered that 23% of the respondents strongly agree that volunteering changed their self-perception and they understood themselves better while 62% agree with it. 15% chose to be neutral and 0% of them disagree and strongly disagree with the statement. Volunteerism allows young people to work in different scenarios and also provides a platform where they are able to take the time to reflect and introspect on themselves, and this ultimately makes them decide on what they want to do in the future.

The implication indicates that 28% of the respondents strongly agree that they are now able to work better in a team after volunteering, the bulk of them agree with the statement at 62%. 10% choose to be neutral and 0% of them disagree and strongly disagree to the statement. Being a volunteer has many perks and working in a team is one of them.

The table indicates that 35% of the respondents strongly agree volunteering has helped improve their self esteem and self worth, and 50% agree to the statement. 15% of them chose neutrality and

0% of them chose to disagree and strongly disagree with the statement. Volunteering is all about helping, be it humanitarian or environmental issues; and helping out brings satisfaction and contentment. And the volunteers in Kohima are of the opinion that when they help others they feel good about themselves and this facilitates in boost their self esteem and worth.

The inference from the table above shows that 20% of the respondents strongly agree that they are able to relate better with the issues and communities with whom their organization works and most respondents opting to agree to it at 65%. 10% remain neutral, 5% disagree and 0% strongly disagrees with what is said. Majority of the volunteers in Kohima agreed that engaging in a voluntary work has increased their level of understanding to the problems and issues their community is facing.

The table showed that a total of 17% of the volunteers strongly agree that they have started helping and supporting others in difficult circumstances directly or indirectly after volunteering and 60% of them support the statement by agreeing it to it. 15% of them

remain neutral, 8% disagreeing and 0% of volunteers who completely disagree.

From the above table, it is inferred that 25% of the respondents strongly agree that their motivation level has gone up after volunteering and the bulk of 60% decide to agree and 15% opting for neutrality leaving 0% of volunteers who chose to disagree and strongly disagree with the statement.

## 5.2. MAIN FINDINGS:

### The results of the study showed that:

#### 5.2.1. Demographic Profile of the Students:

- According to the National Youth Policy 2014, youth is defined as persons from 15-29 years. And accordingly, the data reveals that the preponderance of the volunteers in Kohima is below twenty-nine years at eighty-seven percent of the total number. It is seen that the lower age brackets are volunteering more actively than the volunteers of thirty years and above.
- The 2011 census report on sex ratio shows 931 females per 1000 males and consequently the finding of the study has shown that more than half of the respondents are male (62.5%). The study reveals that the male population as compared to the females devote more time for voluntary activities.
- Young people who have attained higher education volunteer more than those with lower educational qualification. The above finding was affirmed through the data collected from the field that eighty percent of the respondents are graduates and above.
- Respondents from low economic background are equally participating in voluntary works as compared with the higher economic background. But the study points out that there is very less participants from the lowest category, respondents with family annual income less than 1 lakh. There are fewer participants from this section as the young people from this group have other responsibilities which may include earning to sustain their family.
- The study shows that people volunteer more in the formal sector than in the non-formal sector. As majority of the respondents have attained higher education, they want their services to be structured and organised.
- It is established from the study through a chi square test that there is a significant relationship between the gender of the respondents and the selection of voluntary sector. Voluntary sectors are divided into formal and non-formal sector where the formal sector is organised and structured and the non-formal vice versa. The inference from the study tells us that gender plays an important role in opting from the two sectors.
- Volunteerism allows young people to engage in meaningful and charitable activities. It is found from the study that the mainstream of the respondents do not get any monetary aid or stipend for their selfless act. However, twenty-eight percent of the respondents said that they get a small amount as stipends for the work they do.
- The study tells us that students comprise the majority of the volunteers. The success of government initiated programs in schools and colleges like NSS, NYKS, NCC, Red Cross etc. are responsible for this huge number of involvement by the students. The second highest number of volunteers is employed youths because they are not looking for any monetary benefits from rendering their services.

#### 5.2.2. Limitations of Volunteering:

- The study has revealed that families in Kohima are very supportive when it comes to charitable works as none of the volunteers mentioned that their families restricted them from volunteering. Voluntary activities can be time consuming and it leaves very less time for other activities. The study confirmed this statement as almost half of the respondents said it restricts them from other leisure activities. The study also showed that

volunteers find very less time to bond with their friends and families when they indulge in charitable activities.

#### 5.2.3. Motivation to Volunteer:

- The study tells us that people volunteer because it allows them to learn new and important things. People volunteer because they are genuinely concerned about helping the less fortunate while at the same time helping others gives them satisfaction and pleasure. There are several other factors which motivate a person to volunteer. It has been found that many people volunteer due to pressure from their family. The finding from the study tells us that people volunteer to network. Volunteering gives people a platform to meet people, make new friends and acquaintances. Peers are always very influential and people volunteer for certain causes because their friends also share the same value with them. Volunteering helps a person gain confidence and experience. Therefore, the volunteers in Kohima volunteer to get these added benefits. Young people are said to be agents of change. The findings of the study tell us that young people really stand for this statement and believe they can bring change in the society, though their deeds and actions may be small.
- The inference from the study tells us that age plays an important role in motivating a volunteer to volunteer in Kohima. From the study it is ascertained that the younger age groups are volunteering more in order to enhance their career prospects. They are also seen to be highly motivated to do a noble cause out of personal interest where they want to make the society a better place and also to serve the people.

#### 5.2.4. Attitude towards Volunteering:

- The approach of majority of the volunteers in Kohima towards volunteerism is that of a very pleasing experience. It is a win-win situation for everyone involved as volunteering is a journey where the volunteers not only get to help people but also develop themselves through this self-exploration journey and experiences learnt in the field.
- Most of the volunteers in Kohima are of the same opinion that assisting others in need is a very wonderful experience, leaving no respondents who disagree with it. Volunteerism is centred on the feel good factor. The outlook of the young volunteers in Kohima towards volunteerism is that of a positive nature as it involves being useful and contributing towards the development of the greater good.
- None of the volunteers in Kohima see Volunteering as a waste of time because they feel that it is a very important experiential learning for the persons involved. However, a minuscule portion of the respondents neither agree nor disagree that it is a waste of time. This leads the researcher to conclude that they are not sure about what they are doing, hence the neutrality as they are not aware of whether their actions are having a positive impact or not.
- The volunteers in Kohima have shown us that they are indeed reaping the harvests of their hard work as most of them have claimed to have gained new skills as a result of their volunteering because they have understood the objective behind their volunteering and how they are making a change. At the same time a tiny section of them refuse to either agree or disagree with the statement because they are not sure of their goals; and by investing their time in volunteering what they expect to gain in return.
- Majority of the volunteers in Kohima say that volunteering places them in situations where they are required to come up with fresh perspectives to problems and this pushes them to perform in tense situations where they learn invaluable experiences which they can add to their resumes. It is clear from the findings of the study that volunteer programmes exposes young people to areas of work that they may be interested in, develops their skills through training and on the job learning, and connects them with opportunities and networks which can

facilitate the ability of youth to access decent work opportunities. A small section of volunteers choose to remain neutral on the statement because they are unsure of what they want out of volunteering and some are yet to identify what they have learned.

- All of the volunteers in Kohima agree that young people should be taught about the importance of helping others. They agree that sooner or later everyone needs help and it is only when we need help that we realize the importance of helping others in need. Therefore young people must be taught about why it is good to help others.
- Respondents from Kohima are of the opinion that helping others not only assists the receiver with his problems, but by helping the needy, they feel at peace because helping a person in need brings contentment and they feel good about themselves, thereby giving them calm and peace.
- When asked about their opinion about helping others, the volunteers in Kohima have provided mixed responses. The study tells us that majority of the respondents disagree that helping people does more harm than good because at the end of the day everyone needs and deserves help. However, a sizeable amount of volunteers feel that helping does more harm because people cling to easy ways of getting what they want and so they are left helpless when there is no one to assist them with their problems.
- The volunteers in Kohima enthusiastically agree that helping the poorest of the poor/disadvantaged is the right choice in volunteerism because as we have seen earlier, they agree that helping others is wonderful and none of them feel that by helping the needy, they are wasting time.
- Another rousing approval from the volunteers in Kohima who feel that by contributing their time, they will make the society a better place. They understand the concept of invest and return and so they are confident that whatever efforts that go in to helping the society will indeed bring change and progress as a reward.
- Most of the volunteers in Kohima believe that other people deserve their time and help because Kohima being a closely knitted community, everyone is either directly or indirectly dependent on each other.
- The bulk of respondents from Kohima acknowledge that lack of participation in community service will cause severe damage to our society because they trust that progress doesn't come all at once but by the continued effort and struggle of every individual who is part of the community.

#### 5.2.5. Positive Youth Development:

- A majority of the volunteers in Kohima have claimed that volunteering has changed their self-perception and that they feel more positive in their outlook which has in turn helped them to critically analyze and manage their personal issues and conflicts. Not only that, respondents have brought to light that volunteering has improved their self-esteem and worth and are now able to positively take feedbacks from others on their performance and work style. The respondents have expressed that volunteering is a two way street where the helper is helping everyone including himself on the path to stability and prosperity for the community.
- The volunteers in Kohima have said that they are now able to work better in a team and at same time also take the initiative and lead their team as a direct result of volunteering. The respondents have stated that through volunteering, they have been put into contact with an array of different people with different needs where they have been made to work out solutions together with other volunteers as a team or as individuals to come up with new ideas and enthusiasm to drive themselves and their team.
- Most of the volunteers in Kohima have stated that volunteering has changed their earlier beliefs, views and stereotypes about social issues and disadvantaged groups positively and that they

have started helping and supporting others in difficult circumstances directly or indirectly. At the same time, the volunteers have also confessed that volunteering has helped them to better relate with the issues and communities with whom their organizations work with. To support their claims, the volunteers have said that since volunteering puts them in various situations where they have to connect with people from different backgrounds, they learn more about people as individuals and not as a part of a group or sect, thereby helping the volunteers to relate better with the individuals and help each other progress.

- Finally, there is no doubt that volunteers in Kohima extend a helping hand since they are motivated to do something good. From the present study it is found that after volunteering their drive to contribute to their community has seen an impressive growth and they are fueled by the desire to give something worthwhile good for the well-being of the community.

#### 5.3. SUGGESTIONS:

In order to ensure that many more young people have the opportunity to participate in well-managed voluntary programmes, a range of actions must be taken by national governments and civil society organisations in strategic partnership with the private sector, as well as bodies in the international community.

##### 5.3.1. Recommendations to governments:

Ensure that national policy frameworks and the appropriate legislation are in place to guide the direction, planning and resource allocation for programmes that support youth volunteering, protect the rights of young volunteers and foster youth leadership. In this regard it is important to actively engage with young people in the development and implementation of such policy frameworks.

Make provision for the dedication of financial and human resources to youth volunteering strategies and structures within village/ community budgeting cycles and processes.

Ensure that where volunteering strategies and structures are in place, they are youth friendly i.e. they are easily accessible, of interest to young people and respond to their needs. In this regard partnerships with civil society organisations and the private sector are considered essential.

Put in place a national programme to develop awareness of youth volunteering for peace and development and to raise the profile of youth leadership in this regard.

Ensure appropriate mechanisms for the accreditation of youth volunteering. Encourage institutions to recognise accredited volunteering experience as a basis for young people to gain access to opportunities for further learning, career development, employment, micro-finance and other mechanisms for fostering their development, leadership and self-reliance

##### 5.3.3. Recommendations to civil society organisations and institutions

Launch advocacy and awareness programmes to generate a supportive environment for youth volunteering for peace and development.

Develop networking opportunities between volunteer-involving organisations to share information and good practice, and facilitate training for volunteer management and capacity building.

Establish mechanisms to document and disseminate the positive contribution of youth volunteering in national, regional and international forums.

Empower community-based organisations to support volunteers. Develop partnerships with private sector organizations to ensure that young people are better able to access work opportunities

once they have completed their volunteer experience. This may involve sensitizing companies to the needs and contributions of young volunteers.

### Recommendations to all UN agencies and international bodies

Youth volunteering must be promoted at the highest levels to ensure that national governments and regional bodies facilitate greater access to volunteering opportunities for young people. In this regard international organizations can:

- i. Promote the role of young people in meeting the MDGs.
- ii. Take note of the needs and contributions of young people as a particular target group in all policies and strategies developed at the international level.
- iii. Actively involve young volunteers in their programmes.

### 5.4. CONCLUSION:

The world's attention is increasingly shifting to young people as a force for social change and progress. When volunteerism facilitates the inclusion of youth in development processes, it can enhance social inclusion by strengthening the bonds between young people and their communities, giving those volunteers a feeling of belonging to and respect for their society. Volunteerism can complement formal education by teaching young people practical skills that enhance their employability. While it is essential not to see volunteering solely as preparation for employment, volunteer programmes, if well managed, can improve the career prospects and progression of young people by enhancing their job-related skills from resolving conflicts to evaluation and management, problem solving and leadership skills. Volunteer programmes introduce young people to a range of professions, enabling them to experience different types of work as well as connecting them with social networks through which they may be able to access bursaries or work opportunities.

Just as young people are able to develop a sense of autonomy and confidence through the volunteer experience, they are able to demonstrate their ability to make a difference and to lead others towards the future they envision. This increases their involvement in issues that currently impact their lives and it will continue to do so in the future, and serves as one indicator of how they are starting to function in the mainstream and earning their place in the society as genuine and concerned individuals collectively capable of bringing changes to all aspects of the society.

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