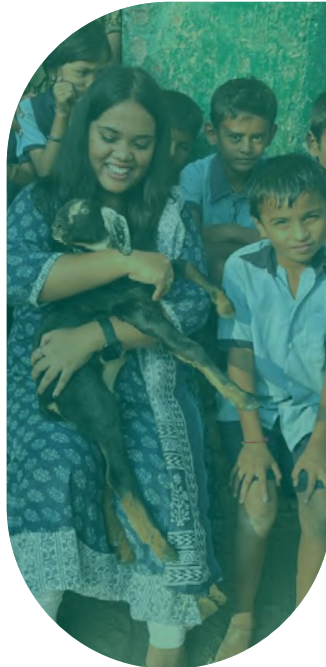
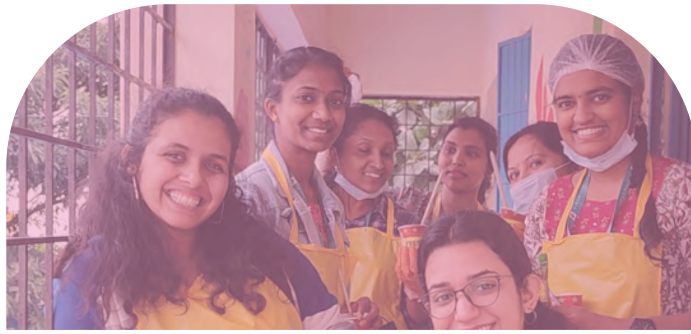


TATA GROUP STUDY: SERVICE THAT SHAPES US

How Tata Volunteers Strengthen Culture, Achieve Impact,
and Transform Themselves





**We listened to
6,745 Voices
not to report
hours, but to
understand
meaning.**

Foreword

Volunteering has long been a lived expression of the Tata Group's values, shaped by generations of colleagues who have consistently stepped forward to commit their time and skills in service of society.

As one of the global leaders in corporate volunteering, the Group's milestone of over 10 million volunteering hours (FY2025) reflects both scale and sustained participation. We are delighted to share that this study was strategically undertaken to add a vital dimension to that narrative—one that listens closely to employee voices and explores how volunteering is experienced, enabled, and internalised across the Group.

By moving beyond metrics to meaning, the research offers rich insights into how volunteering shapes individual identity, strengthens organisational culture, and reinforces the sense of purpose that defines the Tata ethos. I strongly believe the findings of this study will inform the next phase of our volunteering journey—helping us continue to balance scale with depth, and participation with purpose.

I would like to place on record my sincere appreciation to Dr. Chandrika Parmar, Director – Development of Corporate Citizenship (DoCC), S P Jain Institute of Management and Research, for anchoring this study with rigour, sensitivity, and insight. Her work brings clarity and reflection to a subject that lies at the heart of who we are as a Group. I am also deeply grateful to the thousands of Tata colleagues who generously shared their experiences and perspectives, making this study both authentic and meaningful.

I encourage colleagues across the Tata Group and beyond to draw from this report, as we continue to deepen our shared commitment to inclusive, impactful, and sustained volunteering.

Chacko Thomas
Group Chief Sustainability Officer,
Tata Sons

Acknowledgement

The Tata Sustainability Group would like to place on record its sincere appreciation to Dr.Chandrika Parmar, Director – Development of Corporate Citizenship (DoCC), SPJain Institute of Management and Research, for conducting this study.

We also acknowledge the valuable contributions of the core group members who played a pivotal role in conceptualising the study : Sireesha Chandana (Indian Hotels Company), Foram Nagori (Tata Power Group), Supratik Bhattacharya (Tata Consultancy Services), and Rajgopal (TataIQ). Their insights enriched the framing of the research.

Our gratitude to Sourav Roy (Tata Steel), Vinod Kulkarni (Tata Motors), Firuza D'Silva (Trent), Harish Kulkarni (Tata Communications), and Anushree Goel (TajSATS) for their support which strengthened the study through their perspectives and inputs.

The Tata Sustainability Group team comprising of Shrirang Dhavale, Gauri Rajadhyaksha, Trupti Prabhu and Aparna Shukla anchored this study.

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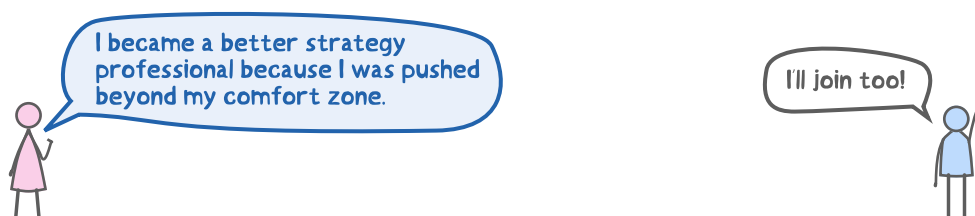
Executive Summary

Tata group employees contributed 10.87 million hours towards volunteering for a variety of social causes and per capita volunteering hours (PCVH) of 10.67 in FY 2025—underscoring the depth and scale of engagement across the Group. This report builds on that foundation—not as an audit of metrics, but as an inquiry into meaning. It explores how volunteering is experienced on the ground by Tata employees, what motivates them, where frictions arise, and how leadership, culture, and design influence the volunteer journey. Drawing on 6,745 responses to a survey cascaded across the group and interviews, it aligns with global frameworks that call for evaluating volunteering not just by scale, but by its relational, transformative, and participatory potential. In doing so, it seeks to offer a textured, voice-rich understanding of how Tata’s volunteering spirit is lived, experienced and reimaged.

Of the 6,745 Tata employees who responded to the survey — 3,207 had volunteered through the Tata corporate volunteering programme, whose voices represent the aspirations, motivations and meaning employees attach to it. It was equally noteworthy that 3,538 Tata employees enthusiastically participated in the survey sharing their challenges and recommending ways to strengthen the Tata corporate volunteering programme, despite not having volunteered themselves.

For some, volunteering predates Tata, and was a continuation of the legacy inherited from family or from organization. The largest groups of volunteers and non-volunteers are between the ages of 25-35, a paradox that signals both success and opportunity. Among the volunteers who responded, 42% began volunteering after they joined Tata, signaling the impact of Tata culture while 58% started volunteering before joining Tata Group indicating that the Tata corporate volunteering programme had successfully retained those who have a volunteering habit. More than 82% of volunteers and 75% of all said volunteering felt like “a Tata thing to do.” That phrase echoed across the responses like a heartbeat—volunteering wasn’t just encouraged; it was expected, inherited, and deeply felt, doing justice to their claim, “It is who we are”.

Motivations for volunteering were varied but consistent: responsibility to give back, the fulfilment of seeing change, the sense of purpose it brings, and the alignment with Tata values. Participation in the Tata corporate volunteering programme is systematically and strategically enabled by offering time-off, extension of continuous and variety of meaningful opportunities, and recognition. Volunteering was also nudged by organizational culture: 32% were inspired by their leaders who they perceived as exemplars, and another 58.8% by peers. Nearly one in four volunteers involved their family members in the volunteering activities, carrying volunteering into homes and across generations.



The impact of leadership was also clear. When managers volunteered, others followed. When peers encouraged each other, participation soared. Volunteering spread not through mandates, but through modeling—through the quiet power of example. Among those who volunteered, 78% reported better collaboration in teams, 73% reported leadership development and most significantly, 81% reported volunteering improved their empathy, patience and humanness. Volunteers attested to becoming less transactional, more reflective, more attuned to others.

At the same time 47% of those who responded to the survey and did volunteer, cited various barriers to volunteering including lack of time, less awareness, misalignment to existing programmes, or perceived access. Some respondents sounded a voice of caution about event-driven or performative models. These voices didn't reject the culture – they appealed for deeper, more sustained, inclusive opportunities.

The lessons are clear. Connect volunteering to leadership and growth, Engage the employees early in their Tata journey, Transition from episodic to continuous and more impactful volunteering opportunities and highlight the role of leaders and families as cultural multipliers. The survey reinforced that volunteering at Tata was not only about hours logged and events held. Volunteering is lived in identity, in culture, and in legacy. It remains a sweet spot where personal values and the organizational Tata ethos move together. Corporate volunteering at Tata is not a checkbox, but a compass.





CHAPTER

01

Introduction

Over the past decade, something quietly powerful had been unfolding at the heart of the Tata Group—not in boardrooms or balance sheets, but in classrooms, villages, shelters, and city streets. It was the stories of over hundred thousand Tata employees, who beyond their job roles, chose to volunteer their time and skills for the benefit of communities in need. This exploratory study began with a question: What does corporate volunteering mean to Tata employees

Employees often describe the outcome of volunteering as-

What does corporate volunteering mean to Tata employees?



Cultural Depth

The first objective of the study was to capture the depth and distinctiveness of the Tata Group's volunteering culture. This involved a close analysis of the collective values, beliefs, and attitudes that drive social responsibility and community involvement, as well as an assessment of how deeply volunteering was institutionalized within the Tata identity, governance, and everyday practices.



Lived Experience

The second objective was to illuminate the lived experiences, motivations, and perceptions of employees who participated in volunteering initiatives. This included exploring personal fulfilment, skill-building opportunities, and social connections that inspired participation, alongside employee perceptions of how volunteering programs are designed and implemented.



Impact Evaluation

Finally, the study sought to provide an empirical evaluation of the impact of volunteering on both employees and the organization. This included a quantitative measurement of cultural embedding, how thoroughly volunteering was ingrained in the organizational ethos—as well as the behavioral outcomes associated with participation, such as engagement, job satisfaction, and overall well-being.

Through this integrated approach, the study aimed to generate actionable insights into the continued evolution of Tata corporate volunteering programs and employee engagement strategy.





**Volunteering is not just
service—it's identity work.**

This study adopted a six-step methodology to rigorously investigate the corporate volunteering ecosystem within the Tata Group.

1. Documents Review

The process began with a thorough review of Tata internal documents e.g. the We Engage – Annual Volunteering Report. This foundational step established an understanding of the organization’s policies, history, and existing practices relating to corporate volunteering and employee engagement.

2. Literature Review on Corporate Volunteering:

Next, an in-depth literature review was conducted, consulting both academic publications and industry reports. This phase provided a conceptual framework and identified emerging trends and key challenges in the field.

3. Interviews with Tata Group Leaders:

Qualitative insights were simultaneously gathered through interviews with 13 senior leaders across the Tata Group. A focus group discussion was also conducted. These conversations elicited strategic perspectives and contextual knowledge, ensuring that the research addressed the unique features of volunteering culture.

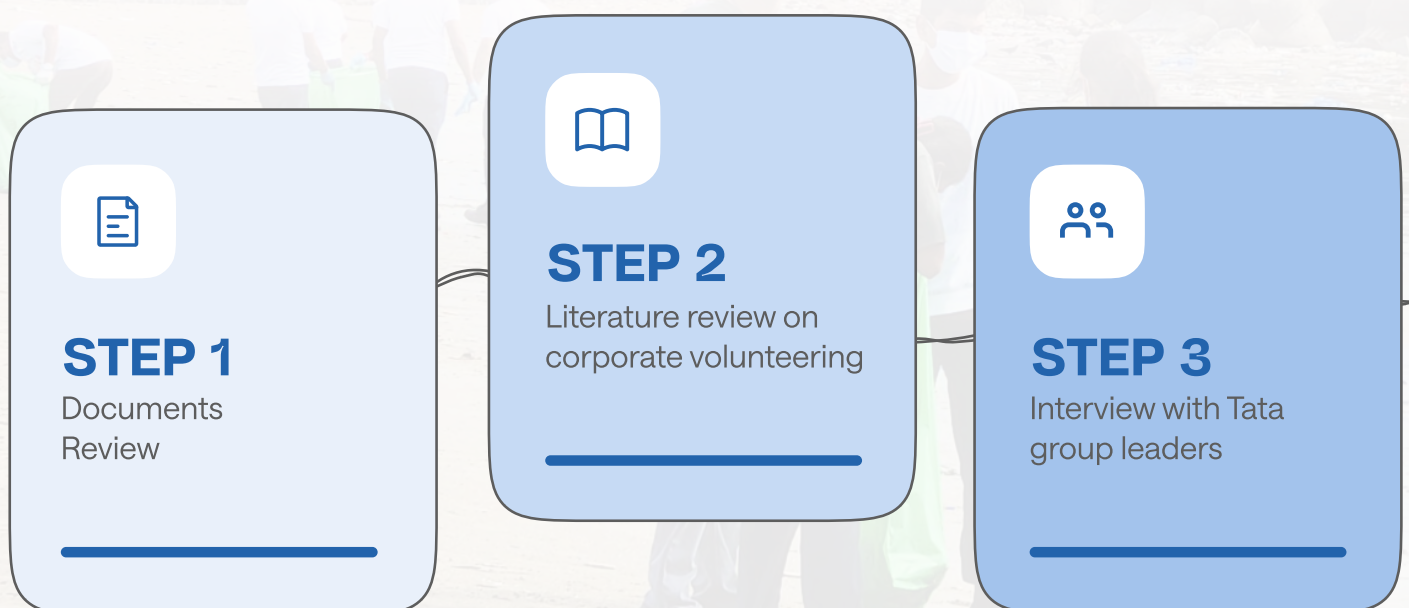


Illustration 1.1 Methods adopted for survey

4. Co-Creating a Survey Tool:

Drawing on evidence from the previous stages, the team involved in the study collaboratively developed a survey tool. This participatory approach ensured the survey content was relevant, contextualized, fine-tuned, and aligned with the study's objectives.

5. Group-Wide Cascade of Survey:

The finalized survey was distributed across Tata companies in a coordinated, group-wide cascade. This strategy promoted extensive reach, enabling input from a wide and representative cross-section of employees. A period of one month was spent in cascading the survey

6. Data Collection from Tata employees:

The final step involved large-scale data collection, with 6,745 Tata employees from 54 Group companies spanning various sectors completing the survey. 59% respondents are largely early-career (under 5 years in Tata) and male-skewed (76% men, 24% women). Nearly half (47%) have volunteered, showing wide reach but also a clear opportunity to expand. Volunteering cuts across age and tenure, positioning it as a Group-wide cultural lever. This robust sample size provided a comprehensive quantitative basis for analysing participation rates, perceptions, and impacts of volunteering across the Group.

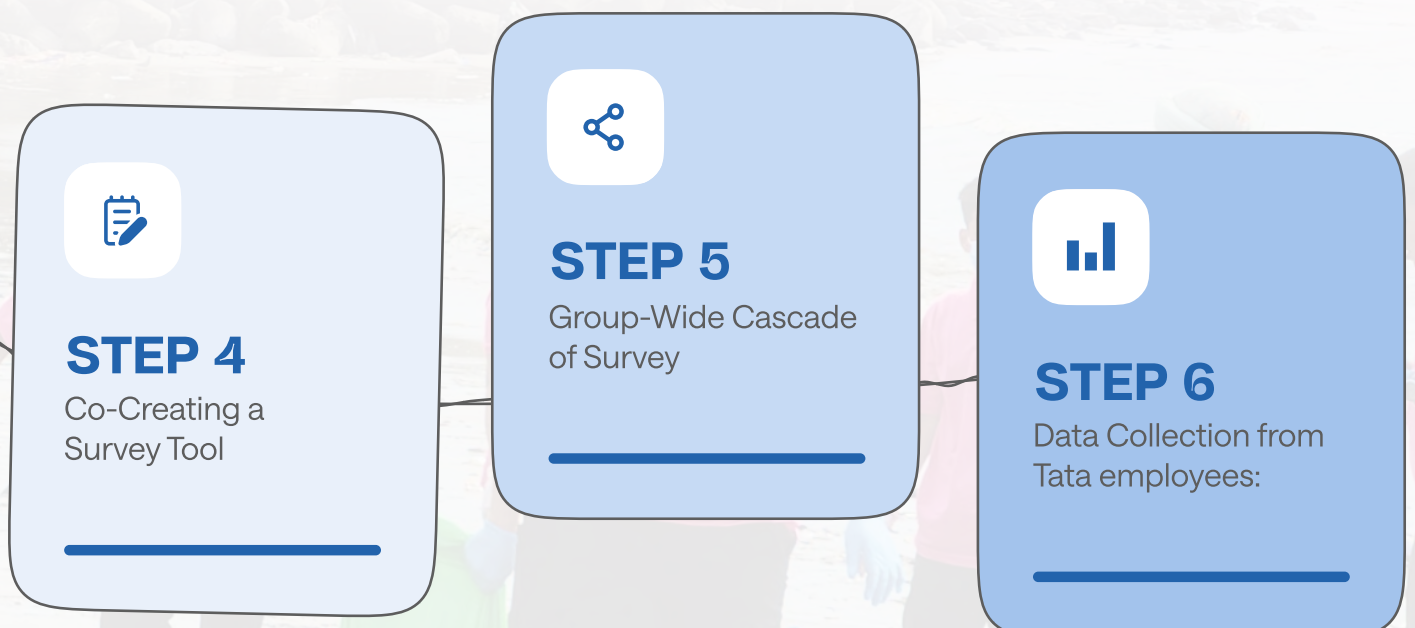


Illustration 1.1 Methods adopted for survey



CHAPTER

02

**Respondents'
& Volunteers'
Profile**

The respondent base for this study comprised a diverse cross-section of Tata employees drawn from across companies, roles, and tenure bands, united by the shared experience of being part of the Group’s corporate volunteering culture. In asking “Who is the respondent? Who is the volunteer?”, this section explores the demographic and motivational contours of those who participated in the survey, revealing patterns in age, gender, and engagement that shape Tata’s ethos of service. It seeks to move beyond generic labels, presenting not just statistics but lived identities—how volunteering is activated and sustained, and how it is experienced as both a personal journey and a collective narrative within the Tata universe.

The survey received 6,745 responses from Tata employees across 54 Group companies. Of these respondents, 3,207 employees (47%) reported volunteering, while 3,538 employees (53%) had not volunteered. In addition, the study analysed 1,532 coded qualitative responses describing barriers and experiences of volunteering, drawn from narrative comments provided by respondents. 390 respondents identified themselves as part of top management

Volunteers Vs Non-Volunteers Profile (n=6,745)



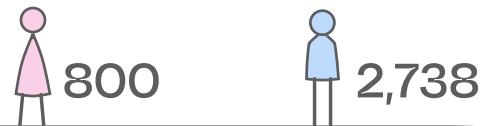
41 yrs
Average Age

38 yrs
Average Age

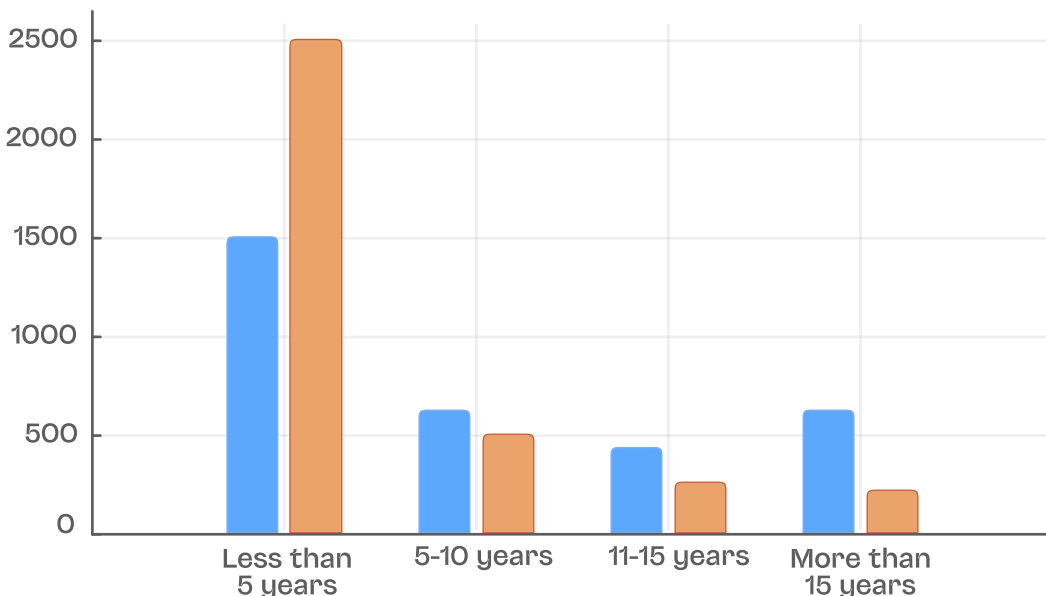
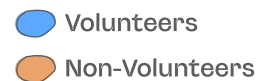
Gender Split



Gender Split



Years in Tata Group



Total: 6,745 (3,208 volunteers)

The Female Cohort

The Male Cohort

1,568
Total (23%)

771
Volunteers

49.2% Rate

5,177
Total (77%)

2,436
Volunteers

47.1% Rate

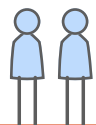
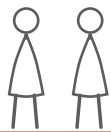


Illustration 2.2: Respondents and Volunteers

Women constitute 23% of survey respondents and show a slightly higher volunteering rate than men. Within the respondent sample, 49.2% of women respondents reported volunteering compared with 47.1% of male respondents. Later in the study motivation responses also suggest an emphasis on purpose and responsibility among women respondents.

Among survey respondents, 395 identified themselves as belonging to top management positions. Within this group, 210 respondents (53%) reported participating in volunteering activities, indicating that volunteering engagement extends into senior leadership levels. The gender distribution among senior leadership respondents reflects the broader workforce pattern, with 319 men and 76 women identifying as part of top management. Among those who volunteered, 175 were men and 35 were women, corresponding to participation rates of 54.9% among male leaders and 46.1% among female leaders within this leadership cohort. A significant proportion of these leaders also have long tenures within the Tata Group, with 44% having spent more than 15 years in the organization. This participation among experienced leaders reinforces the role of leadership modelling in sustaining Tata's culture of service.

771 1,568



We engage more!

6,745

But we have the numbers



5,177 2,436

The following table examines volunteering participation among respondents who identified themselves as belonging to top management, highlighting patterns by gender and tenure. In terms of experience, the largest share of volunteering leaders have more than 15 years of professional experience, indicating strong engagement among long-tenured leaders. At the same time, participation is also visible among relatively newer leaders, suggesting that volunteering engagement spans both legacy leadership and emerging leadership cohorts within the Tata Group.

Gender Number of Volunteers Percentage

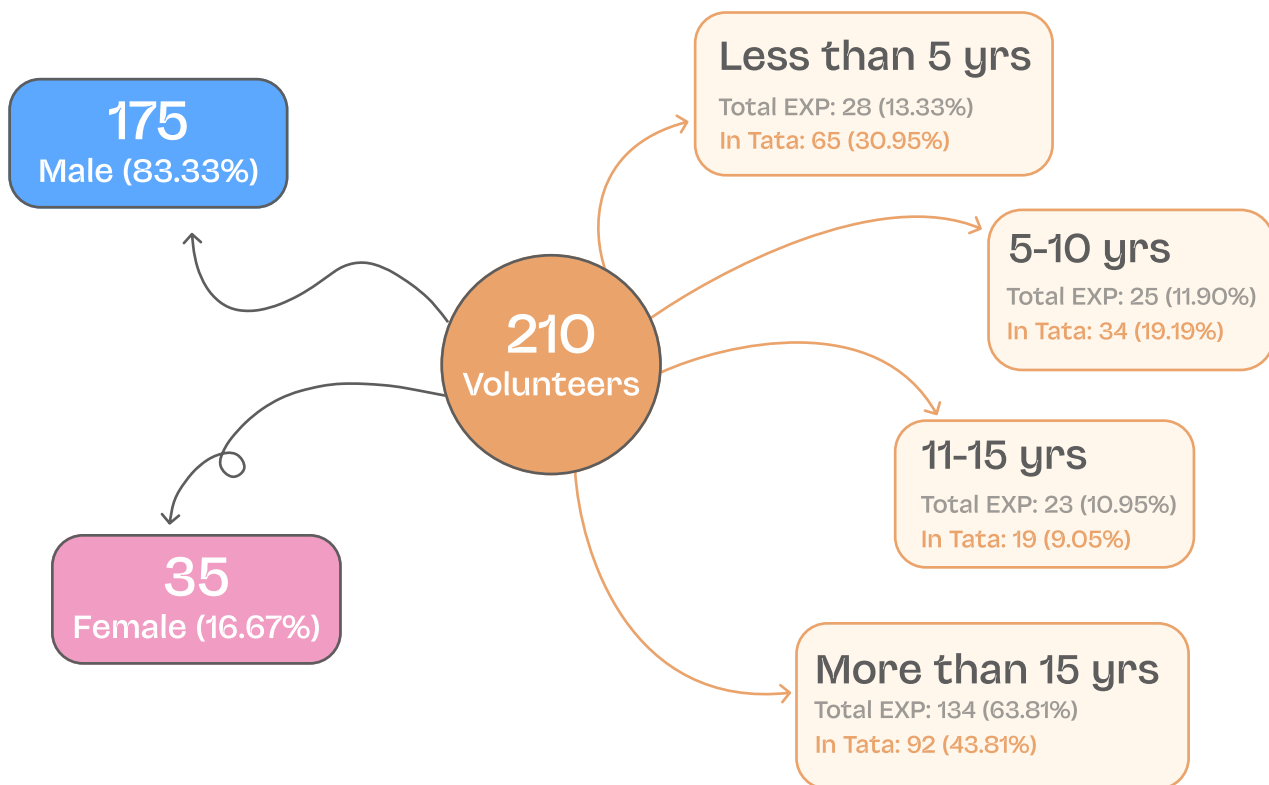


Diagram 2.3 and 2.4: Profile Top Management Volunteers



● Regularly ● Seasonally ● Occasionally ● Rarely

Less than 5 yrs



5-10 years



11-15 years



More than 15 years



Illustration 2.5



Image Source: Company Name

Volunteering participation (illustration 2.5) is distributed across employees with varying tenure at Tata. While early-career employees form the largest share of volunteers, engagement is also evident among mid-career and long-tenured employees, with most participation occurring occasionally or during specific initiatives rather than on a monthly basis.

Key Insights

- **Tenure**

Many regular volunteers are in their first 5 years at Tata, but participation is also strong among mid-tenure employees (5–10 years), showing that volunteering is both an onboarding anchor and a mid-career cultural reinforcement.

- **Younger workforce base:**

Respondents were concentrated in their 20s and 30s, with fewer older employees. Yet, the culture of social responsibility pervades across Tata employees of all age groups and tenure.

- **Gender skewed but higher women respondent engagement:**

While the sample was male-heavy (76% men, 24% women), women respondents showed a slightly higher likelihood of volunteering compared to men. (49% vs 47%).

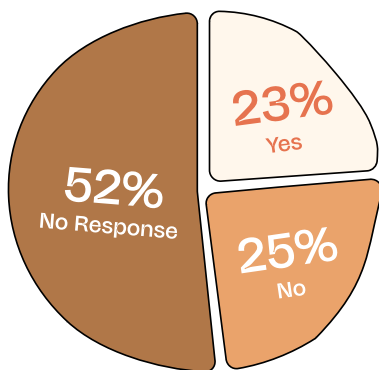
- **Leadership participation is significant:**

395 respondents identified themselves as part of top management. 210 from this number were regular volunteers.



- **Volunteering engagement among senior leaders:**
Present across both long-tenured Tata employees and relatively newer leaders, reflecting participation across different leadership cohorts.
- **Participation split:**
Nearly half of respondents (47%) had volunteered, while 53% had not, highlighting both reach and growth potential.
- **Tata culture triggered first-time volunteers**
20% of total respondents who began volunteering only after joining the Tata group suggesting the institutional environment activated them.
- **Tata corporate volunteering programmes continued to retain**
Those with a prior volunteering habit (27% of respondents) nearly all of those who volunteered before joining the organization continued to volunteer. The culture at Tata doesn't just attract socially conscious individuals, it actively cultivates them. Volunteering becomes contagious, a shared rhythm of care and contribution

Family participation in volunteering



“ **23.5% of volunteers** who responded to the survey have involved their families in company volunteering activities. ”

Illustration 2.6 Family involved in volunteering

Insights:

Corporate volunteering at Tata is not only an individual pursuit but increasingly a collective family experience, which has strategic and cultural implications. 23.5% of volunteers who responded to the survey have involved their families in company volunteering activities. When families participate, the impact of volunteering extends from the workplace into the home, rooting Tata values in employees' personal lives and reinforcing shared social responsibility.

It also reflects both the depth and breadth of volunteering at Tata and suggests a strategic opportunity for enhancing engagement by amplifying family-friendly volunteer initiatives.



CHAPTER

03

**Enablers Of
Volunteering At
Tata**

Volunteering at Tata is made possible not only by employee motivation but by a carefully designed ecosystem of enablers that legitimizes and sustains participation. These enablers fall into two broad categories — structural and cultural — and their interplay is what transforms volunteering from a program into a lived culture.

Structural Support

Employees consistently identified time-off provisions as the single strongest catalyst. The assurance that volunteering can happen within sanctioned work time makes participation viable, especially for younger employees balancing professional and personal demands. Logistical support – transport and coordination – reduces friction and lowers the threshold for participation. Finally, recognition practices, from certificates to appreciation in team forums, reinforce that volunteering is not extracurricular but integral to Tata identity.

Enablers of Volunteering

Structural Enablers

Time-off provisions	Cited as the single strongest catalyst in open-ended mentions
Platforms (Tata Volunteering Week, ProEngage, Engage, Disaster Response, CVP)	Awareness strongly correlated with volunteering
Logistical support (transport, coordination)	Mentioned frequently in employee voices as reducing friction
Recognition (certificates, appreciation, team mentions)	Reinforces volunteering as integral to culture

Cultural Enablers

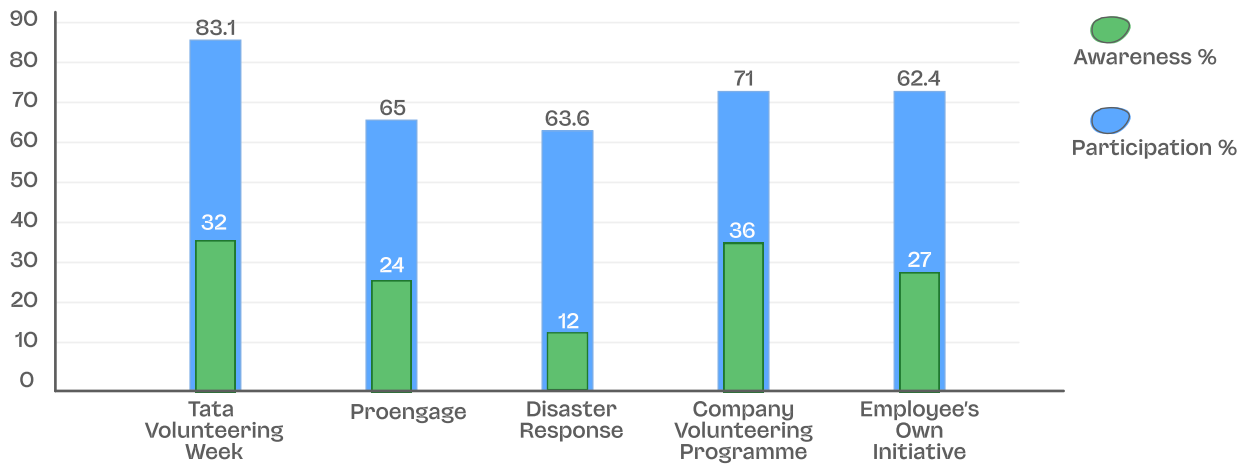
Leadership encouragement	55% of volunteers said leader encouragement mattered
Peer encouragement	59% of volunteers cited peer nudges as critical
Organizational culture	Repeatedly mentioned in narratives as "part of Tata's way of working"

Illustration 3.1

“ During a recent Tata ProEngage volunteering program, I was selected to mentor students at FEA, an NGO... A female student cried, expressing a deep connection... I felt I had made some impact in their life... ”

- Employee from Tata Advanced Systems

Awareness v/s Participation across Tata Volunteering Platforms



In other words, the presence of leaders who model volunteering and colleagues who normalize participation sends a powerful signal — this is what we do at Tata.

“ When our VP joined the cleanup drive with us, I felt it wasn't just allowed, it was encouraged. ”

Employees also describe volunteering as embedded in organizational culture, where the act is less about isolated initiatives and more about belonging to a values-driven community. Platforms such as Tata Volunteering Week, ProEngage further widen access, offering visibility and structured opportunities to Tata employees.

“ You can't say you are too busy to volunteer... ”



Photo Credit - Tata AIA

Tata Volunteering week	Widely known (83.1%), low individual quote presence; strong visibility, but low participation
Pro-Engage	Moderately known (64.6%) but provides most of the deep emotional impact narratives
CVP/EOI	Moderate awareness (60-70%) and moderate engagement

Awareness of platforms matters:

83% know Tata Volunteering Week, 71% know their company's CVP, ~65% know ProEngage. Awareness correlates strongly with participation

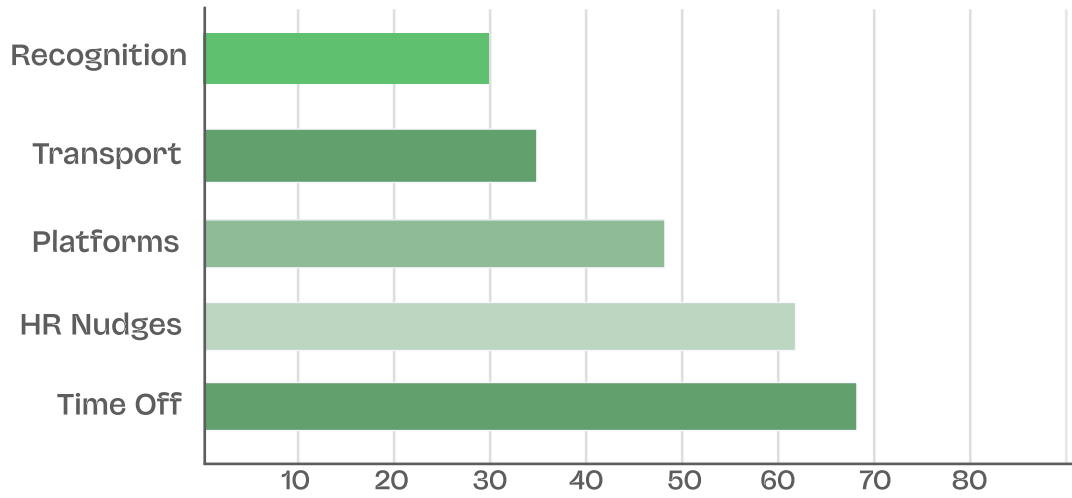
Top Management (Volunteers Engagement With Platforms)

Tata Volunteering Week	ProEngage	Volunteering for Disaster Response	Company Volunteering Programme (CVP)	Employees Own Initiatives (EOI)
204 (97.14%)	184 (87.62%)	171 (81.43%)	190 (90.48%)	179 (85.24%)

Senior leaders who volunteer engage across multiple volunteering platforms, with particularly high participation in collective initiatives such as Tata Volunteering Week (97%) and company volunteering programmes (90%). This pattern suggests that leadership participation often occurs through visible organizational initiatives, reinforcing the role of leaders in modelling and legitimizing volunteering within the Tata Group.

Taken together, these findings highlight a simple truth: **volunteering at Tata is legitimized by structure and energized by culture.** It is the alignment of policies, platforms, and recognition with the daily nudges of leaders and peers that sustains volunteering as a Group-wide ethos.

Enablers mentioned by Respondents (Illustration 5.3)





CHAPTER

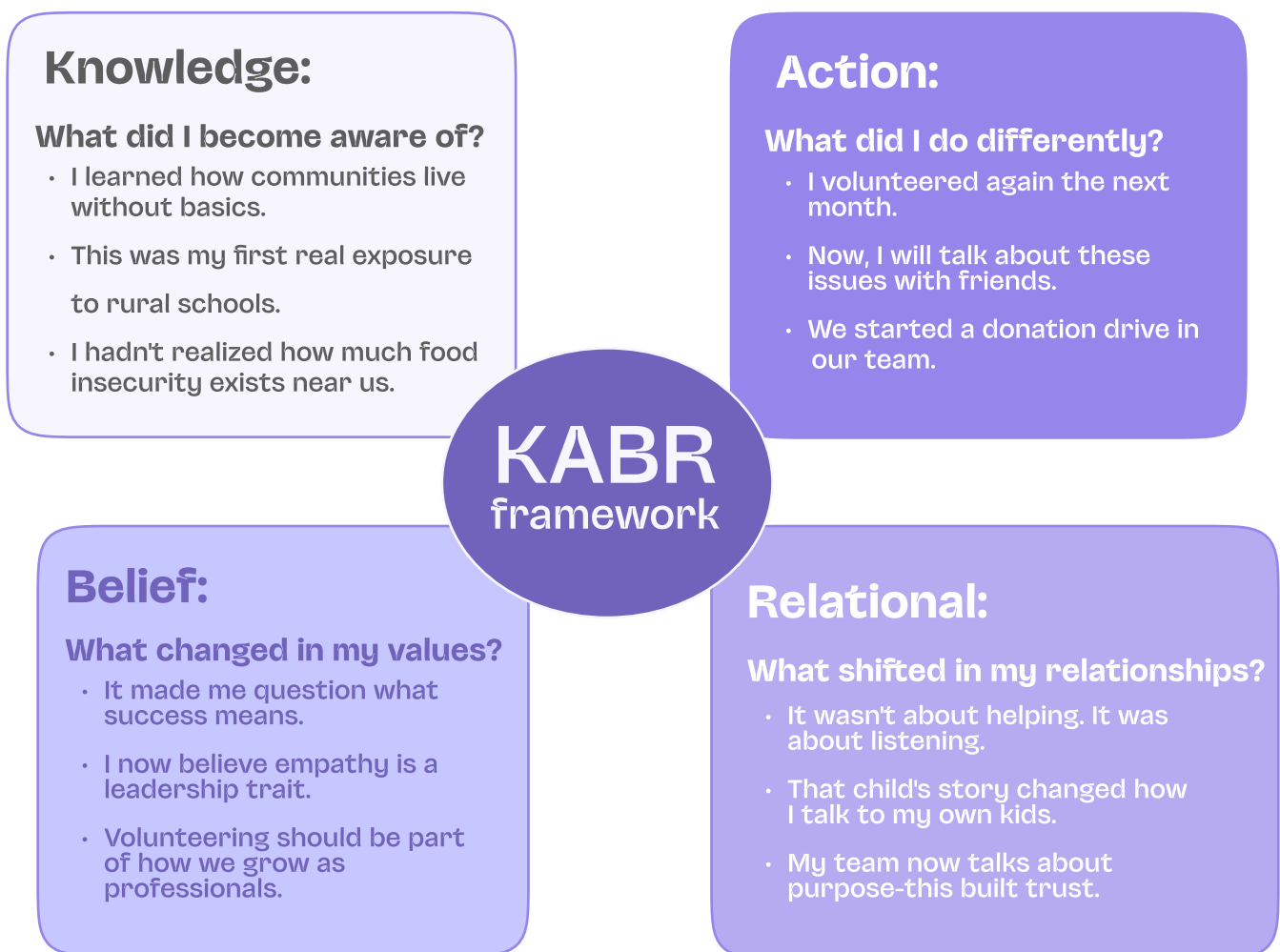
04

**Knowledge, Action, Belief,
And Relational Shifts:
Behavioral Insights**

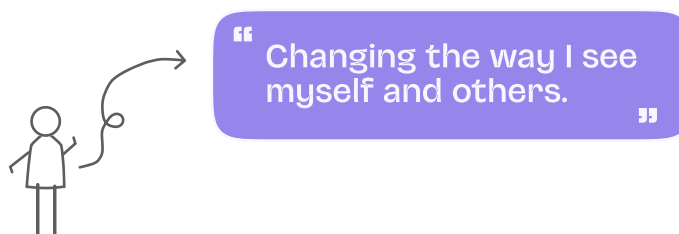
There is a recognition that there is personal sense of fulfillment with volunteering. The volunteering not just makes awareness about issues more acute but also leads to change in attitudes and behaviours. Having established what drives Tata employees to volunteer and the structural supports that enable their participation, it is equally important to examine the effect this engagement has - both at the personal and organizational level.

The insights in this section draw on both the quantitative survey findings and the qualitative narratives shared by respondents, allowing us to capture not only measurable shifts but also how employees describe the meaning of these experiences in their own words.

The KABR framework - Knowledge, Attitude, Behaviour, Relationships - provides a lens to understand these changes, moving from new awareness to new ways of being



Employees often describe the outcome of volunteering as-



Of the 6745 survey respondents - 3207 (47.5%) respondents who volunteered -

63% reported that volunteering had changed their personal behavior.

81% of volunteers reported increased empathy or emotional responsiveness.

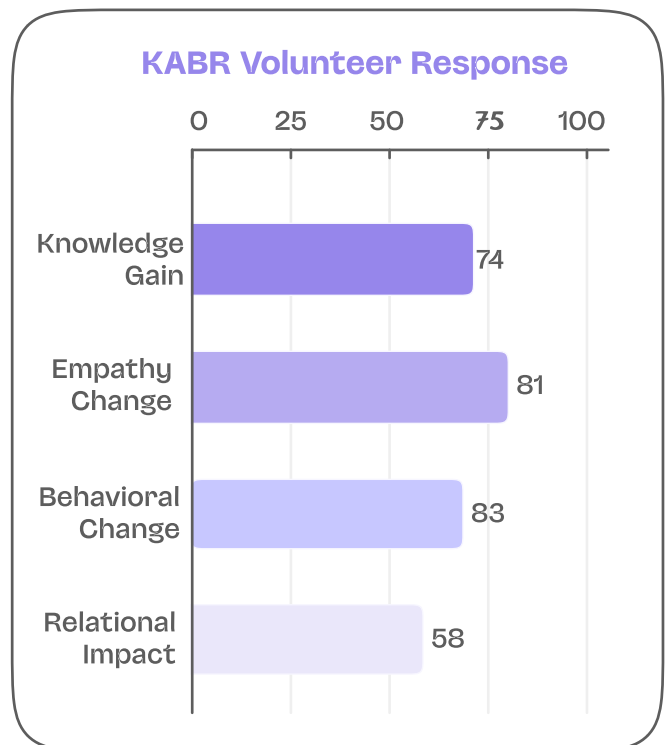
68% noted greater alignment between personal values and Tata's mission.

78% said volunteering improved their workplace interactions and collaboration.

78% of volunteers report on improved workplace collaboration.

65% of narrative responses referenced a sense of pride, responsibility, or character change.

73% observed enhanced leadership opportunities emerging through volunteering.



Voices from the Field:

Over **1,800** qualitative narrative responses captured reflective shifts in identity, professionalism, and meaning making, moving beyond "activity" to "alignment."



K-A-B-R Impact Breakdown

Volunteering as Identity and Meaning:

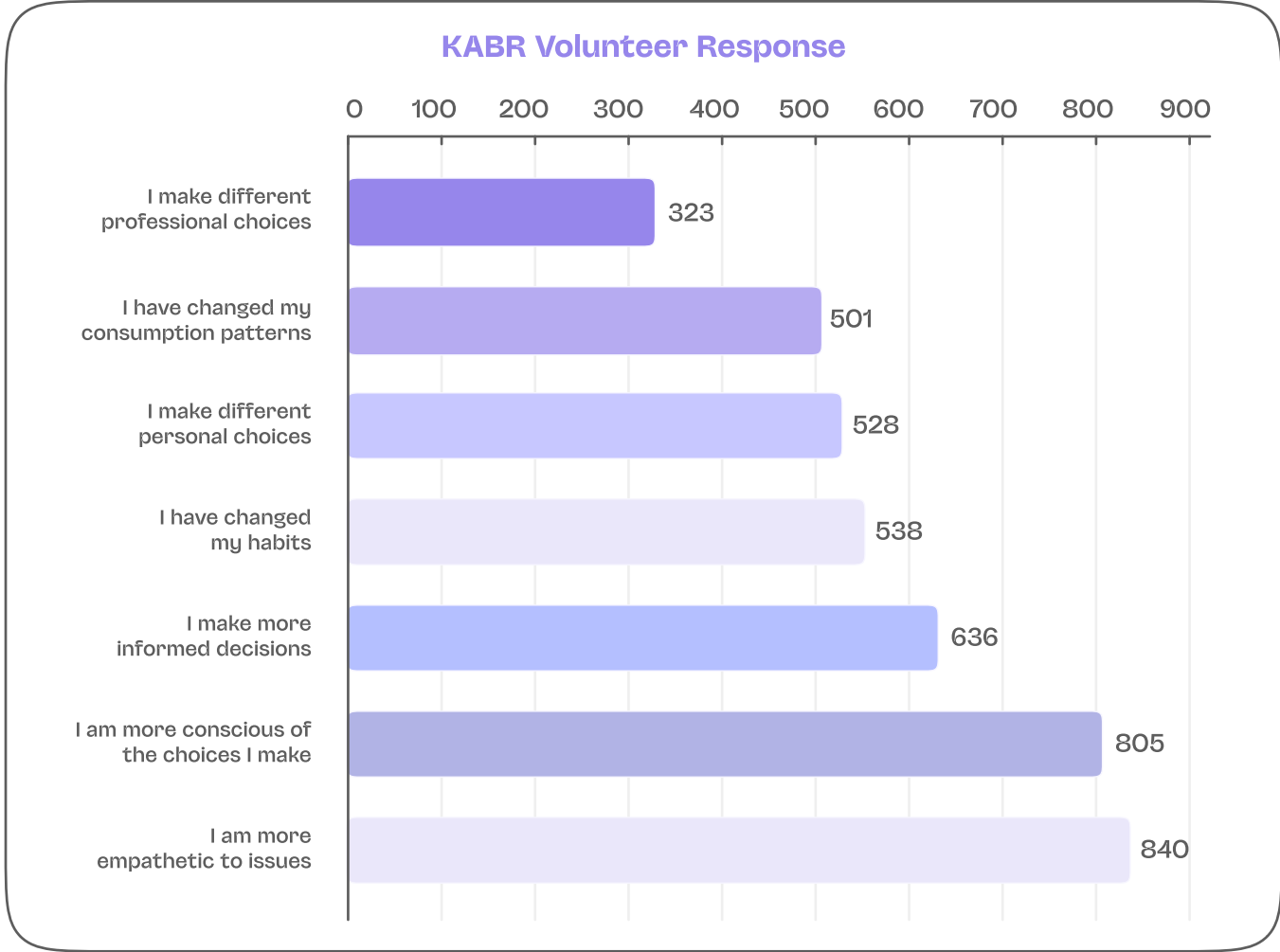
Volunteering at Tata is not an add-on. It is seen by many employees as central to their personal and professional identity. Time and again, employees across levels describe volunteering not as a corporate mandate but as “who we are.” Many frame volunteering as **legacy and belonging** carrying forward family traditions, embodying Tata’s values, and forming intergenerational identity continuity. Volunteers describe themselves as more empathetic, reflective, and connected, with quotes like:

These are some of the sentiments heard in the comments offered by the volunteers:



“ It made me less transactional. I think of people first now. ”

“ I listen better even in meetings. ”



Key Observations

- High Impact - Empathy and Consciousness:



“ I am more empathetic to issues (n=840)

I am more conscious of the choices I make (n=805)

These are the top outcomes. This indicates that the most significant influence of volunteering is psychological and attitudinal, fostering greater empathy and awareness.

”

- Moderate Impact - Decision-Making and Habit Change:

“ I make more informed decisions (n=636) ranks third, showing that participation also enhances critical thinking and awareness in decision-making. Habitual and personal-level shifts

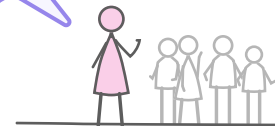
I have changed my habits (n=538)

I make different personal choices (n=528)

I have changed my consumption patterns (n=501)

form the mid-tier. These suggest behavioral spillover effects, though less prominent than attitudinal changes.

”



- Low Impact - Professional Choices:



“ I make different professional choices (n=323)

is the least reported outcome. This suggests that while volunteering influences personal values and lifestyle, it has a limited effect on career-related decisions.

”

75% of Tata volunteers said that volunteering changed their daily behaviour.



75% Yes

25% Not sure

“ I have become more conscious of waste, of kindness, of how I speak to support

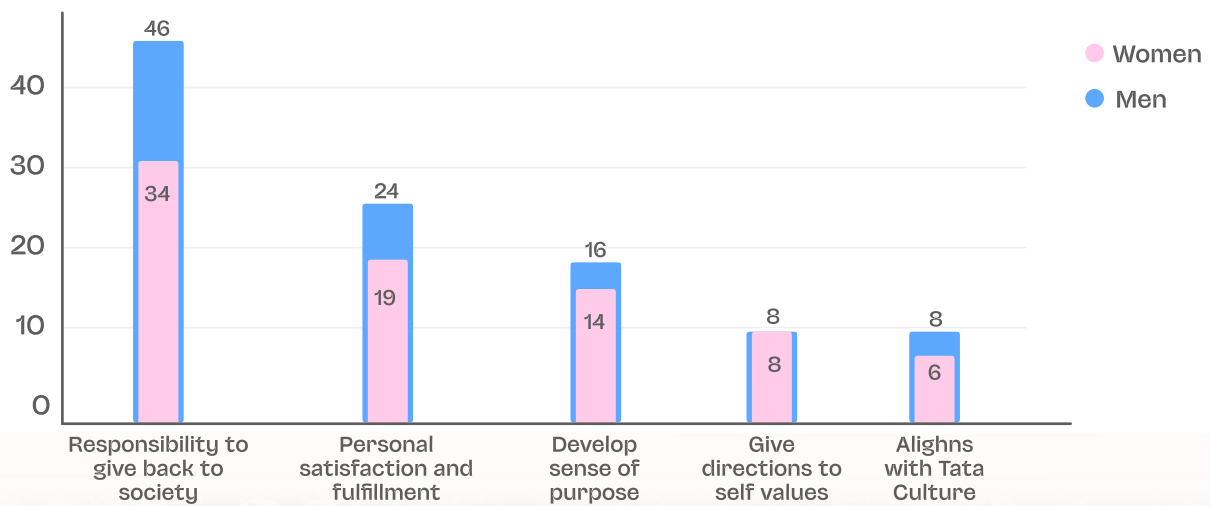
”

Interpretations:

The findings reveal that volunteering at the Tata Group has significant influence on employees' cultural orientation, with high empathy and awareness scores. At the behavioral level, employees demonstrate moderate shifts, such as changes in habits, personal choices, and consumption patterns, suggesting that volunteering encourages lifestyle transformations, though these are not yet widespread or consistent across the workforce. Motivation responses suggest an emphasis on purpose and responsibility among women respondents: for instance, 46 women cited "responsibility to give back to society" compared with 34 men, despite women representing a smaller share of the respondent base.

However, they also perceive a relatively low impact on professional trajectory, indicating that it may not have yet become a decisive factor in shaping employees' career trajectories within the company. But data also suggests that volunteering plays an important role in building peer culture, team cohesion and becomes an important cultural loop.

Number of respondents who identified a specific change



Additional Drivers: Fulfillment, Purpose, and Values Alignment

Beyond altruism, personal fulfillment is highlighted as a powerful motivator especially amongst women respondents.

Meaningful accomplishments: Many recall stories where their volunteering directly led to visible improvements, whether in project success or skills development. A clear sense of purpose emerged as a second motivator. Volunteering allows women to align daily action with larger ambitions or life goals, such as making a sustained social contribution or acting as a role model for others. Even amid demanding routines, this sense of purpose nurtures ongoing involvement.

Purpose-driven engagement: Volunteers report that the clarity of their social mission helps counteract fatigue and sustains them through busy cycles. Alignment with Tata's values is another uniquely strong influence. Women describe high engagement when programs explicitly reflect Tata's principles of integrity, service, sustainability, and inclusion. When they sense that corporate volunteering mirrors these deeper principles, their connection to the company and the cause grows stronger.

Cultural resonance: Initiatives grounded in Tata's core values foster pride and enhance volunteer satisfaction.

To conclude, Tata group's women volunteers are driven by responsibility, fulfillment, meaning, and cultural alignment. The moral obligation narrative is stronger amongst woman volunteers than men - a narrative richly supported by survey numbers.





CHAPTER

05

**Identity And
Organisational
Structure**

Within 3,207 (47.5%) who reported engaging in volunteering nearly 86% rated volunteering as either “Very Important” or “Important” to their organizational culture.

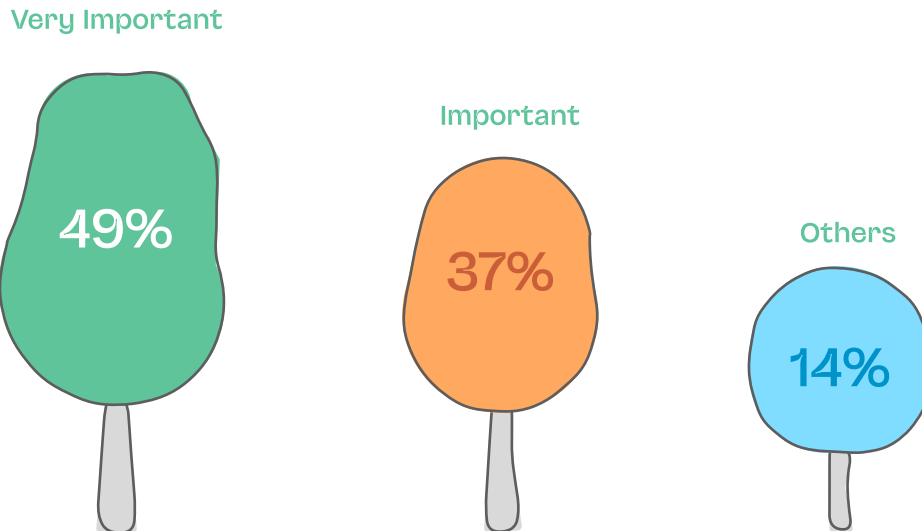


Illustration 5.1 Importance of volunteering for organizational culture

The impact was beyond just participation—89.5% of volunteers said that volunteering had significantly or somewhat shifted organizational values, especially in areas like empathy, inclusion, and collaboration.

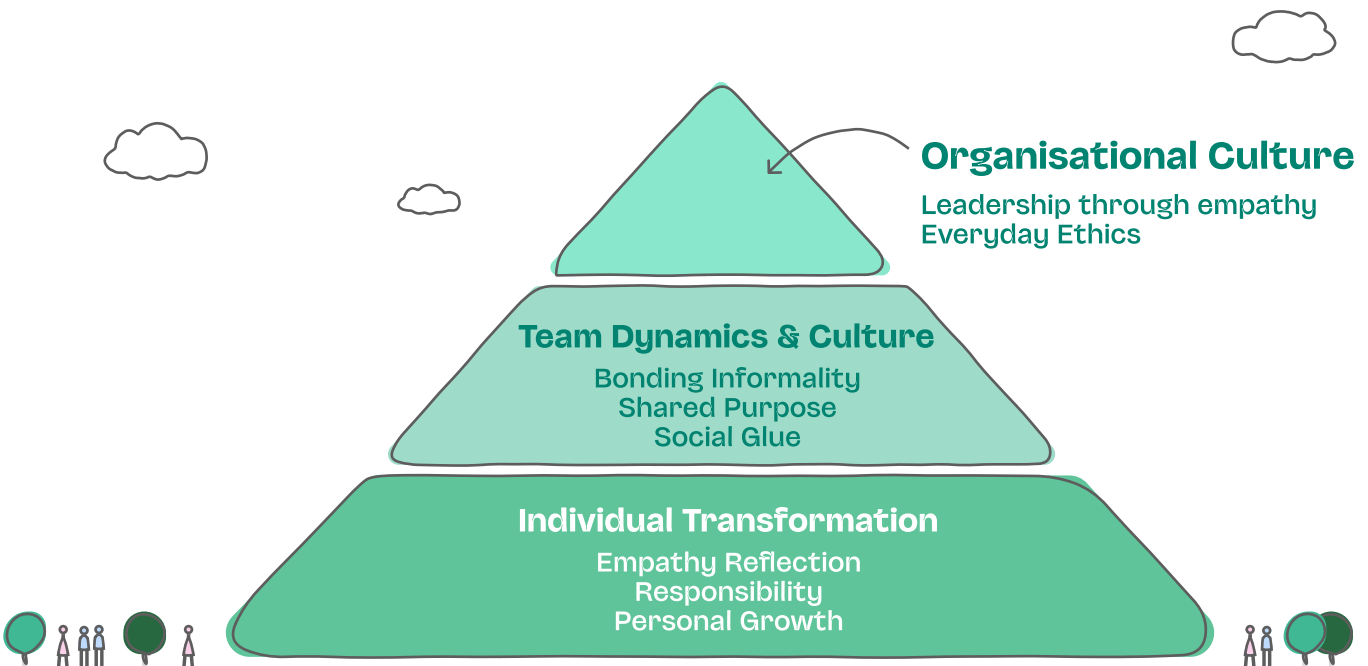


Illustration 5.2 Cascade of volunteering impact

Individual volunteering has cascading effect on team dynamics and on organisational culture (see diagram 5.2). Among volunteers, nearly 75% view it as core to organizational culture. In the narratives collected, volunteering surfaces less as a performance and more as a reflection of belonging.

Employees don't just work at Tata—they live its values. And through volunteering, as individuals, they become part of a legacy that continues to evolve, one act of service at a time.



86% of all respondents said volunteering is “a Tata thing to do.”

This reflects a deeply embedded cultural ethos among active volunteers,

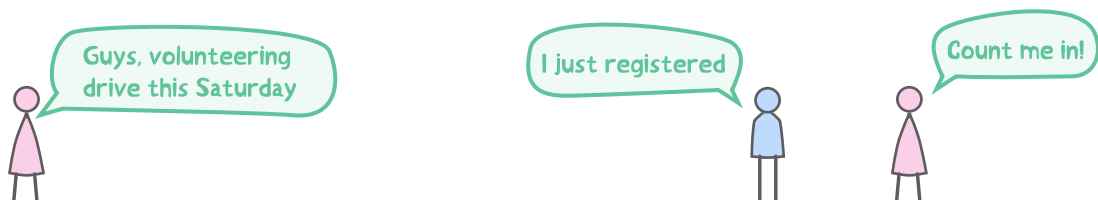
Is Volunteering a Tata Thing to do?

When asked about the cultural impact of volunteering, employees most often pointed to:

- Strengthened teamwork and collaboration
- Improved morale
- A stronger sense of social responsibility
- Increased openness to community
- Reinforcement of the Tata legacy

Employees across levels describe how their motivation to engage in volunteering deepened when they saw senior leaders “show up.” as co-volunteers—sharing meals with beneficiaries, joining tree plantation drives, or attending clean-up campaigns without fanfare. As one participant put it, “You can’t say you’re too busy to volunteer when your boss just spent Saturday digging trenches.” This culture of modelling creates ripple effects. When volunteering is normalized at the top, it becomes safe and aspirational at every level. Many younger employees described how their managers not only encouraged them to volunteer but also actively helped reallocate work to ensure participation. Such encouragement is not always formal. Several narratives speak of small nudges—a message on WhatsApp, a check-in during team meetings, a casual “Let’s all sign up.” These micro-moments of invitation accumulate into a larger ecosystem of support and trust.


Volunteering within Tata appears to be socially modelled and laterally reinforced: 880 volunteers (27%) considered peer encouragement to be “Very Important”. 1,007 (31%) rated it as “Important”. In total, nearly 60% of volunteers describe colleague and peer behavior as a key motivator — reinforcing the idea that volunteering spreads not only by policy, but by presence. Employees are more likely to participate because someone around them is already modeling the act.



"You join Tata and slowly, this becomes part of how you think."

- Middle Manager, Interview





**We never say 'you have to.'
But you feel you have to
because this is Tata."**

- Senior Leader, Field Transcript



CHAPTER

06

**Leadership And
Volunteering**

At Tata, leadership doesn't just endorse volunteering—it embodies it. It is both an enabler and an exemplar. The culture of service is legitimized not through policy, but through presence. As Priti Sharma from Tata Housing shared, “Our CEO came along, rolled up his sleeves, and started painting the wall with us. You don't forget that.” This kind of visible, hands-on leadership sends a powerful message: volunteering is not just permitted, it's encouraged, expected, and shared.

“ Volunteering is not just permitted, it's encouraged, expected, and shared. ”

Leadership as Culture Carrier:

Leadership as Enabler of Volunteering (Data in Percentage)

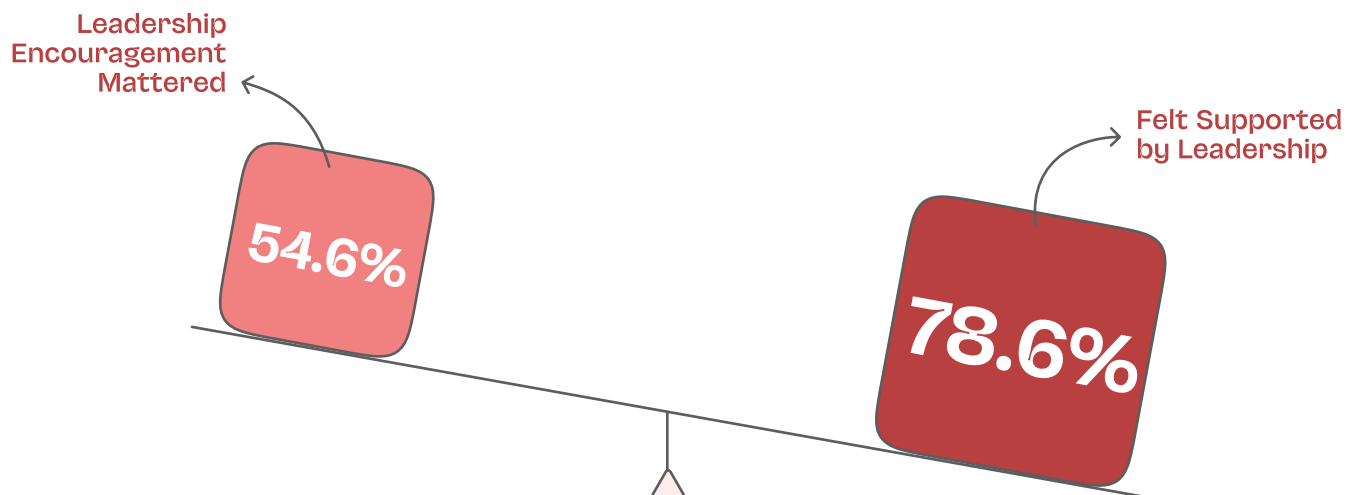


Illustration 8.1 Leadership as enabler of volunteering

This modeling has a measurable impact. Among Tata volunteers, 32% said they were directly inspired to volunteer after seeing a senior leader do so. These aren't symbolic gestures—they're catalytic moments that erase the distance between rank and responsibility. One employee from TCS noted, “My manager didn't just approve my volunteering hours,” and she came with me. That's when I knew this mattered.”

One of the strongest messages emerging from the transcripts and surveys is that volunteering is legitimized not by policy but by example. Leadership matters—not only in enabling volunteering, but in legitimizing it. It becomes aspirational, not optional.

Key Insight
Leadership does not just enable, it embodies. The Tata volunteering culture is strongest when the leader both supports and participates.

2,520 volunteers (78.6%) reported feeling supported by leadership in their volunteering efforts, and 1,752 (54.6%) rated leadership encouragement as either “Very Important” or “Important.” Among those who volunteered, 32% said they were directly inspired to do so because they saw a senior leader volunteering.

Strategic Insights for Tata Group:

Leader is both the exemplar and the enabler. The leverage to transform how volunteering is perceived and leveraged.

- **Strengthen Personal-to-Professional Linkages**

Programs could highlight how volunteering builds leadership, collaboration, and problem-solving skills—making professional alignment clearer.
- **Leverage High Empathy Levels**

With empathy already strong, initiatives can be designed to channel this into sustained long-term engagement.
- **Encourage Lifestyle Transformation**

Reinforce messages and opportunities around sustainable living and conscious consumption, since employees already show moderate movement in this direction.





CHAPTER

07

**Tensions,
Trade-Offs, And
Realism: Barriers
To Volunteering**

While volunteering at Tata should be celebrated for its emotional and social impact, employees also offer thoughtful critiques—calling for deeper reflection, better design, and more meaningful engagement. This sentiment echoes across many narratives. While initiatives like Tata Volunteering Week successfully mobilize participation, some employees feel the format can become eventized—prioritizing convenience and visibility over sustained impact. One volunteer questioned, “We painted the wall, but was that really what the school needed?” A recurring concern is lack of continuity. Volunteers often build emotional connections with communities, only to be rotated out with no follow-up. One employee shared, “We made a difference that day, but there was no return visit or progress report. It ended there.” These gaps leave volunteers wondering about the long-term value of their efforts. Logistical challenges also surfaced.

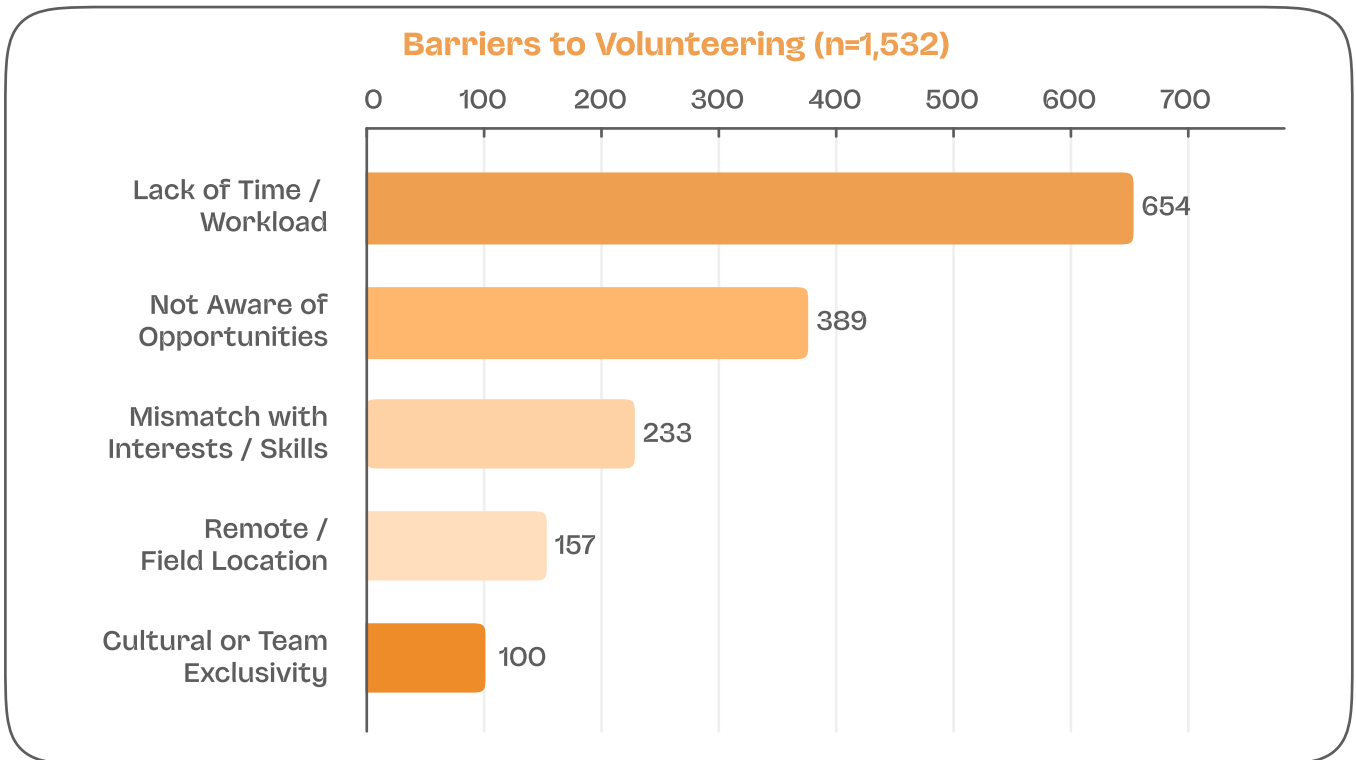
Poor coordination, missing materials, delayed transportation, and lack of preparation were common themes. Volunteers described arriving at sites where children weren’t present, sessions were interrupted, or activities felt rushed and disorganized. These issues, while operational, deeply affect the volunteer experience. Importantly, surface-level execution was another point of critique. Employees spoke of plantation drives where saplings weren’t cared for afterward, or food distribution events that felt mechanical and impersonal. “Beyond execution, volunteers expressed a desire for co-creation with NGO partners. Many felt that their efforts would be more meaningful if they were involved in designing programs, not just executing them.

There were also calls for better orientation and contextual understanding. Volunteers often felt unprepared—unsure of their roles, unfamiliar with the community, or lacking cultural sensitivity. These gaps hindered their ability to engage meaningfully.

Despite these critiques, the tone was not dismissive—it was constructive. Employees weren’t rejecting volunteering; they were asking for it to be more thoughtful, more inclusive, and more impactful. In essence, these reflections highlight that volunteering, to be truly transformative, must move beyond symbolic gestures. It must embrace reflexivity, continuity, and co-ownership.

“ **A total of 1,532**
qualitative responses describing
barriers were coded from the survey ”

Despite the strong culture of volunteering at Tata, employees identified several barriers that limit participation. A total of 1,532 qualitative responses describing barriers were coded from the survey, representing detailed comments provided by respondents drawn from the 3,207 employees who reported volunteering. These coded responses cluster around four main themes.



- **Time and Workload Constraints (42.7%)**

The most frequently cited barrier was time pressure, accounting for 654 coded responses (42.7%). Many employees struggle to fit volunteering into demanding professional schedules, family responsibilities, or academic commitments. Even those motivated to contribute often cannot commit to long hours, rigid schedules, or travel. This underlines the need for flexible models such as micro-volunteering, weekend initiatives, or virtual opportunities.

- **Lack of Awareness (25.4%)**

389 (25.4%) coded responses who had volunteered noted they were unaware of volunteering opportunities or unclear on how to get involved. Limited communication, low visibility of platforms, or uncertainty about where skills can be applied contribute to this gap. While willingness exists, the absence of structured information and onboarding prevents action. Addressing this requires stronger outreach, clearer communication, and guided entry points into volunteering.

- **Mismatch of Interests or Skills (15.1%)**

For 232 coded responses who had volunteered occasionally- (15.1%), available opportunities did not align with their interests or strengths. Some felt they lacked the expertise required; others felt the tasks offered were disconnected from their passions. This mismatch risks disengagement or avoidance. Organizations can respond by offering diverse opportunities, skill-building options, and better matching processes to align volunteer interests with organizational needs.

- **Logistical and Cultural Barriers (16.7%)**

Practical and cultural challenges also surfaced. 157 coded responses (10.2%) highlighted logistical barriers such as inconvenient locations, transport difficulties, and scheduling conflicts. 100 mentions (6.5%) pointed to cultural barriers, including perceptions of exclusivity, lack of inclusivity, or team dynamics that do not support volunteering. Overcoming these barriers calls for accessible, inclusive, and culturally sensitive volunteering practices, ensuring all employees feel able and welcome to participate.



CHAPTER

08

Conclusion

Corporate volunteering at the Tata Group goes beyond structured programs to embody the organization's core values, culture, and leadership philosophy. Nearly half of employees actively participate in volunteering initiatives, and a significant majority recognize it as "a Tata thing to do," demonstrating that volunteering is deeply embedded in the Tata identity. Far from being a peripheral activity, it reflects a legacy of social responsibility and community engagement that has shaped employees' experiences, reinforced organizational purpose, and strengthened the Group's cultural fabric. The impact of volunteering extends across knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and relationships. Employees report increased empathy, social awareness, and collaborative capabilities, alongside enhanced alignment between personal values and organizational objectives. Women volunteers are motivated by a strong sense of responsibility to give back, personal fulfillment, and alignment with Tata's values, highlighting the role of intrinsic motivation in sustaining engagement. Volunteers describe tangible changes in workplace interactions, decision-making, and leadership behaviors, illustrating that volunteering catalyzes personal growth alongside professional development.

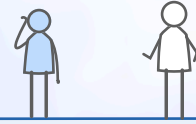
Leadership plays a pivotal role in fostering engagement. When senior leaders actively participate, they provide visible role modeling that legitimizes volunteering, inspires wider involvement, and encourages peer reinforcement. These examples illustrate that volunteering culture spreads organically through influence and participation, rather than mandate, creating a supportive ecosystem that integrates volunteering into everyday work life.

While engagement is high, barriers such as time constraints, lack of awareness, skill mismatch, and logistical or cultural challenges persist. Addressing these through flexible, inclusive, and skill-aligned programs can further expand participation. Emerging trends, including family involvement, reinforce the relational and social dimensions of volunteering, fostering shared purpose and work-life integration.

Strategically, volunteering strengthens organizational culture, enhances employee development, and reinforces brand reputation, while enabling sustainable and equitable community impact. Tata's corporate volunteering ecosystem demonstrates that giving back and personal growth are mutually reinforcing; it acts as both a mirror reflecting the Group's values and a compass guiding employees toward empathy, purpose, and collective responsibility, translating individual engagement into broader societal and organizational impact.

At the same time, a mature volunteering culture also brings new demands for programme design. Employees no longer see volunteering as symbolic participation or peripheral activity; they approach it as an identity-shaping practice. This reflexivity means they ask deeper questions: How meaningful is this engagement? Does it align with personal skills and values? Will it create sustained impact, rather than a one-off activity? For programme designers, this raises the bar — they must move beyond event-driven formats to curate experiences that are flexible, inclusive, skill-aligned, and capable of fostering reflection as well as action. Designing for a workforce that is both willing and discerning requires careful balance: maintaining scale while also deepening meaning, ensuring that participation remains both accessible and transformative


A Compass, Not a Checkbox




"Corporate volunteering at Tata is not a checkbox, but a compass. It acts as both a mirror reflecting the Group's values and a compass guiding employees toward empathy, purpose, and collective responsibility."



Some narratives from Volunteering



I thought I was there to help. I realized I was the one being taught.



Volunteering is not just service—it's identity work.



“

When we collected, packed and donated clothes to the needy school couple of years back, I was told that you can give any age clothing wear & also footwear or utensils. Many have only 1 or 2 pairs of clothing / footwear. It really gets difficult to maintain hygiene with these minimal resources. I was touched & felt like crying due to abundant clothes, footwear & utensils we have at home for each member. It just made us humbler to use resources & inculcate MINIMALISM in lifestyle.

”

“

I had the opportunity to volunteer twice for mangrove plantation drives in the Sundarbans. I was humbled to see how something as small as a sapling could grow into a shield for an entire village. It gave me a sense of purpose—knowing my contribution, though small, is part of a larger cycle of protection and regeneration. These experiences changed my understanding of volunteering—it's not just about helping, but about healing and preserving. It taught me that professional success feels more meaningful when balanced with environmental and social responsibility.

”



“

I began volunteering at an old age home nearby. There, I met woman—85, frail, forgotten. Her eyes lit up every time I visited. One day, she held my hand and said, “You remind me that I still exist.” Two places. Two different worlds. Yet the same deep silence of abandonment. Volunteering made me realize—care has no language, no species. All it takes is time, presence, and a little love.

”

Volunteering experiences within organizational setups can sometimes feel superficial. There's often no follow-up, no reflection. We go, we click pictures, and we leave. I've wondered – are we really helping, or just 'doing' volunteering?" – Respondent ID: 3508



When my manager volunteered, it wasn't just about giving. It was about living Tata values.



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