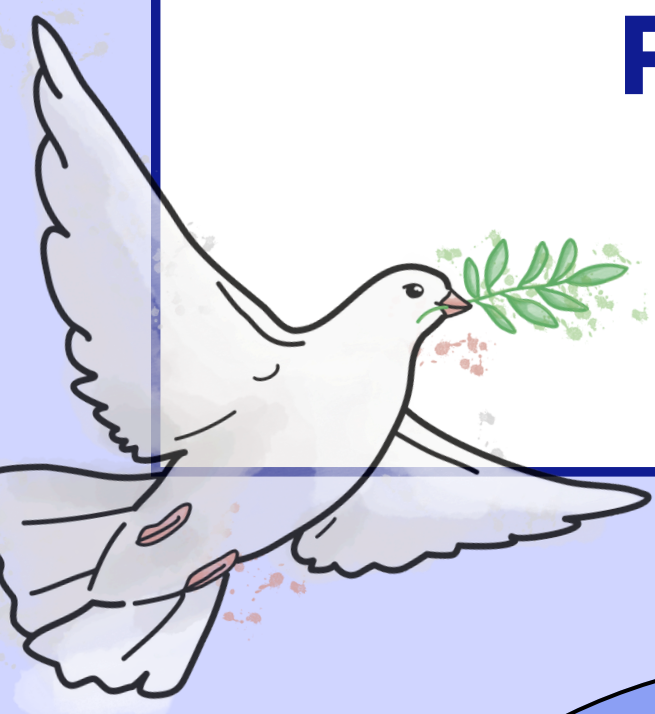


Faith in Action: Examining Synergies Between Faith-Based Organizations and Interfaith Dialogue for Philanthropy, Development, and Communal Harmony in India



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Introduction

Religion is deeply embedded in the Indian subcontinent, with philanthropy rooted in traditions like Christianity's charity, Islam's zakat, and Hinduism's dana. While most faith-based organizations (FBOs) promote education, health, and poverty alleviation, some risk fueling communal divisiveness. The potential for FBOs and interfaith alliances to promote religious tolerance and social development remains crucial for India's future.

Research Objectives

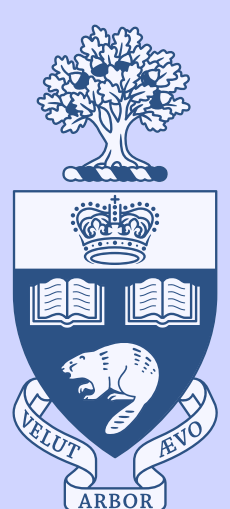
Examine donor preferences, analyze FBO operations and challenges, and explore potential strategies for collaboration between FBOs, interfaith alliances, and the state to enhance welfare distribution and reduce religious extremist influence.

Results

- Faith-based donors had higher self-categorization scores but lower religious tolerance compared to non-faith-based donors (regular NGOs).
- Muslims identified most strongly with their religious group, followed by Christians and Hindus, underscoring the significant role of religious identity in shaping attitudes toward philanthropy. The interview with the representative from Jamaat-I-Islami Hind backed up this finding, revealing that a minimum of 2% of the monthly income of its approximately 1 million members is allocated to zakat for charity.
- Hindus exhibited moderate religious tolerance with high standard deviation, indicating polarization within their identity, with one group highly fused with their religion and another less so.
- Religious tolerance ideally should range between "high" to "extremely high," but the study found only "moderate" scores among faith-based donors and Hindus, indicating room for improvement.
- Interfaith alliances, although valuable, are relatively few in number across India and lack the resources and reach that many long-established FBOs possess. Regardless of religious affiliation, FBOs carry out their work guided by spiritual principles. These organizations play a crucial role in fostering interfaith understanding and communal harmony, bridging divides, and promoting peaceful coexistence among different religious communities.

Methodology

- Research Tools: Interviews and questionnaires.
- Organizations: YMCAs of India (Christian), Ramakrishna Mission (Hindu), Jamaat-I-Islami Hind (Muslim).
- Interviews: Hour-long interviews with top-level officials from selected organizations.
- Questionnaire: 82 respondents; assessed social identification, identity fusion, and religious tolerance using Likert scales.



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