

India Redefined Striving for 'A Happy India'

India Redefined, launched 2009, as a non-political citizens empowerment movement, is striving to synergise citizens, NGOs, corporate and the government to come on a integrated platform for creating doers rather than beneficiaries.

With a vision of 'A Happy India', India Redefined's ultimate goal is to achieve around happiness for all. Solving the problems facing its citizens is the inclusive vision of IR.

IR aims to create a broad-based platform, bringing in NGOs engaged in social activities to forcefully forge ahead in specific areas. Its platform can become an enabler for collaborations and synergy between NGOs and the corporate with an aim to create a multi-prolonged approach for improving our nation.

However, the promoters claim that INDIA Redefined has not taken any donation till now. Thousands of activities which one sees on website were done voluntarily. NGOs are associated with 3rd Sector Partnership program and students do Internship Programs given on website and the Common people join as Volunteers.

INDIA Redefined's Ist phase started in 2009 engaging Common People - making them 'Doers'. In the IInd phase they engaged NGOs through their 3rd sector partnership programme with the commoners. The year 2014 as the IIIrd phase, IR initiated Citizens Corporate Collective Responsibility by engaging Corporate bodies and helping them with their CSR activities.

INDIA Redefined carries out activities under following four verticals

INDIA Redefined has today become a platform and a System Integrator and not just one NGO. It is now evolving into a 'one stop solution for CSR' with over 100 NGOs, experts in all social verticals, project professionals,

implementation partners, innovative technology providers and social enterprises.

SME WORLD had an interaction with Anurag, Co-Founder, India Redefined.

Please tell us the basic concept of INDIA Redefined.

INDIA Redefined was conceived as a movement to light up the fire in the hearts of every Indian citizen, to be awakened, to exercise their rights and before that fulfill their obligation & responsibilities.

We all talk of problems in India - at home, in our drawing rooms to village chaupals, offices and meetings, LinkedIn, Facebook walls but do nothing. Part of the reason is that we think that solving these are not our responsibility but of the government, politicians, bureaucracy, economists, or some NGOs- anyone but us.

INDIA Redefined attempts to tackle the root cause, which can impact most of the problems India is facing. The

attitude of INDIFFERENCE of common people – maybe because we are generally too busy, struggling to survive day to day but in the process, we have left governance to people who are not our representatives, policy to those who do not feel they are accountable to us, economic development to corporate that often place profit before ethics, and all other problems to NGOs who struggle without our support.

We are living in a modern time where globalization has led to fusion of different culture across the world. It is not surprising to see elements of western traits in our day to day living. Hence, it is important for our country to keep up with the global trend rather than sticking with tradition for the sake of maintaining identity in order to progress. By redefining India and what it means to be an Indian, one can constantly be open to new ideas, while respecting the old ideas and norms. INDIA Redefined tries to accentuate the fact that 'India is what WE make of it'

What is unique about INDIA Redefined?

There are many organizations, NGO, Charities which do a lot of wonderful work - But it never seems to be enough. Most of them work within a context or for a specific cause, that the overall positive effect is lost in the gaps.

One of the biggest reasons is that we have not tapped efficiently into the power of the individual. We have groups working towards a certain cause, but the rest of the people, if not oblivious to issue, think it is the groups' responsibility to find a solution.

INDIA Redefined is a platform for people and organizations from different backgrounds, different social class, having different outlooks and opinions



Anurag, Co-founder, India Redefined



to come together and work towards redefining India.

What has been the model so far on which the organisation has been working?

The operation areas of INDIA Redefined are divided into broad headings - AWAKEN INDIA, CLEAN INDIA, HEALTHY INDIA, GREEN INDIA, and PROSPEROUS INDIA - all leading to HAPPY INDIA. Anyone can choose an issue, activity or campaign based on their own interest and expertise. They are encouraged and supported not only to get involved but motivated others to join them. However 'working on any issue' does not mean 'just providing assistance or volunteering' but to 'empower the people affected by the issue to be able to solve it themselves'.

The way to take forward was to try creating a movement where benefactor and beneficiary are both citizens themselves, not very unlike to QUIT INDIA movement. People participated then for themselves for their own betterment.

INDIA Redefined realizes that most of the ordinary people want to do something for the country, they just don't know how. Their desire to help often is overridden by daily grinds and other priorities. The idea has been to mobilize these masses and bring them together. How does India Redefined do it?

By giving a structure to the 'desire to do something' in us, by mentoring and creating small successes in an individual's desire to do something for the society and country, one gets motivated to create bigger changes which in first place were just a talk.

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Small success breeds more success (and motivation)

Level of involvement is not measured by the grandness or scale of the activity a person is undertaking but on the amount of time one spends on the activity. Unfortunately, not everyone has the time, energy or ability to give for the betterment of the country. Many feel a sense of inadequacy as they cannot 'give' large sum donations (like the eminent personalities and corporate).

By creating simple and small activities that can be carried out by anyone, INDIA Redefined wants to instill a confidence and a sense of accomplishment. These small successes breed a desire to do more and bring more success.

People living in the typical social structure only know what their needs are. So the first step of INDIA Redefined is to help people to identify problems in their locality, take ownership of it and solve it. This thought process has led to our tag line - **“Lets aim to make more Doers than Beneficiaries”**.

Kindly outline the evolution of INDIA Redefined and the inspiration behind it

To come to our present stage, INDIA

Redefined has gone through a well thought out journey.

For any nation to develop in a sustainable and holistic manner there are four (4) pillars –

- Citizens
- NGOs or social organizations
- Corporate Bodies &
- The Government

We need all these entities to come together and work in a synchronized manner, and at INDIA Redefined are in the process of creating such a collaborative platform. We aim to be a platform where different bodies and entities come together to create a holistic and innovative programs which have far reaching impact and can be sustained for a long term.

We started with engaging Citizens of the country – the basic building block of a country, in 2009 by motivating them to donate their Time, and not money, to something good for the country – contributing with their ISR (Individual Social Responsibility) on INDIA Redefined platform.

By 2012, Citizens activities were happening at many places and local NGOs also started participating in certain places on their own under INDIA Redefined umbrella. At this time we decided to engage with NGOs in a more structured manner under our 3rd Sector Partner Program. Under this, an NGO jointly carries out activities of their area of interest along with their volunteers and INDIA Redefined's coordinators & volunteers, on INDIA Redefined platform, with guidance and advice from us. Scores of NGOs, spread across the country, have joined up with us and also work as our extended implementation partners. Currently we have over 100+ NGOs from across the country under our 3rd Sector Partner Program, which is growing every day.

Wanting to scale up our Capacity towards meeting the demand of services required in this sector, we come to our current phase of evolution, we have recently (in 2015) started to engage with business organizations with a focus on CSR related projects & activities.

What prompted us to start INDIA Redefined? When something is initiated only out of raw passion outburst, frustration or anger, it tends to fizzle out. Passion or Anger is good and needed but cannot be the sole driver. It is like the spark-plug in car engine - something that gives the movement but you need fuel to run the car. And INDIA Redefined wants to be the fuel of such passion ignited by the common citizens of this country.

The aim is that the people feel an ownership of the movement, where they get to be the leaders instead of followers, where diversity of individual thinking and beliefs are still welcome to strengthen a common platform.

INDIA Redefined makes each individual socially responsible by giving them platform to undertake small steps (activities) and incentivizes



them to work with everyone else as a team to address to the broader issues locally first and eventually nationally.

How do you generate funds and what has been the response?

INDIA Redefined started as a social experiment. We worked against conventional wisdom, thinking out of box and at a scale which is audacious, without any financial support. Idea was to see if a common citizen can be motivated to come on to platform by contributing their ISR (Individual Social Responsibility) within their own time and resources.

INDIA Redefined since inception till now did not seek funds from anyone. The reason for this is

- Common citizens of India are already overburdened and membership fee should not be a deterrent in their desire to do something good for the country and community.
- Like in any project, multiple resources are required almost all of which can be bought by money except a motivated work-force. INDIA Redefined has been in the process of creating a motivated national work-force since 2009 for which funds were not the primary requirement.
- To create a feeling of responsibility towards the country, community and common people of India, it is important that people consider this as a part of their daily life and be willing to spend some small amount from their own pockets. Once the

outlook of people changes from looking completely inwards to considering problems around him (civic, environmental, corruption etc.) as their own problem, people are more likely to take positive action to eradicate these on their own. Easy

availability of external funds and NGOs sometimes has a negative impact as a common person's individual involvement becomes non-existent.

However, now, after five years of no financial support or donation, INDIA Redefined is at juncture that we need funds for organization building to provide scalability, redundancy and continuity and also to take up larger programs & projects for a more far reaching impact. We are now looking to raise funds primarily from corporate sector, HNIs and Funding agencies to

- Create a corpus for administrative expenses
- Project based funding to carry out

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- large scale programs/projects
- We will still prefer that our “Doer Citizens” donate their Time (rather than money) and contribute directly to our nation's progress.

CSR is a burning issue these days especially when it has been made mandatory for a section of the corporate. In your opinion, what difference you see in the CSR efforts?

Bringing out a law for making CSR mandatory for the select Corporates is a positive direction for India, which will make available a large amount of funds for country's development but straitjacketing the activities which can be undertaken under Schedule VII not only misses out on a large number of areas which should have come under the purview of CSR, but the essence of CSR and its integration with business strategy has been missing. By incorporating the provision of donating of CSR funds to Prime Minister's Relief Fund or Swachch Bharat Kosh, it not only provides a short cut to companies, which instead of engaging with communities and improving their well being under CSR, will encourage them to take this easier and safer route (no questions from Income Tax or efforts in developing & implementing a CSR Program) which can turn CSR into an equivalent of 2% CSR Tax.

India is largely a nation with almost half of its population mired in poverty. What should be the broad strategy to alleviate poverty?



At INDIA Redefined, we do not believe in a singular solution to these problems. There is a need to look at these problems in a holistic manner integrating different perspectives and involvement and participation of people at the grassroots. This will require education, skill development, employment generation and entrepreneurship development assisted by easy micro finance. Currently even though the focus may be on the above areas what is missing is quality. We need to impart quality education, quality vocational training with soft-skills to increase employability. There is a need to create opportunities at village level too to stem the tide of urban migration. Spreading awareness of scientific methods of agriculture at grassroots level in rural India and creating a support system for smaller farmers using organic and sustainable practices is important. Even though India's young population is currently being sighted as strength, we need to realize the importance of population control, otherwise our future generation will be fighting over the limited natural resources that we have.

Rural poverty in India is extreme. Do you think the efforts being put in by NGOs and the government will achieve results and how?

Efforts by the Government, Social Sector and Business Houses will make a difference but success will be achieved when the villagers themselves are made to engage in their own improvement, with support from NGOs, Govt. & Corporates. Their thinking has to be changed from being a beneficiary to some scheme or a program to that of being the drivers of the program and leveraging it to improve their condition. This requires creating motivation, self belief and trust in the programs of the villagers.

Often, this is the neglected area of the program and the awareness campaigns or workshop are namesake and a real connect is not established. We need the people to feel empowered to create the change themselves.

What are priority areas where huge efforts are required?

We at INDIA Redefined believe that sincere efforts are required by all stakeholders in all four broad verticals and we prefer not to prioritize these but to be worked on simultaneously. We classify these as

Awaken India – Awareness, Advocacy, Education, Skill Development, Empowerment, Employment, Entrepreneurship etc.

Clean India - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH), Waste Management, Air, Water, Soil Pollution etc.

Healthy India - Awareness Programs, mHealth, Telemedicine, Rural Health Care, Emergency Response Training & Support and other health related areas etc.

Green India - Environment, Renewable Energy, Sustainability, Bio Diversity, Agriculture, Eco farming, Forestation, Climate Change etc.

How do you foresee the state of affairs 10 years from now?

I am very positive about India improving in years to come. Awared Citizens, Responsible Corporates, Dedicated Social Sector and a Performing Government are the recipe which will be redefining India in years to come. The question is are we up to it?

What is your vision for the India Redefined?

Our vision simply is – **“A HAPPY INDIA”**. However, to make it more

understandable as :

Create an India of tomorrow which is

- **awakened, informed and educated**
- **clean, green and sustainable**
- **healthy, prosperous and happy**

This makes INDIA Redefined like a large canvas where common people, NGOs and Corporate come together to paint (work) an area of their interest and expertise and thus creating a painting which is our new redefined India. That is why INDIA Redefined's vision is an amalgamation of different visions but ultimately leads to a HAPPY INDIA. “Saadhya” is important not the “Saadhan”

INDIA Redefined is apolitical and not affiliated to a single ideology. But will not hesitate to work with any and every political party, business houses or NGO for the right cause.

*For more information please visit
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About Anurag

Anurag has over 30 years of cross-sectoral experience in shipping, manufacturing, power-generation, Information Technology, Digital Media and Film Production at senior positions. He is responsible for the development of customized eLearning content in niche areas of maritime sector and corporate leveraging new concepts of training delivery.

He has expertise in strategic planning & operations with a business process orientation and cross-cultural team building. A Change Agent, he challenges status quo and implements processes and systems, which can bring about continuous or radical improvement in the organization. Goal oriented, able to define problems clearly, he can evaluate alternative courses of action critically and implement solutions decisively & effectively.