



Support Mechanisms and Challenges of Human Charitable Organizations: Exploring Perception and Practices Regarding Community's Discarded Goods

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Multidimensional nature of Human charitable organisations needs facilities related to health, education, clothing, and overall well-being of residents.
- Key themes include charitable organisation's support system, external needs and expectations of the organisation, challenges faced due to lack of funding and staffing.
- Donation of external communities' discarded goods may support the better livelihood of charitable communities.
- Digital app may create a bridge between external communities and human charitable organisations for the donation of discarded goods.

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ABSTRACT

Human charitable organizations play an important role in satisfying the needs of underprivileged groups. Despite their significant contribution, they confront several obstacles, such as unstable finances, ineffective operations, and trouble obtaining external community support. The main objective of this study is to explore the support system, needs and challenges faced by the human charitable organization in Varanasi district, Uttar Pradesh, India. A qualitative in-depth interview guide was designed to collect data for the study to understand the surroundings, needs, and challenges faced by the organization management and its beneficiaries. The study was conducted in 2025 using a purposive and stratified sampling technique to choose participants who could offer pertinent insights and were actively involved in the operation of these organizations. The findings indicate that the donation of discarded goods is a significant way for charitable communities to fulfil their common needs. It was found that most of the charitable organizations are performing well, however they are facing some challenges such as lack of fulfilled requirements of necessities, education promoting things and health issues. The research also highlighted the necessity of capacity building infrastructure, long-term funding plans, and increased cooperation with external society people through digital or another convenient platform.

INTRODUCTION

Indian charitable organizations, also known as non-profit organizations, are supporting the advancement of education, alleviating poverty, empowering women economically, supporting migrant workers, and facilitating technology integration in underprivileged communities (Plerhoples, 2017). Charitable

organizations are non-profit entities dedicated to providing support, resources, and services that enhance the well-being of individuals, communities, or targeted causes. These organizations depend on donations, grants, and volunteer contributions to address a range of social, educational, health, environmental, and humanitarian challenges. Their principal objective is to generate social impact rather than financial profit, and they are increasingly adopting digital

tools to improve communication, mobilize support, and reinforce advocacy initiatives. In the digital era, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) must determine not only which digital platforms to utilize but also whether to delegate decision-making authority to their supporters (Hall et al., 2019). The acceleration of digitization, particularly following initiatives like Digital India, has further transformed the sector (Yadav et al., 2026). Non-profit organizations serve as institutions of democratic thought, cultivating citizens who are prepared to engage in civic life and promoting internal organizational processes that foster democracy within the sector itself (King & Griffin, 2019). Charitable organizations serve an important function within society; however, they frequently encounter challenges that threaten their long-term sustainability. A primary concern is financial instability. These organizations rely on external funding sources, including grants, donations, and gifts, all of which are susceptible to economic fluctuations (Shevchenko et al., 2024). In addition, these organizations encounter challenges related to organizational capacity, limited access to evidence-based practices, volunteer leadership, and staffing constraints (Despard, 2016). Nonprofit organizations often struggle with governance, fundraising, performance, and the balance between daily operations and their social mission. As social, political, and economic uncertainties increase, it has become more important for these organizations to build capacity and adapt to stay sustainable and serve their communities well. (Waerder et al., 2021). Charitable organizations provide used clothing to individuals in need, offering both immediate relief and sustained assistance in economically disadvantaged regions (Sumo et al., 2023). To enhance fundraising efforts and organizational distinctiveness, management scholars recommend fostering innovation and adopting creative strategies (Svensson et al., 2019). Changing lifestyle and the rise of fast fashion have led to more reusable items like clothes, books, toys, furniture, and household goods being thrown away. At the same time, charities that help vulnerable groups often lack enough resources. Even though many people are willing to donate, a lack of awareness and inefficient redistribution systems make it harder for donations to reach those in need. While most research looks at the welfare work of charities, there is less focus on how donated goods are collected, managed, and distributed. Previous studies have not explored much about how charitable organizations in India, especially in Varanasi, collect, manage, and redistribute reusable goods. This research examines how charities help extend the use of discarded but still useful items to support people in need and encourage sustainable consumption. It also considers how a digital platform could help connect donors and charities and offers practical suggestions to improve resource sharing, social welfare, and environmental sustainability.

METHODOLOG

An exploratory-descriptive qualitative research design was employed to examine the support systems, work environments, and challenges faced by human charitable organizations, as well as their perceptions and practices regarding community donations and reusable goods in the Varanasi district, Uttar Pradesh, India. This study received ethics approval from the Ethical Committee, Institute

of Science, Banaras Hindu University (I.Sc./ECM-XX/2025-26). The Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research checklist served as the study's guidance (Tong et al., 2007). This study uses a qualitative interpretative approach (Climent-Sanz et al., 2020). Data were collected between February and May 2025 from 17 charitable organizations, including 9 old-age homes and 8 orphanages as shown in Figure 1 and 2. The Varanasi district comprises eight blocks: Pindra, Rajatalab, Baragaon, Chiragaon, Chhapra, Harhua, Kashividyapeeth, and Sewapuri. To ensure geographical representation, organizations were selected from different blocks, with two organizations surveyed from each block and three from one block. Purposive sampling was used to select organizations actively engaged in welfare services and possessing relevant knowledge, while stratified sampling ensured representation from various geographical areas. Both government and private-sector organizations were included to provide a comprehensive understanding of their roles, operational approaches, and needs within the charitable sector.

The study targeted charitable organizations in the Varanasi district that provide welfare services to vulnerable groups, including orphaned children, elderly individuals, women, persons with disabilities, slum children, and economically disadvantaged populations. Participants comprised key staff members such as founders, managers, coordinators, and other knowledgeable personnel. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Organizations that were inactive, temporarily closed, no longer operating during the study period, located outside Varanasi, or not engaged in human welfare were excluded.

Data collection was conducted through in-person, in-depth interviews using an open-ended interview guide designed to elicit detailed information and enable participants to share their experiences, perspectives, and challenges. The interview schedule, validated by two subject-matter experts, addressed four primary areas: the working environment and support systems of charitable organizations; needs and expectations regarding community donations of reusable goods; opinions and suggestions on utilizing digital platforms to support sustainable development; and the main challenges encountered in Varanasi. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and was conducted flexibly, with follow-up questions used to explore emerging topics and deepen understanding. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was achieved to guarantee the reliability, validity, and transparency of the qualitative data following the study of Chaturvedi and Vatta (2026). All interviews were digitally recorded and manually transcribed. Field notes were taken to supplement the transcripts and capture non-verbal responses. To maintain confidentiality, each organization and respondent was assigned a coded label, such as R-1, R-2 and as more. The data were analysed following a six-step methodology: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, identification of themes, review of themes, definition and naming of themes, and reporting of findings (Braun et al., 2022). Data were manually coded and organized using NVivo Version 15 (Lumivero, 2024). Themes and sub-themes were developed from the main topics in each area and grouped by similar meaning to form broader categories.

RESULTS

The identified themes and sub-themes illustrate how charitable organizations promote the well-being and empowerment of vulnerable populations. The thematic framework developed from the analysis highlights the varied roles and practices adopted by Charitable organizations in addressing organizational environments, needs, and expectations from external communities. These include aspects such as donations, the necessity of digital platforms, and associated challenges. The following sections provide a detailed discussion of the themes and sub-themes.

Theme-1 Organisation's environment and support mechanism for beneficiaries

These outcomes addressed basic needs, health care, emotional support, educational access, skill development, and leisure opportunities to enhance the livelihood of charitable populations, and facilitate their integration into society.

Provision of essential needs and daily services for beneficiaries

Result found that organizations support vulnerable people by ensuring what they have what they need to survive, stay safe, and live with dignity. They provide food, clothing, shelter, and daily care and many charitable organizations created safe, caring spaces for older adults, orphaned or abandoned children, women facing challenges, people with disabilities, and others often left out. These services are essential for the well-being and protection of those they support. "We always try to offer a caring and supportive place for people who are alone or separated from their families." (R-3)

Encouragement of physical health and healthcare access

Healthcare support has become a primary priority for many charitable organizations, helping make medical services easier to

access by organizing health camps, doctor visits, vaccination campaigns, distributing medicine, and providing emergency care. These efforts improve physical health and help reduce healthcare gaps for people in need. "Many of the beneficiaries come from situations where healthcare is either unavailable or too expensive. Our organization places a special emphasis on health and well-being." (R-2)

Access to education, development of skills and independence

Many organizations provided literacy programs, educational support, and opportunities for both formal and informal learning, especially for underprivileged children and adults. When people take part in vocational training in areas like computer literacy, tailoring, or handicrafts, they gain practical skills that make it easier to find jobs and become financially independent. "We always aim to improve reading, writing, and basic math skills for both adults and children through our literacy programs and school support courses." (R-13)

Recreation, social inclusion and individual Growth

Organizations support personal growth by offering social, cultural, and recreational activities that make life better. Sports, yoga, outdoor adventures, music, art, and crafts give people ways to exercise, be creative, express themselves, and connect with others. These activities help build confidence, friendships, and a sense of belonging, while also bringing happiness and comfort.

Charitable groups provide more than basic support. They help people in need build long-term health, resilience, and personal growth through these activities. "Vocational training programs in areas such as computer skills, tailoring, and handicraft making provide people with practical ways to earn a living." (R-10)

Figure 1. Orphanage homes with their target area

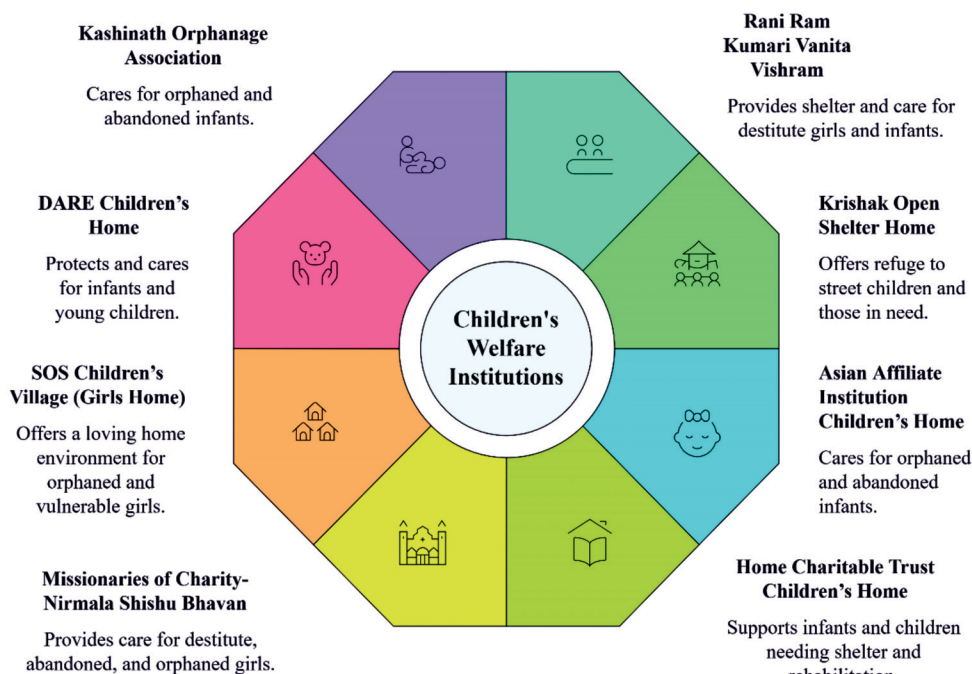
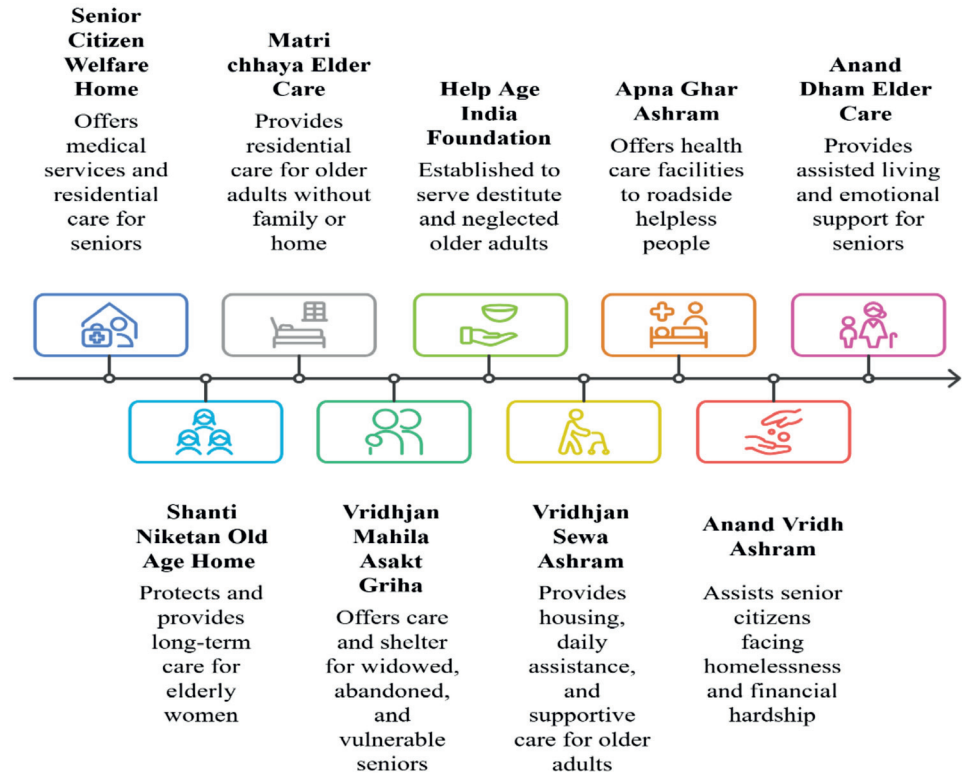


Figure 2. Elder care/old age centres with their target area



Made with Napkin

Theme 2- External needs and expectations of charitable organizations

The findings showed that nonprofits mainly depend on outside funding to keep their services running and reach more people in need. Even though these organizations are committed to offering full support, many cannot keep up with the growing needs of their communities because they lack resources. To keep their work going and stay sustainable, they look for financial help, donations, and partnerships with others in the community. These outside contributions not only help provide support but also encourage more people and groups to get involved in welfare efforts.

Demand for material support and essential goods

Organizations said they always need donations of basic items such as clothing, shoes, school supplies, bedding, food, and household goods. These donations help lower their costs and directly support people's daily needs. Respondents' states that organization builds a cycle of responsibility and kindness by passing on used items to people who need them most. "Every item we give reflects compassion and ensures nothing valuable is missed that could change someone's life." (R-1)

Acceptance and repurposing of throwaway to useful material

Many organizations accept gently used items that are still in good working order. Donate these items is a practical way to help people in need and make the most of available resources. When reusable goods are shared, it shows a commitment to caring for the community, protecting the environment, and acting responsibly. Organizations usually take items that donors no longer need, although they are in excellent condition. This method helps

organizations reach their goals. By giving these items to those who need them, organizations encourage generosity and responsibility. Every donation shows empathy and helps keep useful things out of landfills. "Our organization creates a loop of responsibility and kindness by redistributing such as used things to those who need them the most". (R-3)

Provision of educational and developmental materials

Several organizations have highlighted the need for educational supplies such as school bags, study tables, notebooks, stationery, and books. For children and teenagers from underprivileged backgrounds, these materials are vital to supporting their education and providing better learning opportunities. "If anyone want to donate willingly (study materials) we can accept because it may slight helpful for beneficiaries". (R-5)

Theme 3 Digital platforms as a catalyst in social impact and resource mobilization

The findings indicate that charitable organizations expressed significant interest in utilizing digital platforms to streamline the collection, management, and distribution of donated resources. Participants identified digital technology as an effective tool for enhancing organizational efficiency and connecting contributors with beneficiaries. Organizations reported that a unified digital platform could simplify donation processes, improve access to resources, foster community engagement, and strengthen the sustainability of support initiatives.

Enhancing accessibility to donations and resources

A primary expectation was that digital platforms would facilitate easier access to donated goods and services. Organizations

indicated that these platforms enable geographic interaction with potential contributors and expedite the identification of available resources. This increased accessibility was considered particularly advantageous for organizations with limited financial and logistical capacity. “Yes, digital platform may be easier for donors who want to help but they have no idea that where they to donate, as per my point of view it may be good.” (R-2)

Facilitating connections between donors and beneficiaries through digital technology

Participants highlighted that digital platforms enable direct and effective interaction between donors and nonprofit organizations. These platforms were regarded as mechanisms to ensure that donated goods reach beneficiaries more efficiently by reducing communication barriers and supporting real-time engagement. “Yes, I think it will be good. Building a digital relationship between donors and beneficiaries is now essential for our charitable organization to run smoothly in today’s connected world.” (R-13)

Promoting efficient redistribution of valuable resources

Organizations report that digital channels can facilitate the transfer of functional yet surplus items such as furniture, clothing, shoes, household goods, and educational materials.

These platforms enhance the social value of donated resources and reduce waste by employing systematic listing and matching processes. The online platform ensures that resources reach individuals and communities in need by enabling donors to list and share surplus yet valuable items without temporal or geographic limitations. “Not bad if the customer’s used items may be useful for our organisation’s beneficiaries, then it will be best solutions.” (R-10)

Promoting volunteerism and community engagement through digital platforms

Participants suggested that increasing the visibility and accessibility of charitable initiatives through digital platforms may

facilitate broader community involvement. Such platforms can raise awareness of social issues and organizational needs, thereby attracting additional volunteers, contributors, and supporters. Maintaining charitable activities and fostering a culture of social responsibility were identified as essential components. “It can make a strong bridge between external community and our organisation and people will be aware about charitable organisation purpose.” (R-7)

Strengthening collaborative partnerships and community engagement

Organizations have emphasized the importance of building strong relationships with government and private funders, volunteers, community members, businesses, and other benefactors who support charities. These partnerships help raise public awareness, secure funding, and make philanthropic efforts more effective and sustainable.

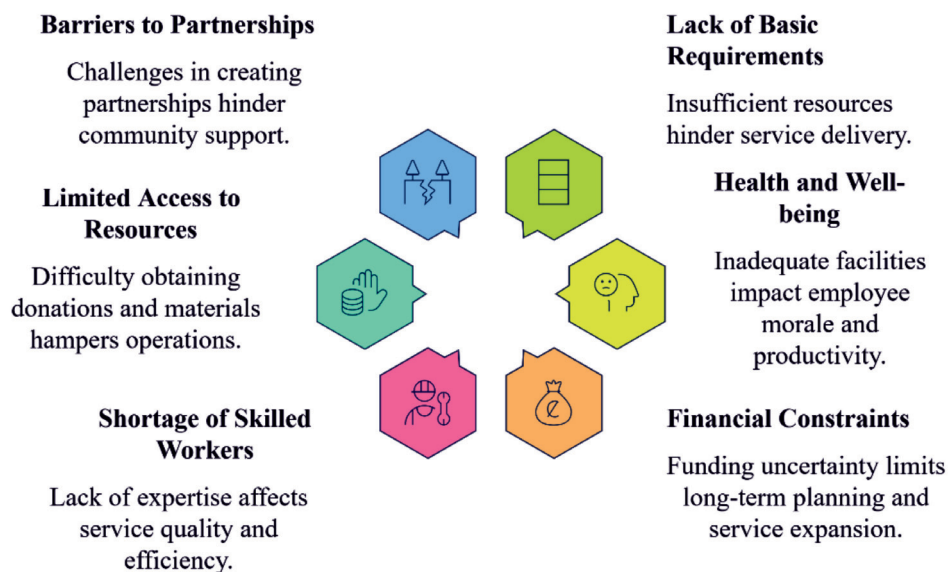
Strategies for innovation and future development

Many organizations are adopting digital tools to streamline communication, donation management, resource tracking, and engagement with both donors and beneficiaries. Respondents also report efforts to expand services to reach vulnerable populations and underserved communities. To address limited resources, organizations are implementing more efficient methods for collecting and distributing donations. Additionally, there is a recognized need for funding models that ensure consistent support, enabling programs to operate sustainably rather than relying on irregular donations. “I hope this unique idea will create a sustainable future for charitable communities as well as external community donors.” (R-9)

Theme 4: Organizational challenges affecting sustainable services and maintenance

Charitable organizations face numerous challenges that limit their capacity to deliver services efficiently and sustainably, despite

Figure 3. Challenges faced by Human Charitable Organizations



their significant contributions to the welfare of vulnerable population. Financial limitations, insufficient human resources, organizational difficulties, and technological barriers often hinder efforts to provide holistic care, healthcare support, education, resource redistribution, and social inclusion initiatives.

Lack of basic requirement

Some common needs, such as clothing, come with unique challenges. Even though many donations are received, problems can arise with sorting, keeping items clean, and making sure the right products go to the right people. While donors mean well, these gaps sometimes leave beneficiaries with unmet needs. One participant explained, “Beneficiaries greatly like the secure dorms (bedding). We maintain the seasonal gear we supply, such as blankets in the winter and lighter clothing in the summer. But still, it is insufficient sometimes.” (R- 6)

Insufficient health and wellbeing facilities

Many charity organizations encounter challenges in providing beneficiaries with adequate facilities to support their health and well-being. Beneficiaries have frequently reported dissatisfaction with medical care, citing restricted access to regular checkups, shortages of essential medications, and insufficient specialist treatment for chronic conditions or psychological concerns. Due to an absence of qualified health educators, preventive health education sessions are not frequently conducted, and many recipients are still ignorant of topics like reproductive and mental health. Another significant obstacle is access to healthcare services, as doctor visits and medical camps are irregular and largely depend on volunteer availability and external funding.

“Even though our organization values health and well-being, there are a number of obstacles that restrict what we can offer”. (R-16)

Financial constraints and funding uncertainty

A primary challenge faced by nonprofit organizations is inadequate and unreliable funding. Many organizations struggle to cover operating expenses, maintain infrastructure, procure essential supplies, and expand their services. Insufficient funding often restricts the number of beneficiaries who can be assisted and undermines the long-term sustainability of welfare programs. Securing enough funding to continue and expand our services for those in need is our biggest challenge. “Financial instability makes long-term planning particularly difficult, compelling organizations to prioritize immediate needs over sustainable growth.” (R-12)

Shortage of skilled workers and human resources

Many organizations report difficulties in recruiting and retaining volunteers, social workers, healthcare professionals, and skilled employees. This shortage of human resources limits the organization’s ability to deliver specialized services, manage programs, and respond effectively to growing community needs. Additionally, it increases the workload for existing staff members. “The shortage of qualified professionals is particularly challenging when addressing complex issues such as mental health support, healthcare services, and educational development.” (R-17)

Limited access to financial donations and material resources

Although organizations rely significantly on donations of food, clothing, educational materials, and other essential items, these resources are frequently unavailable. Fluctuations in donations can hinder service delivery and create difficulties in consistently meeting the needs of beneficiaries. Securing adequate and high-quality resources to support disadvantaged populations remains a persistent challenge for organizations. “Whenever we want to organise any training programmes and some other activities for their wellbeing then we face some financial challenges although enough.” (R-11)

Barriers to create sustainable partnerships and securing community support

Many organizations face real difficulties building lasting partnerships with businesses, government agencies, donors, and local communities. Low public awareness and uneven donor involvement make it harder for these groups to grow and gather the resources they need.

Building stronger coalitions is key to helping organizations last, reach more people, and make a bigger difference in their communities. “Limited meeting with external society’s organisation always faces obstacle regarding donation problems because people are not aware about charitable communities.” (R-16)

DISCUSSION

This discussion highlights how complex support systems of charitable organizations work, especially in areas like health, clothing, education, and social support. To understand how these systems work and what they mean, it is important to look at organizational relationships and evidence-based approaches to generosity. Charitable organizations offer a variety of services, such as educational, medical, rehabilitation, and social-pedagogical programs. The sustainability of diversified funding sources depends on expanding donation streams, such as individual giving, community support, and foundation grants. Studies of activity and culture nonprofits indicate that organizational characteristics shape both the composition and scale of charitable contributions, allowing organizations to more effectively target fundraising strategies and strengthen resilience to funding volatility (Krawczyk et al., 2017).

Studies show that these organizations make health services like primary care and mental health support more accessible, directly meeting the needs of underserved communities (Latief, 2010). Besides healthcare, they often give out clothing and educational materials, helping people meet basic needs and encouraging learning and skill development. These actions can help reduce poverty and social exclusion, and educational support fits with wider social goals. Non-profits can become more effective and sustainable by focusing on social connections and motivation (Speckbacher, 2013). While this study offers a different view from Smith-Carrier (2020), it is clear that charitable systems can create power imbalances, as providers often have more control than recipients because of the focus on direct aid. Addressing only the symptoms of social problems, instead of their root causes, can lead to ongoing dependency rather than real empowerment (McAllum, 2018).

Nonprofits are also using social media more to engage communities and develop services together (Namisango et al., 2021). Social media is a fast-growing group of online platforms where people participate and share (Pandey et al., 2020). Tools like WhatsApp are now widely used (Mishra & Kumari, 2024). Using new ways to communicate through social media improves traditional information technologies and helps promote wellness (Vedel et al., 2020). Humanitarian organizations mainly serve people in need and play an important role in meeting basic needs like healthcare, clothing, education, and social support. They usually combine community involvement, direct aid, and advocacy for broader change as their main ways of providing support (Kamimura et al., 2013).

However, donors, governments, and the public are asking more from charitable organizations in terms of accountability, transparency, and showing how effective they are. Because human behaviour is complex and the people served are so diverse, it is difficult to use standard ways of measuring performance methods usually made for public or for-profit organizations in nonprofit human services (Carnochan et al., 2013). The generation of reusable discarded goods, driven by fast fashion and consumerism, and the unmet material needs of charitable organizations highlight a significant opportunity for sustainable resource redistribution. Charitable organizations can play a vital intermediary role in extending the life cycle of reusable products, supporting vulnerable populations, reducing waste, and promoting circular economy practices through effective and digitally enabled redistribution mechanisms.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizing the significance of an organization's environment and the role of donations and its operations. According to the findings charitable organizations are aiding vulnerable populations, such as the old person and orphaned children, not only offering immediate assistance but also promoting long-term self-sufficiency. Still these charitable institutions face numerous challenges, despite the historical and cultural richness of Varanasi, by proactively identify and tackling obstacles of charities could be improved their operation, strength their relationship with donors. Future contributions in areas like education, skill enhancement, healthcare, and social integration significantly aid in sustainable social progress. However, the ongoing success and efficacy of these efforts are heavily reliant on steady donations and external support. Consequently, it is essential for individuals, organizations, and government to actively provide resources and support, allowing charitable organizations to amplify their impact and continue to work effectively toward the overall improvement of society.

DECLARATIONS

Ethical consideration and consent to participate: All data were managed in compliance with institutional and international ethical requirements, and no identifiable information has been revealed. Participants were made aware that they might leave at any time without facing any repercussions. Every procedure involving human subjects was conducted in respective manner, and each participant gave their informed consent before any data was collected.

Confidentiality, privacy, and voluntary involvement were all fully respected during the interview process.

Authors contribution: IY designed the study, developed the research design, conducted fieldwork, collected qualitative data, finalized theme analysis and data transcription, and drafted the first report with the help of SB. PS and LV monitored the whole scholarly program, contributed to the formulation of the study plan and interview guide, and critically analysed the work for intellectual content including reading and approving the final text of the article.

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Declaration of using AI tool: Authors have used AI tool-Napkin AI, Grammarly, Quillbot for improving the grammar of the text and for preparing figures.

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