



# NIRMAN

NIRMAN is a youth initiative to identify, nurture and organize young change makers to solve various societal challenges. It is an educational process to train the youth to take up crucial issues and problems in the society. NIRMAN provides guidance, expertise and environment to inculcate self learning and encourages youth for social action.



## **Background:**

SEARCH (Society for Education, Action and Research in Community Health) founded in 1986 by Dr. Abhay and Dr. Rani Bang for rural health care and research, is the parent organization of NIRMAN. As it was felt that there was a lack of emerging youth leadership to take on various developmental challenges in the state of Maharashtra, NIRMAN was started as a program under SEARCH in the year 2006. In the year 2008, SEARCH collaborated with MKCL (Maharashtra Knowledge Corporation Limited) and since then, NIRMAN has spread to various corners of Maharashtra.

Today, half of the Indian population is under 25 yrs of age. In 2020, average person in India will be 29 yrs of age, compared to 48 yrs in Japan. Clearly, youth is the face, force and future of India. NIRMAN aims to help these youngsters find meaning to their lives, to bridge the gap between the various social, scientific and technological challenges around and to unleash the tremendous potential of the youth.

## **Vision:**

NIRMAN aims to create a large group of young professionals having the desire and the capability to understand and solve the burning social problems. It plans to achieve this by developing an educational process which will facilitate a deeper search of these youth for leading a purposeful life. NIRMAN believes that such a pursuit of social problem solving will bring out the best in those individuals.

Society has problems like poverty, malnutrition, unemployment, lack of quality education, food and water scarcity, global warming, etc which are waiting to be solved. On the other hand, there are many

youth who are in pursuit of a more meaningful life, something beyond just earning money. NIRMAN attempts to create a bridge between these two things so as to fulfill both the needs.

NIRMAN believes that the self-actualization of its participants cannot take place in isolation or in the narrow confinements of a secured lifestyle. It therefore attempts to bring the youth face to face with the reality of life, enabling them to identify, analyze and solve the societal problems. NIRMAN is a continuously evolving process of problem based experiential learning and identification of self through it. It focuses on enabling the participants to understand the world outside to find the peace within.

### **Goals:**

- Educational Goals

1. To sensitize the youth towards various societal challenges by way of education through experience, exposure, efforts and experimentation.
2. To enable the youth to find out and actualize their mission and to equip them with the necessary skills, values and vision to increase the effectiveness of their work.
3. To give them opportunity and atmosphere to grow by way of 'Self Learning' and to find more meaningful and joyful purpose for their life

- Organizational Goals

1. To cultivate and sustain a large community of youth leadership who will work (fulltime or part-time) for social change and support others.
2. By working with people, to identify various problems in the society, to bring them to society's attention and to develop innovative solutions on these.

### **Educational Philosophy:**

The current education system gives lot of information, occasionally a few skills, but does not give its participants sense of purpose. And so, "What should I do with my life?" remains an unanswered question for most people. Very few get a chance to actively search for an answer.

In order to change this situation and staying true to the very purpose of education, NIRMAN encourages self – search for the development of one's life mission, something which is intellectually stimulating and emotionally satisfying.

The NIRMAN educational philosophy finds its roots in the Nayee Talim principle proposed by Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave. As against the conventional education system which compartmentalizes formal education and real life, NIRMAN aims to bridge this gap and achieve education through real problem solving.

*Education for life, Education through life and Education throughout life* is the motto of this process.

## **NIRMAN Educational Process:**

NIRMAN has developed a unique educational process to systematically cultivate young social leadership from the selected students/professionals.

As part of the NIRMAN educational process, each batch of around 150 selected youth goes through a series of 3 residential camps that are organized once in every 6 months (generally January, June and December). Each camp is of about 8 days, conducted at Shodhgram, Gadchiroli and the series continues for one year. Participants from different regional, economic and academic backgrounds add depth and breadth to this process.

Along with the camps, study visits, educative sessions, reading assignments, internships, fellowships, individual mentoring, individual volunteering and group actions are carried out. They help sensitize the youth towards societal challenges through exposure and experience. In this intermediate period between the camps, the participants keep in touch with each other and build further understanding of social issues through self-initiation and self-learning activities.

### Before the Camps - Selection Process:

The participants aspiring to join NIRMAN have to fill up an introspective [questionnaire](#) which includes questions regarding their values, goals in life, personality characteristics, decisions, interaction with social realities, etc. Based on the applications, the participants are screened for personal interviews that are conducted statewide, after which the final selection takes place.

### NIRMAN Expanse – Present Status:

Since its inception, 7 batches of NIRMAN have finished the training program. The 8<sup>th</sup> batch has commenced its journey from January 2018. Through these 8 batches, a total of 1050 youth are associated with NIRMAN. Geographically spread, these youth are from all the 36 districts in Maharashtra state and from 11 other states in India. Education wise, there are around 40% doctors, 35% engineers and a mix of lawyers, journalists, filmmakers, teachers, farmers, science-arts-commerce graduates, etc. There is a 55:45 male/female gender ratio.

### After the Camps – Starting Their Work:

After having gone through the NIRMAN process of camps, the participants commonly develop/decide on their area of interest for social contribution. Frequent discussions are carried out with the NIRMAN team and various resource persons to develop clarity regarding the individual's prospective work domain, area, role and problem definition, organizational and financial aspects so that person specific edu-action plan is chalked out.

The participants who have graduated and want to start working, generally take up one of the following five work options:

- a. Be a social entrepreneur and start one's own venture
- b. Work with different non-profit organizations with an explicit social mission
- c. Join the government system and serve the people
- d. Avail certain fellowships to work on a definite project and
- e. Work in the private sector and contribute part time for some social cause

As of May 2018, around 200 NIRMAN youth are working full time on specific social challenges in different parts of Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Assam and Odisha. Their work domains can be broadly classified as:

- Health
- Education
- Energy and Environment
- Development and Governance
- Other

These young motivated people exhibit the spirit of NIRMAN in their life choices and professional actions, daily! There are 50 more young people from NIRMAN who contributed full time in the social sector but now have taken an educational break to cultivate further skills necessary for their next endeavors in social change. **Together, these 250 (200 currently active and 50 on break) NIRMAN youth have contributed around 550 person-years of social action so far, by working with over 45 different social organization across the country.** The various problems they have chosen to work on include topics like rural electrification, watershed development, waste management, providing health services in remote rural and tribal areas, improving the implementation of national rural employment guarantee scheme, building a business model to spread books and reading culture in the rural area, research on chronic diseases and malaria, telemedicine, research on cattle breeds to improve farmers' productivity, brain based education, organic farming, environmental impact assessment, etc.

Every year, more and more participants join this league and their collective reach, variety and depth is increasing. NIRMAN is developing its advanced educational process for this pool of young change agents to further build their effectiveness and world view.

### **NIRMAN Samudaay and Associations:**

Though NIRMAN is an initiative by SEARCH and MKCL, today around 30 leading social organizations, thinkers, activists, professionals are supporting this initiative. Together this group constitutes the wider *NIRMAN Samudaay* which believes in this dream of 'solving social problems through nurturing youth leadership'.

### **Possibilities of Future Expansion:**

- \* NIRMAN is already reaching wide to all the corners of Maharashtra. There have been requests from NGOs in Karnataka, Gujrat and Jharkhand about replicating NIRMAN in their states.
- \* IIT Bombay approached NIRMAN with the request of conducting such process exclusively for their students. Accordingly, two workshops with total 50 students (B.Tech. & M.Tech.) of IIT Bombay took place in Gadchiroli in December 2014 and 2015. The process was conducted in Hindi/English and the experience has been very encouraging.

### **Further Information and Contact Details:**

Website – <http://www.nirman.mkcl.org>, Simollanghan – Newsletter - <http://simollanghan.blogspot.in>

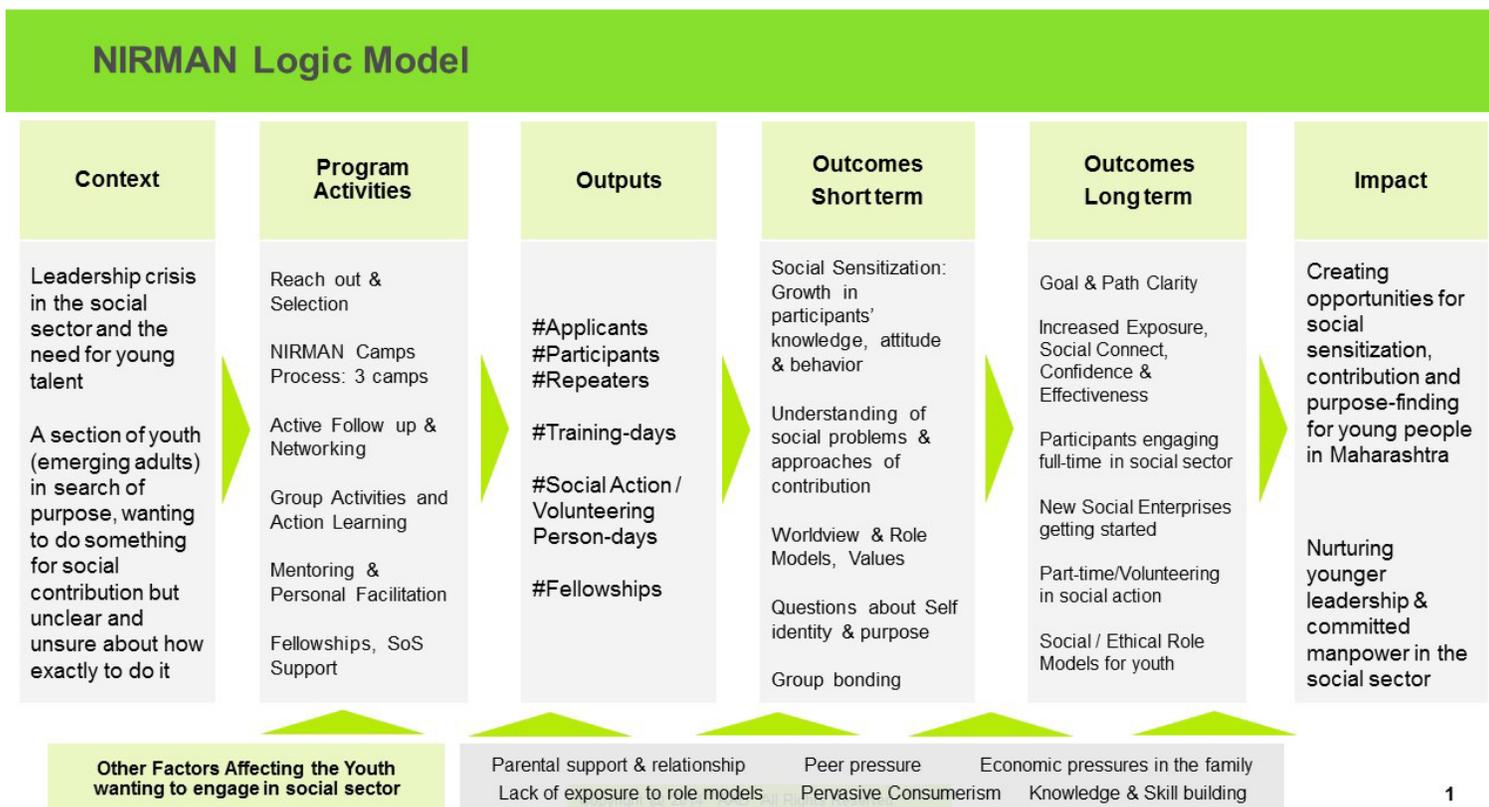
Email – [contact.nirman@gmail.com](mailto:contact.nirman@gmail.com), [nirmaanites@gmail.com](mailto:nirmaanites@gmail.com)

Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/nirmanforyouth>, YouTube - [www.youtube.com/nirmaanites](http://www.youtube.com/nirmaanites)

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# Annexure

## 1. Logic Model of the NIRMAN Program:



## 2. Developmental Perspective on Emerging Adults:

The participants in NIRMAN belong to the age group of 18 – 28, the ‘emerging adulthood’ phase. It is the age of identity exploration and the age of possibilities. For the youth interested in social issues, the key developmental questions that we have observed include the ones related to their self-identity, sense of purpose and meaning, relationship with family and partner, need for a likeminded group of friends, supportive mentoring, deeper understanding of social problems and approaches of solving them, clarity of values and conviction of decision-making, personal effectiveness and career.

NIRMAN is facilitating the youth’s search for purpose by social problem based experiential learning and identification of self through it. A few sample reflections from the participants as shown below, echo this fact and the growth they experience:

- “NIRMAN taught me to critically analyze various social problems and gave me the courage to pursue my life in a meaningful way towards my society.”
- “I got a value system, lots of guides and friends that removed my feeling of loneliness.”
- “I understood the difference between my needs and wants and got the conviction to reduce my carbon footprint. NIRMAN taught me that what I ‘need’ to do is more important than what I ‘like’. It helped me become empathetic towards people.”
- “Career is not about material achievements, it’s about touching more number of people.”

- “NIRMAN gave me confidence and vigor, nurtured my social sensitivity without forcing anything. It gave me the opportunity to serve.”

These narratives reflect the possibility of “search for purpose through pursuit of social problem solving” that is driving the participants in NIRMAN. In a before-after questionnaire survey administered to 73 participants from the recent batch of NIRMAN, 65 people said that the cause for which to work will be the most important criteria for their career decisions, 50 people wanted to work with nonprofits as a priority and the entire group on average was ready to take a pay cut of INR 32,549 from their expected salary at the age of 30.

In a situation where young people in India are continuously bombarded with consumerism and monetary competition for success, NIRMAN is offering a conducive environment and systematic possibilities for the youth participants to engage in actions of social change and find a deeper meaning to their lives.

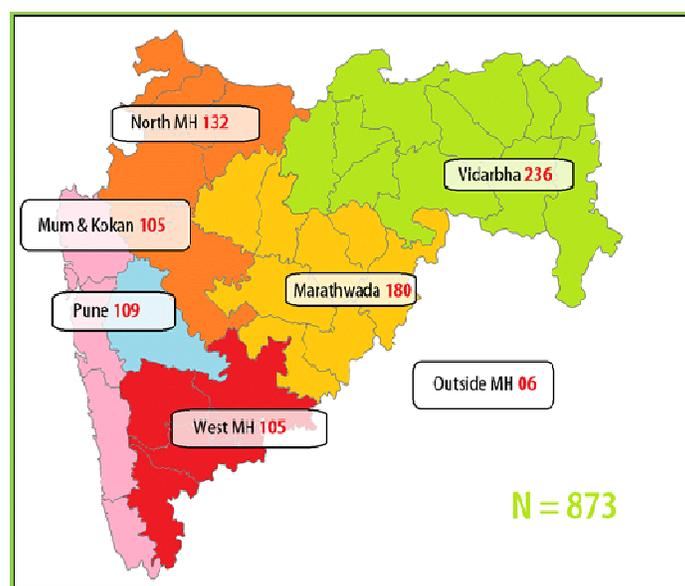
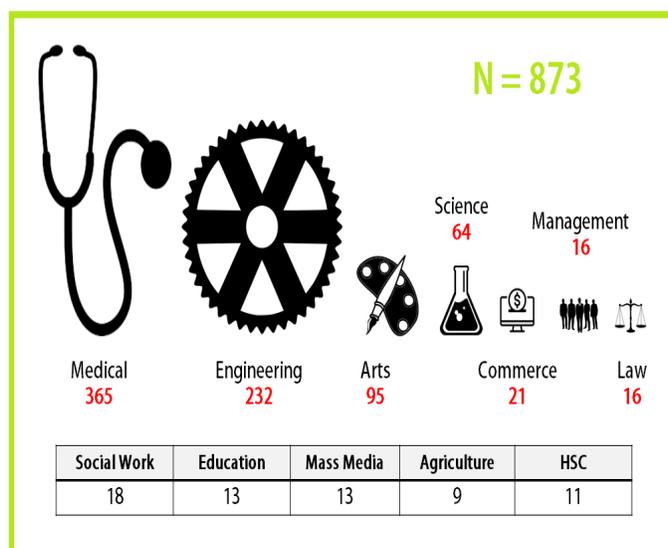
### 3. Key Elements of the NIRMAN Educational Process:

- Sensitize the youth towards societal challenges through exposure and experience
- Solidify conviction to work on social issues and develops a problem solving attitude
- Expose the young participants to the concept of Swadharma as fulfilling the Purpose of Life and give them a life philosophy and goal clarity
- Facilitate their journey towards becoming a healthy, responsible and effective adult by enabling their growth in self-awareness, appreciation of diversity, thought clarity, self-expression, confidence, spirit of experimentation, etc
- Support them to take concrete steps for social action and
- Give them a supportive groups of friends and an outstanding network

### 4. NIRMAN Impact:

Since its inception in 2006, NIRMAN has grown in various ways and its impact can be assessed on multiple dimensions:

Following data is for the first 7 batches of NIRMAN and will be updated soon.



## SOCIAL IMPACT

**Social Contribution** | 155 NIRMAN participants are currently working full time on specific social challenges and are pursuing it as their career/ life mission. 216 NIRMAN participants have worked at some point in time, as a social problem solver.

155

**Cumulative Years** | 216 NIRMAN participants have collectively contributed more than 400 person-years of social action in India's development sector.

400+

**Organizations Served** | NIRMAN participants are facilitators of positive social change in the society. Contribution is made in the form of services provided to over 45 non profit organizations, government institutions and social enterprises in Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujrat, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka.

45+

**Medical Service** | Medical professionals from NIRMAN have served the needy community in remote areas, through either NGOs or as medical officers in government health care institutions, totaling to a service of over 125 person-years.

125

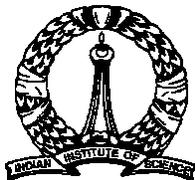
**ALM** | NIRMAN educational process goes beyond camps; Action Learning Module facilitates NIRMAN participants to learn through direct social action. In last two years, 419 NIRMAN participants have volunteered 2240 person-days of social action.

2240

Training Details	
Workshops Conducted	46
No. of Person-Training Days	16638
Resources Persons (State, National and International)	103
Fellowships Received by NIRMAN Participants	60
Closely knit Community!	
Couples in between NIRMAN participants	58
Sibling Pairs in between NIRMAN participants	54
<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>45 Lakh</b>

## Educational Institutions:

Many participants from NIRMAN have pursued advanced degrees from some of the top educational institutions including IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IIT Chennai, IIT BHU, Indian Institute of Science Bangalore, IISER Pune, All India Institute of Medical Sciences New Delhi, SGPGI Lucknow, Johns Hopkins University, Harvard University, University of Pennsylvania, George Mason University, TU Delft Netherlands, Tata Institute of Social Sciences Mumbai, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute Trivandrum, CEPT University Ahmedabad, National Institute of Design Ahmedabad, GSMC & KEM Hospital, LTMMC & Sion Hospital, GMC Nagpur, MGIMS Sevagram, etc.



राष्ट्रीय डिज़ाइन संस्थान  
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## 5. Major Institutional Support:

Society for Education, Action and Research in Community Health (SEARCH), MKCL Knowledge Foundation (MKCL-KF), Tata Trusts, Caring Friends, American India Foundation (AIF), Infosys Foundation, PCF, BAIF Development and Research Foundation etc.

## 6. Knowledge Contribution/ Research Papers Published by NIRMAN Alumni:

- [Stroke Is the Leading Cause of Death in Rural Gadchiroli: A Prospective Community-Based Study](#) – Stroke
- [High Prevalence of Stroke in Rural Gadchiroli, India: A Community-Based Study](#) – Neuro epidemiology
- [Barriers to Malaria Control among Marginalized Tribal Communities: A Qualitative Study](#) – PLOS ONE
- [Use of Ethno-Veterinary medicines \(EVM\) from Vidarbha Region \(MH\) India](#) – Bioscience Discovery
- [Food Grain vs Liquor : Maharashtra under Crisis](#) - Economic and Political Weekly
- [Oxford study validates Indian environmentalist claims](#) – India Together

## 7. Media Coverage:

There have been over ~150 articles, features, news, interviews about NIRMAN in various newspapers, magazines, TV, radio channels, social media and blogs, etc.



COMMUNITIES

## The Nirman Initiative: Encouraging Social Action in Tribal Areas

BY KIRAN KUMBHAR ON 02/09/2017 · LEAVE A COMMENT



### The Road Less Travelled

Story of a young doctor who touched the lives of tribal people in Gadchiroli (Maharashtra) through his medical service and how living in the primary health center in a remote village changed his life

## 8. Financial Contribution:

To financially contribute to NIRMAN program for various purposes like the expenses of the fellowship amounts of the NIRMAN Fellows, their workshops, participants' accommodation, food, study material, study visits during camps, travel of the facilitators, administrative and infrastructural costs, please draw a cheque or DD in favour of "SEARCH - NIRMAN" payable at Gadchiroli, Maharashtra.

For making online transfer, please use the following details:

- ❖ Account title - SEARCH-NIRMAN
- ❖ Bank Name - Bank of Maharashtra
- ❖ Branch – Gadchiroli
- ❖ Account No. - 60011788671
- ❖ IFS code - MAHB0000940

*Note: Donations to SEARCH - NIRMAN are tax exempt under section 80 G.*

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