

'Volunteers no more a jhola-clad clan'



L to R: Renu Kakkar (Vice President, Corporate Communications, Apeejay Surrendra Group), Shweta Gopalachari (Founder of Toybank), Joe Phelan (IBLF, UK), Mithu Alur (Founder of Adapt), Subhadra Anand (CEO, Save The Children), Shalabh Sahai (Founder and Director, iVolunteer) and Farida Lambay (Founder and Trustee of NGO Pratham)

By A Staff Reporter

Volunteering is picking up, but still there is much to be done. This is what a panel of experts concluded at a discussion held recently at Oxford Bookstore. While each of them shared their views on various aspects of volunteering, it was revealed that the youth is definitely enthusiastic about being volunteers. All they need is the right guidance and direction to channelise their enthusiasm.

"Volunteering is all about giving back to the society rather than just taking from it and people in the age bracket of 25 to 35 are very much interested in such activities. Our society has a very mature attitude towards volunteering and many want to do it on a sustained basis," stated Farida Lambay, Founder and Trustee, Pratham, an NGO.

Speaking about the change in perception of a volunteer, Shweta Gopalachari, Founder, Toybank said, "Volunteers are no more a jhola-clad clan. Youngsters know the importance of volunteering and they do not come to us with zero information. They do some kind of homework and know their areas of interest and also what they want to do. It is just that they

have to be trained to have the right attitude and need to be sensitised."

"The response has been good and the turnout would have been even better, provided the time and location was convenient. Mumbai is more time-specific and people want orientations to be held at places close to where they stay or work. If these factors are fulfilled, then Mumbai will definitely see a good turnout. The commitment in Mumbai is better than in other metros," asserted Shalabh Sahai, Director, iVolunteer.

Award for volunteers

Apeejay Surrendra Group in association with iVolunteer and International Business leaders Forum, UK (IBLF), on Monday, announced the Apeejay India Volunteer Awards 2011 (AVIA) that aims at recognising the work of volunteers and volunteer-engaging corporates and NGOs, across the country. The award ceremony will be held in the month of August in New Delhi.