Beneficiaries of Social Initiatives of Indic Faith-Based Organizations: Profiles, Service Experiences, and Implications

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Abstract
This article is based on a study of a sample of 966 beneficiaries of selected social initiatives across nine Indic Faith-Based Organizations (IFBOs) in India. Findings revealed that IFBO beneficiary profiles resemble the general public welfare user in terms of financial/economic status. Service experiences entailed duration, type, influence of faith in terms of teachings, vision–mission familiarity, and personnel contact. In general, there was a fairly sustained duration of service obtained and sacredness/faith permeated into varied aspects of service provision. The main beneficiary self-implication was functional need fulfillment. Some transcendental aspects and faith cohesiveness also entered the picture. Perceived implications for society were in terms of contribution to social growth and development, spreading the organizational message, and demonstration of social innovations guided by organizational ideology. Some contentions on perceived differentials vis-à-vis other social initiatives were that the teacher/members of the order and faith marked the difference.

Keywords
Indic faith-based organizations, beneficiaries, service experiences, perceived implications

Introduction
Several faith-based organizations are engaged in social service, which also entails personal spiritual growth and development of faith among the recipients (Weisbrot, 1998). This service engagement can be seen as their partnering in larger development goals in an essentially resource-limited setting (Hester, 2002; Kline, 2010; Wills et al., 2009). Generally, the main mission of faith-based organizations is to propagate faith, and hence religious imagery accompanies the service mission (Ebaugh, Pipes, Chafetz, & Daniels, 2003). This in turn influences aspects of leadership in faith-based organizations, practical functioning, finance, and policy issues (Cook, 1997). The overall understanding is to cultivate a faith-based context for service (Kaplan, Calman, Golub, Ruddock, & Billings, 2006; Kaplan et al., 2009).

This faith-based service also generates a social capital among stakeholders, as it develops communes and associations around faith institutions (Boix & Posner, 1998). Social capital is defined by Putnam (1995) as “features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit” (p. 66). Viewed as an asset for mutually beneficial collective action, Putnam (2000) has further specified two types of social capital—bonding and bridging. Bonding social capital is more inward looking and tends to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups. Bridging social capital is oriented toward external linkage to assets and information diffusion and can generate broader identities and reciprocity. Religion and faith are instruments in promoting social capital through varied institutional forms (Fukuyama, 1995). Faith-based service efforts in particular create a net of stakeholders, which take the shape of communes and habitus of adherents. In the case of social services (such as health, education, livelihood initiatives, and other social projects), there are project beneficiaries who align to these institutions.

The focus of this article is to look at the beneficiaries or recipients of social service initiatives of a particular type of faith-based organizations in India—broadly termed as Indic faith-based organizations (IFBOs). According to Berger (2003), faith-based voluntary organizations can be defined as formal organizations whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions and which operate on a nonprofit, independent voluntary basis to promote and realize...
collectively articulated ideas about the public good at the national or international levels. Although faith-based voluntary organizations operate within the same legal and political frameworks of secular civil society institutions, their missions and operations are guided by a concept of the divine and the recognition of the sacred nature of human life (Anhelm, 1999). In contrast to the rights-based approach of many secular NGOs, the starting point of religious organizations is the duty-oriented language of religion characterized by obligations toward the divine and others, by a belief in the transformative capacities and a concern for justice and reconciliation (Falk, 2001). Carlson-Thies (1999) proposed that faith-based organizations specialize in or are particularly well suited for certain kinds of social service activities such as holistic social service delivery that focuses on personal transformation. This assumption is evident in the “ur-text” of compassionate conservatism, and it is often made explicit by those who advocate for an expanded role for faith-based organizations in the social welfare system. There are conditions that facilitate the flourishing of faith-based organizations, which entail providing followers an access to the sacred at the deep level, engendering experiences of the sacred, breaking down the dichotomy between mind and body in worship so as to experiment with worship styles (sometimes including music) and hence communicating with the new generation, and giving credence to theology as emerging out of members’ own experiences of the sacred (Landres & Bolger, 2007).

The origins of Indic faith-based voluntary organizations can be traced to the 19th-century period of Hindu reform movements. Similar to congregations in the United States, these faith-based voluntary organizations have formed an integral aspect of voluntary action/initiatives in the area of welfare and development in the Indian context (Mukhopadhay, 1995; Paul Chaudhary, 1971; Sen, 1998). A theoretical support to this epistemic link comes from Weber’s emphasis on faith as an independent causal element influencing action throughout history. In the Weberian sense, just like how Calvinist modernity inspired political revolutions, which since the 17th century irreversibly transformed Western feudal societies into bourgeois democratic nation-states, the Indian version of Reformation (to use Talal Asad’s cultural contextualization) was marked by the rediscovery, reinterpretation and public dissemination of Vedanta or the philosophy of nonduality (Van Bijlert, 2003), which these organizations undertook on a grand scale.

IFBOs are those aligning and adhering to tenets of Indic faiths and syncretic tenets therein. Indic faiths are systematized faiths that have their origin in the Indian subcontinent and constitute the core subject matter of Indological studies (Madan, 2004). In terms of Indic faith-based voluntary organizations, there is a further bifurcation—those aligning to the tenets of the theistic gnostic school inferring particularly from Vedic tenets, post-Vedic developments and contemporary strands within the purview of Hinduism. The stances could be purist or syncretic depending upon the orientation of the charismatic leader/teacher (Copley, 2000). The other category is of those organizations adhering primarily to the atheistic agnostic school—the Indic pragmatists aligning to tenets of Jainism, Buddhism, and the multifarious sects and cults therein (Warrier, 2003). Beckerlegge (2003) posited these organizations as signifying a simplification of traditional tenets. “Hindu India” (as the imagination of an ideal nation conceived by them) herein is presented as an embodiment of the divine and the focus is on “service” of the “Hindu nation.” Two elements that characterize these organizations are spiritual universalism and cultural nationalism, that is, universality of the spiritual reality or Brahman and the cultural importance of “one India” (Heehs, 2003). These organizations answered challenges posed by colonialism by the “invention of tradition” and “translation of carefully selected elements of the indigenous cultural repertoire of the orient vis-à-vis the occident.” However, in doing so, they also ended up confirming the hegemonic claims of these alien categories (Fischer-Tine, 2003). These organizations are in many ways “Hinduizing agents” popularizing the nationalist ideology of Hindutva proponents. However, the contemporary phenomenon is that of avatar gurus—important element in whose endeavor to fulfill the earthly missions is the setting up of institutional organizations. There are elaborate mechanics of institutional building: ethics of seva (service) as crucial to the spirit of institution building. Thus, seva is panegyric, that is, it constitutes an expression of the Hindu topography of the self where the prototypical act of worship is the glorification of the divine (Warrier, 2003).

Characteristically thus, IFBOs have an associate/adherent base, undertake social initiatives and attempt to “reach out” and thereby also constitute a beneficiary base. The process is a dual one—wherein at one level IFBOs attempt to “serve” and at another “spread the normative-ideational message” and thereby consolidate their base. With social projects as the entry point, this article attempts to examine these IFBOs’ beneficiaries’ profiles, service experiences, and perceived implications for self and society. Through this profile mapping of IFBOs’ social service projects beneficiaries, looking at their service experiences and the perceived implications of this service for themselves and society at large, the attempt is to then broadly analyze the social stake of IFBOs. Social stake refers to understanding IFBOs as actors in civil society and as generators of social capital.
Faith-Based Program Beneficiaries

Studies have attempted to look at the effectiveness of programs administered by faith-based organizations. Primarily, the focus has been on beneficiary/clientele satisfaction as a parameter for efficacy (Ferguson, Wu, Spruijt-Metz, & Dyrness, 2007). Earlier studies are those of church-based programs for prisoner beneficiaries (Johnson, 2002; Johnson, Larson, & Pitts, 1997; O’Connor, Su, Ryan, Parikh, & Alexander, 1997) and church/congregation-based health programs for larger beneficiary groups (Brudenell, 2003; Campbell et al., 2000; Fox, Stein, Gonalez, Farrenkopf, & Dellinger, 1998). Yet another genre is on church programs for youth beneficiaries on areas of substance abuse and crime prevention (Berrien, McRoberts, & Winship, 2000; Hood, 2000). Further beneficiaries of employment generation programs of churches/congregations have been studied (Kennedy & Bielefeld, 2003; Kim, 2001). Evaluation studies on church’s work with youth and vulnerable families have also been undertaken (Thompson, 1994; Winship & Reynolds, 2003; Wuthnow, Hackett, & Hsu, 2004).

In the Indian context in particular, there are a few studies on “devotees” of faith-based organizations, with little focus on faith-based organizations’ social programs and the corresponding beneficiaries. Studies are largely descriptive accounts of socioreligious organizations highlighting their ideological underpinnings, social outreach, and implications (White, 1992; Williams, 1984). Some ethnographic works have highlighted the involvement of these organizations with “subaltern groups” or “people on the margins” (Hardimann, 2007; Shah, 2006). Translation of IFBOs’ social service efforts in the diaspora with beneficiaries of other nations (other than India) has received a mention in works of Squarcini (2000), Crnic (2009), and M. Wood (2010). Squarcini and Crnic have studied the devotees of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in the Diaspora and M. Wood has looked at the devotees of the Jalaram Bapa (a 19th-century Gujarati saint) tradition in the United Kingdom. Further specific faith and spiritual techniques of Art of Living Foundation called the Sudarshan Kriya and Pranayama (SK&P) and Integral Yoga (IY) of Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Society, have received scientific treatments. Other such practices are Integrated Meditation, Transcendental Meditation, and Raja Yoga. There is a body of systematic scientific literature examining the efficacy of SK&P procedure for health and well-being—such as efficacy for dysthymic patients and for patients of depression and melancholia (Gangadhar, Janakiramaiah, Sudarshan, & Shetty, 1999; Janakiramaiah et al., 2000). Efficacy of SK&P on brain function, regulating blood cortisol or stress hormone, and for treatment of stress, anxiety, and depression has also been studied. The effects of SK&P for improving the health and well-being of individuals with HIV/AIDS and substance abuse (Vedamurthachar et al., 2006) have also been examined as also in counseling postdisaster situations (Descilo et al., 2009). With respect to the IY technique, some of the interpretations available are that of reversal of consciousness (Dalal, 2001); and the alterations in the consciousness process (which in turn encompasses three functional subsystems—attention, awareness, and memory; Narayan, 2001). Considering that IFBOs historically have engaged in social service activities, cumulative data on their social service project beneficiaries are required. An initial effort has been made in the present study.

Method

The objectives are to examine the (a) sociodemographic profiles, (b) service experiences, (c) perceived self-society implications of the beneficiaries, and (d) perceived distinctiveness from other social initiatives. A two-stage sampling procedure was adopted. In the first stage, the range of IFBOs was mapped and the universe of IFBOs (inferring from the theistic gnostic school) was charted. With the core criteria of social engagements, the sampling frame was determined from which nine IFBOs were selected with the additional criteria of era of origin, core ideological orientation as in the vision–mission (primarily faith-oriented and spiritual or primarily political) and size. Seven of the nine organizations selected qualify as faith-based movements with a global spread and two have intercountry branches and a different kind of translocal presence entailing a virtual export of the charisma. Virtual export refers to online presence of the IFBO and its charismatic teacher. Two projects/social initiatives per organization (total 18) were identified through convenience and selective sampling. Permissions were a key component in determining which social projects would be selected. Three projects were on health issues (including outreach programs and health support services), two on livelihood issues, five on rural development, two on ecology-related issues (natural resource development) and one each on education, disaster management/rehabilitation, customized program, that is, training/outreach program backed by the IFBO’s ideology, residential institution and services for the elderly, residential institution for children, economic empowerment, and leadership skills/life skills development.

In the second stage, beneficiaries, that is, those availing of the project services on record were identified through a modified version of probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling. Herein the sites were preidentified as the 18 projects/programs of the IFBOs. The cumulative total number of beneficiaries for each project (as available in documented form) is the universe/population, which was 19,322 (across 18 project sites). One twentieth of the total (keeping in mind cost and time considerations) was the desired sample size, that is, the sampling interval was fixed at 20 and random start at one. Starting from the first project to the 18th, every 20th beneficiary was interviewed (with movement to next in range in case of nonresponse). This ensured equivalent coverage across projects as also a random and representative
sample considering the range of projects, issues covered, geographical spread as also aspects of access, permission, and language. Defining the sampling universe by placing all project beneficiaries in a single sequence and identifying the sample from the cumulative total of beneficiaries ensured a “probability proportional to project beneficiary population size” sample. The total sample size for beneficiaries is 966, and the average response rate was 74.76%. Beneficiary data were collected through a structured interview schedule. Specific questions were on sociodemographic profile, duration, and nature of service obtained, perceived influence of faith on service delivery, familiarity with respective IFBOs’ vision–mission as well as teachings and personnel contact during service delivery. Semi-open-ended questions were posed in terms of perceived implications for self, society, and perceived differentials vis-à-vis other social initiatives. Qualitative responses on perceived implications were coded using the Atlas ti computer package prior to statistical procedures. The statistical analysis was done using the SPSS 15 computer package. Univariate and bivariate analysis of data has been undertaken with regression analysis of perceived implications by beneficiaries for self and society at large. All the predictor nominal variables were recoded into binary (dummy) or suitable contrast variables for the multiple linear regression procedures.

Main Findings

Project/Program Type and Background Characteristics of Beneficiaries

As depicted in Table 1, the beneficiaries of the IFBOs under the study sampled as per the PPS sampling strategy were distributed as per the project/program type thus. Close to one fourth (26.7%) were beneficiaries of the rural development programs of the IFBOs. About 17.1% were beneficiaries of ecology-related programs and 13.5% of the health projects. Close to one tenth (9.3%) benefited from the livelihood programs followed by economic empowerment and leadership skills/life skills development programs (7.3%). Other programs included disaster management, residential institutions, and services for the elderly, customized programs referring to group-specific projects (such as training of trainers and prison programs), and educational and residential institutions for children. Age distribution revealed that majority (70.4%) were in the age groups 30 to 69 years. Close to three fifth of the beneficiaries (59.3%) resided in rural areas and approximately one fourth (26.1%) resided in semiurban settings. About 50.8% of the beneficiaries were women and 49.2% were men. Majority (62.2%) were married, about one tenth (9.5%) were never married, and close to one fourth (23.3%) were widowed. Majority (81.9%) were Hindus and the rest aligned to other religions (which included Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, and Islam in small proportions). A third (32.6%) belonged to the general category in terms of ethnicity, about 30.4% belonged to backward classes, scheduled caste (28.2%), and scheduled tribes (8.8%).

In terms of education level, one tenth of the beneficiaries were graduates and 7.8% had no formal education. Close to a fourth each had education up to primary school (23.2%), up to secondary school (24.9%), and up to higher secondary school (26%). About 8% had postgraduate and professional-level qualifications. Majority (32.6%) were undertaking agricultural labor, two fifth (20.3%) undertook part-time work, 16% were self-employed, and 12.3% were never employed. About 9.1% were in service, 5.1% were retired, and 4.6% undertook some home-based work. Approximately half (51.6%) had a monthly per capita expenditure estimate (MPCE; in INR) of less than INR500. About one third (30.1%) had an estimate ranging from INR501 to INR1,000. Hence, majority (81.7%) of the beneficiaries’ had lower expenditure levels and half were in the poverty bracket.

Service Experiences

In terms of duration of services obtained, as depicted in Table 2, more than two fifth (42.4%) had availed of project/program services of IFBOs for 2 years and more. About one fifth had obtained services for 6 months to 2 years (22.3%) and 3 to 6 months (19.2%), respectively. Hence majority (83.9%) had obtained services for 3 months and more. Nature of services obtained included approximately one third (29.9%) availing services entailing development of livelihood means. About 13.8% availed health-related services and 12.3% used watershed and farm mechanism support. Other services included renewable energy/natural resource development programs (9.9%), listening to spiritual discourse for self-development (9.3%), education services (6.1%), housing support/reconstruction (6.2%), technical support for agro/cottage industry (6.5%), residential care (95.4%), and food relief and other modes of sustenance (0.5%).

About two fifth (39.9%) of the beneficiaries did not see the influence of faith in service delivery. Close to one third (34.8%) of them perceived the influence to some extent and one fourth (25.4%) saw the influence to a large extent. In terms of familiarity/orientation to the organizational vision–mission, close to one fourth proposed that it happened at the initial stage (24.9%). About 24.1% said that the organizational vision–mission was not discussed. Few however said that it was done occasionally (21%) or that periodic sessions were held (20%). About one tenth of the beneficiaries proposed that such exercises were undertaken always. Majority (65%) of the beneficiaries were familiar with the teachings of the charismatic guru (the main teacher or seer to whom the followers have been attracted on the basis of their allure). Close to a third (32.2%) proposed that the personnel contact during service was of the monastic order members. More than two fifth (42.4%) proposed that staff contact was most during service delivery and a tenth (10.4%) proposed that they came in contact with senior member adherents.
Table 1. Project/Program Type and Background Characteristics of Beneficiaries.

| Project/program description                          | %  | Number of respondents |
|------------------------------------------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Health                                               | 13.5 | 130                   |
| Education                                            | 5.2  | 50                    |
| Livelihood                                           | 9.3  | 90                    |
| Rural development                                    | 26.7 | 258                   |
| Ecology                                              | 17.1 | 165                   |
| Disaster management/rehabilitation                   | 6.2  | 60                    |
| Customized program                                  | 6.2  | 60                    |
| Residential institutions and services for the elderly| 6.2  | 60                    |
| Residential institutions—Children                    | 2.3  | 22                    |
| Economic empowerment and leadership skills/life skills development | 7.3  | 71                    |
| Age (in years)                                       |     |                       |
| 10-14                                                | 2.5  | 24                    |
| 15-19                                                | 2.5  | 24                    |
| 20-29                                                | 14.4 | 139                   |
| 30-39                                                | 20.7 | 200                   |
| 40-49                                                | 20.6 | 199                   |
| 50-59                                                | 14.8 | 143                   |
| 60-69                                                | 14.3 | 138                   |
| 70-79                                                | 7.3  | 71                    |
| 80 and above                                         | 2.9  | 28                    |
| Place of residence                                   |     |                       |
| Rural                                                | 59.3 | 573                   |
| Semirural, semiurban                                 | 26.1 | 252                   |
| Urban                                                | 14.6 | 141                   |
| Sex                                                  |     |                       |
| Male                                                 | 49.2 | 475                   |
| Female                                               | 50.8 | 491                   |
| Marital status                                        |     |                       |
| Currently married                                    | 62.2 | 601                   |
| Never married                                        | 9.5  | 92                    |
| Widowed                                              | 23.3 | 225                   |
| Divorced                                             | 2.1  | 20                    |
| Separated                                            | 2.9  | 28                    |
| Religion                                             |     |                       |
| Hindu                                                | 81.9 | 791                   |
| Others                                               | 18.1 | 175                   |
| Ethnicity                                            |     |                       |
| Scheduled caste                                      | 28.2 | 272                   |
| Scheduled tribes                                     | 8.8  | 85                    |
| Other backward classes                               | 30.4 | 294                   |
| General/socioeconomically privileged category         | 32.6 | 315                   |
| Education level                                      |     |                       |
| No formal education                                  | 7.8  | 75                    |
| Up to primary                                        | 23.2 | 224                   |
| Up to secondary                                     | 24.9 | 241                   |
| Up to higher secondary                              | 26.0 | 251                   |
| Graduate                                             | 10.0 | 97                    |
| Postgraduate and above                               | 3.5  | 34                    |
| Professional qualifications                          | 4.6  | 44                    |
| Occupational status                                  |     |                       |
| In service                                           | 9.1  | 88                    |
| Retired                                              | 5.1  | 49                    |

(continued)
### Table 1. (continued)

| Project/program type and background characteristics | %  | Number of respondents |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Part-time work                                      | 20.3 | 196                   |
| Never employed                                      | 12.3 | 119                   |
| Self-employed                                       | 16.0 | 155                   |
| Agricultural labor                                  | 32.6 | 315                   |
| Home-based work                                     | 4.6  | 44                    |
| MPCE                                                |     |                       |
| Less than INR500                                    | 51.6 | 498                   |
| INR501 to INR1,000                                  | 30.1 | 291                   |
| INR1,001 to INR2,000                                | 13.4 | 129                   |
| INR2,001 to INR3,000                                | 2.9  | 28                    |
| INR3,001 to INR4,000                                | 2.1  | 20                    |
| Total                                               | 100.00 | 966               |

Note: MPCE = monthly per capita expenditure estimate.

### Table 2. Service Experiences.

| Service experiences | %  | Number of respondents |
|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Duration of services obtained |     |                       |
| Less than 1 month    | 4.7 | 45                    |
| 1 to 3 months        | 11.5 | 111                  |
| 3 to 6 months        | 19.2 | 185                   |
| 6 months to 2 years  | 22.3 | 215                   |
| 2 years and above    | 42.4 | 410                   |
| Nature of services obtained |     |                       |
| Discourse            | 9.3  | 90                    |
| Education services   | 6.1  | 59                    |
| Health service       | 13.8 | 133                   |
| Food relief and other modes of sustenance           | 0.5  | 5                     |
| Livelihood means    | 29.9 | 289                   |
| Watershed and farm mechanism support                | 12.3 | 119                   |
| Housing support/reconstruction                        | 6.2  | 60                    |
| Residential care                                          | 5.4  | 52                    |
| Technical support—agro/cottage industry              | 6.5  | 63                    |
| Renewable energy/natural resource development and livelihood enhancement | 9.9  | 96                    |
| Influence of faith in service delivery               |     |                       |
| Does not influence at all                            | 39.9 | 385                   |
| To some extent                                        | 34.8 | 336                   |
| To a large extent                                     | 25.4 | 245                   |
| Familiarity/orientation to the organizational vision–mission–objectives |     |                       |
| Always                                              | 9.9  | 96                    |
| Occasionally                                        | 21.0 | 203                   |
| At the initial stage                                 | 24.9 | 241                   |
| Periodic sessions held                               | 20.0 | 193                   |
| Not discussed                                       | 24.1 | 233                   |
| Familiarity with the teachings of the charismatic guru |     |                       |
| Yes                                                 | 65.0 | 628                   |
| No                                                  | 35.0 | 338                   |
| Personnel contact during service delivery            |     |                       |
| Members of the monastic order                       | 32.2 | 311                   |
| Senior member adherents                             | 10.4 | 100                   |
| Staff                                               | 42.5 | 411                   |
| Volunteers                                          | 14.9 | 144                   |
| Total                                               | 100.00 | 966               |
Table 3. Perceived Implications for Self, Society, and Distinctiveness From Other Social Initiatives.

| Perceived implications for self, society, and distinctiveness from other social initiatives | %     | Number of respondents |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| Perceived implications for self                                                            |       |                       |
| Meeting livelihood needs/self-sufficiency                                                  | 49.9  | 482                   |
| Building sense of communitas with organization                                            | 16.6  | 160                   |
| Personal growth and self-development                                                       | 16.1  | 156                   |
| Conscientization about organizational ideology                                             | 7.2   | 70                    |
| Spiritual/faith-oriented anchor points and support                                         | 10.1  | 98                    |
| Perceived implications for society                                                         |       |                       |
| Contributes to social growth and development                                               | 39.4  | 381                   |
| Support to similar other initiatives                                                      | 9.3   | 90                    |
| Demonstrates social innovations guided by organizational ideology                          | 9.1   | 88                    |
| Spreads the message                                                                        | 10.7  | 103                   |
| Service                                                                                    | 31.5  | 304                   |
| Perceptions on difference from other social initiatives                                     |       |                       |
| Faith makes the difference                                                                 | 11.8  | 114                   |
| The teacher/members of the order make the difference                                       | 32.3  | 312                   |
| Something is unique in terms of the orientation                                            | 22.3  | 215                   |
| No difference                                                                              | 16.9  | 163                   |
| Cannot say                                                                                 | 16.8  | 162                   |
| Total                                                                                      | 100.00| 966                   |

On the Pearson’s chi-square test of association, most of the background variables had significant association with the duration of services obtained. In a similar vein, some associations between background characteristics and nature of services found to be significant were place of residence, $\chi^2(18) = 565.073, p < .001$, contingency coefficient = .608; sex, $\chi^2(9) = 128.396, p < .001$, contingency coefficient = .343; ethnicity, $\chi^2(27) = 460.587, p < .001$, contingency coefficient = .568; MPCE, $\chi^2(27) = 626.791, p < .001$, contingency coefficient = .627; religion, $\chi^2(9) = 60.576, p < .001$, contingency coefficient = .243; marital status, $\chi^2(27) = 302.971, p < .001$, contingency coefficient = .489; education, $\chi^2(36) = 545.886, p < .001$, contingency coefficient = .601; and occupation, $\chi^2(36) = 1,087.537, p < .001$, contingency coefficient = .728. The association between project/program type and nature of services was highly significant, $\chi^2(45) = 3,738.323, p < .001$, contingency coefficient = .891.

In terms of influence of faith during service delivery, on the Pearson’s chi-square test of significance of association, except sex, $\chi^2(4) = 4.623, p = .099$, contingency coefficient = .069, all the other associations were significant. Further in terms of familiarity/orientation to organizational vision–mission–objectives (i.e., the primary ideology and goal with which they work and things they propose to do), except religion, $\chi^2(4) = 1.227, p = .874$, contingency coefficient = .036, all the other associations were significant. This shows the bridging character of IFBOs wherein familiarization of organizational vision–mission–objectives to those who came in contact happened irrespective of their religion of origin.

Similarly in terms of familiarity with teachings of the charismatic guru, all associations were significant, except sex, $\chi^2(1) = 0.944, p = .331$, contingency coefficient = .031, and to some extent religion, $\chi^2(2) = 6.099, p = .047$, contingency coefficient = .079. In terms of personnel contact during service delivery, on the Pearson’s chi-square test of significance, all the associations except religion were significant. This probably provides testimony to the fact that IFBOs undertake mass outreach through monastic order members, senior adherents, staff, and volunteers and endeavor to cater to maximum possible beneficiaries irrespective of their religion of origin. The idea could be to accumulate as much religious capital and brand building through bridging policies.

Perceived Implications for Self, Society, and Distinctiveness From Other Social Initiatives

In terms of implications for self, as depicted in Table 3, approximately half (49.9%) of the respondents proposed that IFBOs projects enabled meeting their livelihood needs and ensured self-sufficiency. About 16.6% saw them as building a camaraderie/communitas with the organization and 16.1% viewed them as enabling personal growth and self-development. Close to one tenth (10.1%) perceived the implications for themselves as providing spiritual/faith-oriented anchor points and support and 7.2% perceived the social service projects of the IFBOs as modes of enabling conscientization on the organizational ideology. In terms of beneficiaries’ perceived implications of the IFBOs social service involvement for the society, about two fifth (39.4%) saw the IFBOs
as contributing to social growth and development. The direct corollary was that of service (31.5%)—IFBOs engagement perceived as doing noble service to society. Close to one tenth proposed that the IFBOs through their service projects enabled spreading the organizational message (10.7%), provided support to similar other initiatives (9.3%) and demonstrated social innovations guided by organizational ideology (9.1%).

In terms of perceptions of difference from other social initiatives, approximately one third (32.3%) of the beneficiaries proposed that the teacher/members of the order made the difference. A little more than one fifth (22.3%) proposed that something is unique in terms of orientation (i.e., they felt that something was different and distinct in their ideology and approach)—however, they could not articulate the exact nature of the difference. About 16.9% said that there was no difference between IFBOs social initiatives and those of other organizations and an equal proportion (16.8%) said that they could not say what the difference was. However, about one tenth (11.8%) of the beneficiaries clearly proposed that faith made the difference.

On the Pearson’s chi-square test of significance, all the associations between background characteristics and intermediary variables/constructs. The standard error of for society were significant. Hence, all the factors of the background variables contributed in some measure to differentials in views on perceived implications of the IFBOs social service engagement for society. In terms of perspectives on difference vis-à-vis other social initiatives, on the Pearson’s chi-square test of significance, except religion all the other associations were significant. Hence, religion of the beneficiaries did not significantly affect their perceptions on whether the IFBO social initiatives were different vis-à-vis other social initiatives. All associations between service experiences variables and perceived distinctiveness of IFBOs social initiatives, were significant as follows: duration of services, \( \chi^2(16) = 39.766, p < .001 \), contingency coefficient = .199; nature of services, \( \chi^2(36) = 308.615, p < .001 \), contingency coefficient = .492; influence of faith during service delivery, \( \chi^2(8) = 90.520, p < .001 \), contingency coefficient = .293; familiarity with organizational vision–mission–objectives, \( \chi^2(16) = 236.597, p < .001 \), contingency coefficient = .444; familiarity with the teachings of the charismatic guru, \( \chi^2(4) = 106.579, p < .001 \), contingency coefficient = .315; and, personnel contact during service delivery, \( \chi^2(12) = 58.071, p < .001 \), contingency coefficient = .240.

In the regression model depicted in Table 4, the adjusted \( R^2 \) is 27.5%, that is, about 27.5% of the variability of the perceived implications on self (of beneficiaries’ of IFBOs’ services/projects) is explained by background characteristics and intermediary variables/constructs. The standard error of

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for Perceived Implications for Self of Beneficiaries by Background Characteristics and Intermediary Variables (Coefficients*).

| Model                  | Unstandardized coefficients | Standardized coefficients | t    | p   |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|------|-----|
|                        | B      | SE    | \( \beta \) |       | B    | SE    |
| Constant               | 1.716  | .356  | 4.816         | .000  |      |       |
| Organization           | -0.026 | .025  | -0.050        | -1.032| .302 |
| Project or program description | 0.088  | .016  | 0.199         | 5.002 | .000 |
| Age                    | 0.028  | .022  | 0.040         | 1.262 | .207 |
| Place of residence     | -0.050 | .064  | -0.027        | -0.778| .437 |
| Sex                    | -0.064 | .081  | -0.023        | -0.785| .432 |
| Marital status         | -0.043 | .037  | -0.034        | -1.170| .242 |
| Religion               | 0.026  | .021  | 0.037         | 1.241 | .215 |
| Ethnicity              | 0.072  | .036  | 0.063         | 1.979 | .048 |
| Education level        | 0.018  | .035  | 0.019         | 0.516 | .060 |
| Occupational status    | -0.063 | .027  | -0.080        | -2.310| .021 |
| Monthly per capita expenditure | 0.246  | .061  | 0.170         | 4.024 | .000 |
| Duration of service obtained | 0.087  | .034  | 0.077         | 2.514 | .012 |
| Nature of services obtained | 0.007  | .002  | 0.153         | 4.259 | .000 |
| Influence of faith     | 0.171  | .063  | 0.100         | 2.733 | .006 |
| Familiarity/orientation to organizational vision–mission–objectives | -0.154 | .034  | -0.147        | -4.495| .000 |
| Familiarity with teachings of the charismatic guru | -0.335 | .096  | -0.117        | -3.504| .000 |
| Personnel that one comes in contact with while service delivery | -0.022 | .041  | -0.018        | -0.537| .591 |

*Dependent variable: Implications for self.
the estimate or the unexplained variability is 1.15867. Further model significance is through $F$-test statistic $= 21.377$, $p < .001$, referring to the fact that at least one predictor is significantly influencing the dependent variable. Coefficientwise significance is depicted through the $t$-test values. The predictors that are significantly related to implications for self of the beneficiaries are project/program type, ethnicity, occupational status, MPCE, duration of services obtained, nature of services obtained, perceptions on faith influence in service delivery, familiarity/orientation to organizational vision/mission, and familiarity with the teachings of the charismatic guru.

In the regression model specified in Table 5, the adjusted $R^2$ is 19.2%, that is, about 19.2% of the variability of the beneficiaries’ perceived implications for society is explained by background characteristics and intermediary variables/constructs. The standard error of the estimate or the unexplained variability is 1.56176. Further model significance is through $F$-test statistic $= 13.725$, $p < .001$, referring to the fact that at least one predictor is significantly influencing the dependent variable. Coefficientwise significance is depicted through the $t$-test values. The predictors that are significantly related to beneficiaries’ perceived implications for society are organization, project/program type, age, place of residence, occupation status, MPCE, nature of services obtained, perceptions on faith influence in service delivery, and familiarity/orientation to organizational vision/mission.

In the regression model depicted in Table 6, the adjusted $R^2$ is 19.4%, that is, about 19.4% of the variability of the beneficiaries’ perceived difference of IFBOs social initiatives vis-à-vis other social initiatives is explained by background characteristics and intermediary variables/constructs. The standard error of the estimate or the unexplained variability is 1.14740. Further model significance is through $F$-test statistic $= 13.898$, $p < .001$, referring to the fact that at least one predictor is significantly influencing the dependent variable. Coefficientwise significance is depicted through the $t$-test values. The predictors that are significantly related to beneficiaries’ perceived difference of IFBOs social initiatives vis-à-vis other social initiatives are project/program type, spoken, nature of services obtained, familiarity/orientation to organizational vision/mission/objectives and familiarity with the teachings of the charismatic guru. However, in all the three regression models, the coefficient of variance for regression is greater than 10%, and hence they are not useful for prediction purposes.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

IFBOs’ beneficiary respondents of the study aligned to a range of programs, the core ones being rural development, ecology, health as also livelihood development, and economic empowerment projects. Residential services and customized programs also featured on the list. From Wuthnow et al.’s findings (2004), it can be concluded that the

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**Table 5.** Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for Perceived Implications for Society by Background Characteristics and Intermediary Variables (Coefficients*).

| Model | Unstandardized coefficients | Standardized coefficients | t | p |
|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|
|       | B  | SE | β  | B  | SE |     |     |
| 1     | Constant | 0.887 | .480 | 1.846 | .065 |     |     |
|       | Organization | 0.281 | .034 | .427 | 8.346 | .000 |     |     |
|       | Project or program description | -0.079 | .022 | -.140 | -3.660 | .000 |     |     |
|       | Age | 0.107 | .030 | .121 | 3.598 | .000 |     |     |
|       | Place of residence | -0.293 | .086 | -.124 | -3.385 | .001 |     |     |
|       | Sex | -0.170 | .109 | -.049 | -1.557 | .120 |     |     |
|       | Marital status | -0.067 | .050 | -.041 | -1.348 | .178 |     |     |
|       | Religion | -0.043 | .028 | -.048 | -1.516 | .130 |     |     |
|       | Ethnicity | -0.051 | .049 | -.035 | -1.043 | .297 |     |     |
|       | Education level | 0.076 | .047 | .064 | 1.618 | .106 |     |     |
|       | Occupational status | 0.151 | .037 | .149 | 4.097 | .000 |     |     |
|       | Monthly per capita expenditure | 0.157 | .082 | .085 | 1.910 | .056 |     |     |
|       | Duration of service obtained | -0.070 | .046 | -.049 | -1.505 | .133 |     |     |
|       | Nature of services obtained | -0.007 | .002 | -.115 | -3.026 | .003 |     |     |
|       | Influence of faith | 0.431 | .084 | .197 | 5.112 | .000 |     |     |
|       | Familiarity/orientation to organizational vision–mission–objectives | 0.092 | .046 | .069 | 1.998 | .046 |     |     |
|       | Familiarity with teachings of the charismatic guru | 0.065 | .129 | .018 | 0.504 | .615 |     |     |
|       | Personnel that one comes in contact with while service delivery | -0.003 | .055 | -.002 | -0.060 | .952 |     |     |

*Dependent variable: Perceived implications for society.
recipients/beneficiary profiles of IFBO services resemble those of general public welfare user profile in terms of financial/economic status. However, contrary to global faith-based organizations that claim to attract a diverse constituency of people with needs, the IFBOs under study had a different take. Although they claim to cater to a cross-sectional beneficiary group, in reality, the leaning is more toward majoritarian/Hindu preferences. This takes the form of ethnoreligious nationalism, which asserts the primacy of Hindu worldview (which is the religion of the majority in India) and seeks to establish a Hindu nation based upon conservative interpretation of Hindu religious values (Hansen, 2009). Hence, vis-à-vis Putnam’s bridging capital, what is probably seen in terms of IFBO beneficiary outreach is a selective-exclusive bridging—cross-sectional in principle but parochial in reality. This could also be due to the faith paraphernalia that generally accompanies the service delivery package. Access/service attainment then automatically gets restricted to those for whom the accompaniment is palatable (this is assuming that in a social service providing scenario with multiple choices, recipients have the agency of informed decision making).

Faith influence in service delivery and the degree of beneficiaries’ familiarity with respective IFBO ideologies and teachings of the charismatic guru shows the faith-embeddedness of IFBOs’ service. Faith-embeddedness refers to the fact that all social service activities of these IFBOs have a strong and ingrained component of faith in them. The idea is to bring faith in the public forum beyond rituals and toward a community orientation (Isaac, 2003). This is what then the beneficiaries tended to identify as an anchor. Sacredness as permeating into varied aspects of the social—diffusing but never diminishing, becomes the operational protocol (McCorkle, Bohn, Hughes, & Kim, 2005). Although the comprehension of IFBOs’ social services is within certain cultural–social–economic–political contexts (see Bertrand, 2005; Johnsdotter, Ingvarsdotter, Östman, & Carlbom, 2011), faith revivifies the service story (see also Gilbert, 2010; Joseph, 2011). Furthermore, although the service per se has an unblemished, puritan overtone with the modus operandi belying a secularist feel, components of the IFBOs’ characters seep into the beneficiary consciousness as well (see E. Wood, Watson, & Hayter, 2011). One of the ways this happens is the recognition and acceptance of religiosity/spirituality as an important psychosocial variable (see also Pargament, Murray-Swank, & Tarakeshwar, 2005; Pesut, Clark, Maxwell, & Michalak, 2011; Schettino et al., 2011). This religiosity/spirituality, in relation to the “beneficiary self,” leads to virtue and cultural development (see also Sandage & Harden, 2011).

The fourfold beneficiaries’ perceived implications of self can be grouped as (a) functional need fulfillment, (b) self-enhancement and actualization, (c) communitas development, and (c) faith-embeddedness. Functional need fulfillment is generally seen as enhancing the quality of life, providing social support and aiding coping and adjustment efforts, that is, sociocultural adaptation (see also Ai, Tice, Table 6. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for Perceived Difference Vis-à-Vis Other Social Initiatives by Background Characteristics and Intermediary Variables (Coefficients*).
Huang, Rodgers, & Bolling, 2008; Klemens & Bikos, 2009; Krause, 2010; Somlai & Heckman, 2000). Self-enhancement and actualization is viewed as a processual focus on consciousness—transcending the ego and cultivating an image of God in the psyche. A dual emphasis is thus placed on the totality of the conscious and unconscious mind; and God image as an object relational concept tending toward the divine (see also Aird, Scott, McGrath, Najman, & Al Mamun, 2010; Schap-Jonker, Eurlings-Bontekoe, Verhagen, & Zock, 2002; Watts, 2000). Inferring from Valentine and Sweet (1999), it can be said that IFBOs mediate a mindfulness among the beneficiaries—of the faith orientation and the charismatic guru. Most of them who are aware and familiar with the teachings and IFBO vision—mission valorize them and align to them—consciously and unconsciously.

There develops, among the beneficiary subset, a trajectory of relational and contextual reasoning entailing recognition, reconciliation, and transcendence of contradiction (Blakeney, Blakeney, & Reich, 2005) toward a spiritual awakening of sorts. The beneficiary self is deemed to then move from an existential split to a recovered integrity facilitated by the IFBOs (see also Tarakeshwar, Hansen, Kochman, & Sikkema, 2005). Communitas development entails a subjective social support through the faith-based program participation (see also Dulin, 2005). Faith-embeddedness is a manifestation of salience and practice frequency and belief in the remedial capacities of divine intervention—something that emerges out of faith-based program affiliation (see also Baker & Cruickshank, 2009; Kwilecki, 2004; Village, 2005).

For IFBOs, the mandate is to bring faith back into the public realm. The service ideology is mediated actively by religious–civil practices combining philanthropy and rituals. Norms of community organizing around the faith principle are created. Hence, in mapping the beneficiary contours of IFBOs, what also emerges is that apart from service provision and material need fulfillment, the mandate of ideational/ideological proliferation persists. Hence the social capital formation and social outreach through the social service exercise does get colored to some extent with the “faith agenda” of the IFBOs. In the complexity of the fabric with the “push of spirituality” does get colored to some extent with the “faith agenda” of the IFBOs. In the complexity of the fabric with the “push of spirituality” does get colored to some extent with the “faith agenda” of the IFBOs.

Draw boundaries of mandate and determining the “best fit” service package that does not impinge too hard ideationally on the beneficiaries’ belief systems remains a challenge.

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