

About NSS

1. In India, the idea of involving students in the task of national service dates back to the times of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation. The central theme which he tried to impress upon his student audience time and again, was that they should always keep before them, their social responsibility. The first duty of the students should be, not to treat their period of study as one of the opportunities for indulgence in intellectual luxury, but for preparing themselves for final dedication in the service of those who provided the sinews of the nation with the national goods & services so essential to society. Advising them to form a living contact with the community in whose midst their institution is located, he suggested that instead of undertaking academic research about economic and social disability, the students should do "something positive so that the life of the villagers might be raised to a higher material and moral level".
2. The post-independence era was marked by an urge for introducing social service for students, both as a measure of educational reform and as a means to improve the quality of educated manpower. The University Grants Commission headed by Dr. Radhakrishnan recommended introduction of national service in the academic institutions on a voluntary basis with a view to developing healthy contacts between the students and teachers on the one hand and establishing a constructive linkage between the campus and the community on the other hand.
3. The idea was again considered by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) at its meeting held in January, 1950. After examining the various aspects of the matter and in the light of experience of other countries in this field, the Board recommended that students should devote some time to manual work on a voluntary basis and that the teachers should also associate with them in such work. In the draft First Five Year Plan adopted by the Government of India in 1952, the need for social and labour service for students for one year was further stressed. Consequent upon this, labour and social service camps, campus work projects, village apprenticeship scheme etc. were put into operation by various educational institutions, In 1958, the then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his letter to the Chief-Ministers, mooted the idea of having social service as a prerequisite for graduation. He further directed the Ministry of Education to formulate a suitable scheme for introduction of national service into the academic institutions.
4. In 1959, a draft outline of the scheme was placed before the Education Minister's Conference. The Conference was unanimous about the urgent need for trying out a workable scheme for national service. In view of the fact that education as it was imparted in schools and colleges, left something to be desired and it was necessary to supplement it with programmes which would arouse interest the social and economic reconstruction of the country. It was viewed that

if the objectives of the scheme were to be realized, it was essential to integrate social service with the educational process as early as possible. The Conference suggested the appointment of a committee to work out details of the proposed pilot project. In pursuance of these recommendations, a National Service Committee was appointed under the Chairmanship of Dr. C.D. Deshmukh on August 28, 1959 to make concrete suggestions in this direction. The committee recommended that national service for a period of nine months to a year may be made compulsory for all students completing high school education and intending to enroll themselves in a college or a university. The scheme was to include some military training, social service, manual labour and general education. The recommendations of the Committee could not be accepted because of its financial implications and difficulties in implementation.

5. In 1960, at the instance of the Government of India, Prof. K.G. Saiyidain studied national service by students implemented in several countries of the world and submitted his report under the title "National Service for the Youth" to the Government with a number of recommendations as to what could be done in India to develop a feasible scheme of social service by students. It was also recommended that social service camps should be open to students as well as non-students within the prescribed age group for better inter-relationship.
6. The Education Commission headed by Dr. D.S. Kothari (1964-66) recommended that students at all stages of education should be associated with some form of social service. This was taken into account by the State Education Minister during their conference in April 1967 and they recommended that at the university stage, students could be permitted to join the National Cadet Corps (NCC) which was already in existence on a voluntary basis and an alternative to this could be offered to them in the form of a new programme called the National Service Scheme (NSS). Promising sportsmen, however, should be exempted from both and allowed to join another scheme called the National Sports Organisation (NSO), in view of the need to give priority to the development of sports and athletics.
7. The Vice-Chancellors' Conference in September, 1969 welcomed this recommendation and suggested that a special committee of Vice Chancellors could be set up to examine this question in detail. In the statement of national policy on education of the Government of India, it was laid down that work experience and national service should be an integral part of education. In May, 1969, a conference of the students' representatives of the universities and institutions of higher learning convened by the Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission also unanimously declared 'that national service could be a powerful instrument for national integration. It could be used to introduce urban students to rural life. Projects of permanent

value could also be undertaken as a symbol of the contribution of the student community to the progress and upliftment of the nation.

8. The details were soon worked out and the Planning Commission sanctioned an outlay budget of Rs. 5 Crores for National Service Scheme (NSS) during the Fourth Five Year Plan. It was stipulated that the NSS programme should be started as a pilot project in selected institutions and universities.
9. On September 24, 1969, the then Union Education Minister Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao, launched the NSS programme in 37 universities covering all States and simultaneously requested the Chief Ministers of States for their cooperation and help. It was appropriate that the programme was started during the Gandhi Centenary Year as it was Gandhi Ji who inspired the Indian youth to participate in the movement for India's independence and the social upliftment of the downtrodden masses of our nation.
10. The cardinal principle of the programme is that it is organised by the students themselves and both students and teachers through their combined participation in social service, get a sense of involvement in the tasks of national development. Besides, the students, particularly, obtain work experience which might help them to find avenues of self-employment or employment in any organisation at the end of their university career. The initial financial arrangements provided for an expenditure of Rs. 120/- per NSS student per annum to be shared by the Central and the State Governments in the ratio of 7:5 i.e. the Central Government spending Rs. 70/- and State Governments Rs. 50/- respectively per NSS student per year. An amount of Rs. 120/- per NSS student per annum on programmes to be shared by the Central and State Governments in the ratio of 7:5 (i.e. Rs. 70/- per student by the central government and Rs. 50/- per student by the State Governments). Now, the NSS is a Central Sector Scheme of Government of India and to run its activities & Programmes in all the States and Union Territories are fully funded by the Central Government. Keeping the inflation in view, the budget for Special Camping and regular Activities is as follows:
 - Regular Activities: Rs.400/- per volunteer, per annum.
 - Special Camping Programme: Rs.700/- per volunteer, for two consecutive years.

□ The scheme now extends to all the states/Union Territories and universities in the country and covers Councils of +2 level in the country also in many states. Students, teachers, guardians, persons in authority in government, universities and colleges/schools and the people in general now realize the need and significance of NSS. It has aroused among the student youth an awareness of the realities of life, a better understanding and appreciation of the problems of the people. NSS is, thus, a concrete attempt in making campus relevant to the

needs of the community. There are several instances of excellent work and exemplary conduct of NSS units which have earned them appreciation respect and confidence of the people. The special camping programmes organised under the themes of 'Youth Against Famine (1973)', 'Youth Against Dirt & Disease (1974-75)', 'Youth for Eco-Development' and 'Youth for Rural Reconstruction' 'Youth for National Development and Youth for Literacy (1985-93)' 'Youth for National Integration and Communal Harmony (1993-95)' have resulted in gains both to the community as well as to the students. The theme for the year 1995-96 onwards for Special Camping is Youth for Sustainable Development with focus on Watershed Management and Water land Development'. Themes have been selected in accordance with national priorities. Also, from 1991-92 onwards NSS has launched a nationwide campaign on AIDS Awareness called "Universities Talk AIDS" (UTA) which has earned international attention and appreciation.

□ Community service rendered by university and +2 level students has covered several aspects like adoption of villages & Urban slums for intensive development work, carrying out the medico-social surveys, setting up of medical centres, programmes of mass immunization, sanitation drives, adult education programmes for the weaker sections of the community, blood donation, helping patients in hospitals, helping inmates of orphanages and the physically handicapped etc. NSS volunteers rendered commendable relief work during natural calamities/emergencies such as cyclones, floods, famine, earthquake, tsunamis etc from time to time all over the country. The NSS students have also done useful work in organising campaigns for eradication of social evils, and popularization of the nationally accepted objectives like nationalism, democracy, secularism, social harmony and development of scientific temper.

The main objectives of National Service Scheme (NSS) are:

- i. understand the community in which they work
- ii. understand themselves in relation to their community
- iii. identify the needs and problems of the community and involve them in problem-solving
- iv. develop among themselves a sense of social and civic responsibility
- v. utilise their knowledge in finding practical solutions to individual and community problems
- vi. develop competence required for group-living and sharing of responsibilities
- vii. gain skills in mobilising community participation
- viii. acquire leadership qualities and democratic attitudes

- ix. develop capacity to meet emergencies and natural disasters and
- x. practise national integration and social harmony

Regular Activities

NSS volunteers generally work in villages, slums and voluntary agencies to complete 120 hours of regular activities during an academic year. As per the fundamental principles of National Service Scheme, a volunteer is expected to remain in constant touch with the community. Hence, it is of vital importance that a particular village/slum is selected for implementation of NSS programmes. As the NSS volunteer is to live with the members of the community during the 7 days Special Camping Programme and learn from their experience during his/her tenure in NSS, the village/slum should be carefully selected for adoption by NSS unit.

1. Adoption of Villages

1.1 Adoption of a village and area is a very meaningful programme in NSS. It is far better to concentrate attention on one village and take up the task for development perspective, than to fritter away energy in many locations involving too many activities which may not be completed at all or where the follow up action may not be possible. From this point of view, village adoption programme should ensure continuity of work vis-a-vis sustained action, evaluation and follow up work.

Contacting Village/Area Leaders

1.2 As a first step in this programme, it is necessary to establish contact with more than one village which would help to select a village where 'Leadership' is well established. In other words, selecting a village with proper leadership is very important as the sustained follow up action and evaluation is ensured in such places. To start with, the NSS unit can take the help of the Block Authorities, District Panchayat Officer, District Tribal Welfare Officer, District Medical Officer, Extension Officer of Agriculture, Irrigation and Education Departments for the selection of the village. It is to be noted that the selected villages should be within a short distance from the college so that constant contact can easily be made.

Survey of the Village/Area

1.3 Before drawing up the plan of action, it is absolutely necessary to conduct a comprehensive survey of few villages situated at a short distance from the college. The assistance from the teachers and students of agriculture, economics, commerce, geography, statistics, home science, social work, medicine, psychology and education etc. have to be sought for the purpose. Conducting socio-economic survey can be an interesting field activity which has direct bearing on the curriculum of economics, commerce, statistics, psychology, health

education etc. The report of such a survey will provide up-to-date information about the problems and potentials of the village and help in programme planning for village development. The applied field work will help the students to increase their analytical ability and deepen their thinking. Further, this will help them to identify the problems which have been left unnoticed. The survey work can also be accomplished with the help of PRA exercises (Participatory Rural Appraisal)

Identification of Problem(s)

1.4 It is on the basis of this need assessment that projects/programmes are to be formulated. The programme officers should use their discretion and should identify the projects which can be completed by seeking assistance from the communities/other agencies.

1.5 The aim of adoption of village or area is to give new ideas of development to the villagers which would improve their living conditions. Once the trust of the communities is won, they start cooperating with the NSS volunteers and approach them for solution of their problems. One of the important services that can be rendered by NSS volunteers is disseminating information about the latest developments in agriculture, watershed management, wastelands development, non-conventional energy, low cost housing, sanitation, nutrition and personal hygiene, schemes for skill development, income generation, government schemes such as Swachh Bharat, Ayushman Bharat, Accessible India, Digital India, Beti Bachao and Beti Padhao, Environment and Energy Conservation and Education, legal aid, consumer protection and allied field.

1.6 The Programme Officers (PO) should motivate the communities to involve themselves with NSS for the community development work undertaken by the NSS unit. Further he or she will have to seek the help of various government departments and agencies for technical advice and financial assistance. Therefore, he/she must establish good rapport with the government officials and development agencies. For this, it is better if the administration is taken into confidence by prior consultations.

Completion of Projects

1.7 As already stated, the Programme Officer must select the projects very carefully as the image of NSS depends upon the successful completion of such projects. Successful completion of the projects can win appreciation and credit of the community'

Evaluation of Project

1.8 Every project should be evaluated after its completion by involving members of the community, Government officials and Panchayat officials. The NSS unit should learn from the

lapses in the execution of the project and plan for the next project keeping in view the bottlenecks and constraints faced by them during the earlier project.

2. Adoption of Slums

Most of the colleges and universities are usually located in the urban areas. Due to long distance between the college campuses and the villages, the visits to the adopted villages by the NSS volunteers may become expensive and time consuming. In view of this, it is desirable to adopt slum especially by colleges located in urban areas.

Survey of the Slum

2.1 For adoption of a slum, there should be composite survey team consisting of students drawn from faculties like, Arts, Science, Engineering, Medicine, Home Science and Social Work etc. The selected areas should be compact and should be easily accessible for students. Areas with acute political conflicts may be avoided.

2.2 The issues pertaining to the identification of problems, project planning, interaction and coordination with the various departmental agencies, execution and completion of projects shall be undertaken on the same basis/lines as discussed earlier in the part 'Adoption of Villages'. The progress of projects should also be reviewed frequently.

Services in Slums

2.3 The slum, tenements, Jhuggis and Jhoupri can be adopted by the NSS units with the aim of slum improvement. Under this, activities like providing water, water logging, sanitation, electricity, drainage, health and welfare services, life and living conditions, can be undertaken.

NSS volunteers for Slum Work

2.4 Taking into account the living conditions & status of slum dwellers of the slums, only highly motivated, adaptable, mature and skilled students should be selected for slum development.

2.5 Following are the tasks which the students can undertake in slum areas:-

(a) As Community Investigators: They can prepare brief community profile on various slums in the city or town covering different amenities, services, and living conditions etc.

(b) As Community Workers: They can identify local leaders and in cooperation with them discuss local problems on which cooperative action can be initiated.

(c) As Programme Aides: Students can help the local communities' in launching a number of programmes like setting up a free milk distribution centre, sanitation drive, recreation, adult lad primary education, health projects like immunization. first aid centre, child care, nutrition classes, and free legal aid centres etc. They can also help in forming youth clubs, children's groups, mahila mandals etc.

(d) As Community Organizers: NSS students, after establishing rapport with the slum dwellers, can form community association to tackle local problems on a group basis with reliance on local resources, self help and mutual aid and with some minimum external assistance.

Some suggestions for Selection of slums

- (i) There should be a socio-economic survey of the slum by a team of volunteers drawn from different faculties;
- (ii) The selected area should be compact. There should not be more than 300 residents in an adopted slum;
- (iii) The community people should be receptive to the ideas of improving their living standard. They should also be ready to coordinate and involve in the projects undertaken by the NSS for their upliftment;
- (iv) The areas where political conflicts are likely to arise should be avoided by the NSS units;
- (v) The area should be easily accessible to the NSS volunteers to undertake frequent visits to slums;
- (vi) The working in the slum needs commitment and hard work. Only sensitive and highly motivated NSS volunteers can find easy to serve in slum areas.

3. Coordination with Voluntary Organizations

It may be noted that the NSS unit has no financial resource to implement any programme in the adopted villages or slum on its own. Therefore, a successful unit has to closely coordinate with the government agencies and voluntary organisations working in this field.

3.1 After identification of the needs of the community and the selection of projects, the programme officer should look for the Government agency or a voluntary organisation who can assist in the completion of a particular project. The different departments of the Government like forest, agriculture, adult education, health, child and family welfare, can render very useful assistance to the project pertaining to community work. Voluntary organisations can also help in forming public opinion in favour of NSS projects. Adult education samitis, Nasha Bandi Boards, Yuva Mandals and Mahila Mandals can provide additional assistance to the NSS units. Similarly voluntary land statutory welfare agencies such as Community Centres, Residential Institutions for children/women, the Aged and Institutions for physically handicapped and disabled can provide a wide scope of the choice of service to the NSS volunteers. NSS volunteers can be placed with these agencies considering the inherent aptitudes and inclinations of NSS volunteers. NSS volunteers must be told to develop a sense of belonging and respect for the people with whom they are working. Working in close collaboration with these agencies will help the NSS volunteers in understanding the problems

of a vulnerable section of the society. The work opportunities in the welfare institutions may be enumerated as under-

- (i) Adoption of welfare institutions and helping the inmates and staff by arranging outings, fund collection drives, reading and writing letters for those who are unable to do so;
- (ii) propagation of the message of Swachhta, Digital Literacy, renewable energy etc.
- (iii) working for improvement of physical environment;
- (iv) programme of non-formal education and general literacy classes;
- (v) organisation of economic development activities;
- (vi) establishment of hobby centres and
- (vii) assisting in the rehabilitation work of the disabled, destitute etc.

In addition, NSS units and welfare agencies can take up joint community development projects and other programmes of community welfare and awareness depending on the local needs.

3.2 The NSS Programme Officers should plan activities in the adopted village or slum in such a way that the leisure time of the NSS volunteers can be utilized in the service of adopted village or slum. Week-end visits to the adopted areas provide suitable opportunities to live with the community and know their problems and make an earnest effort to do something for them. Similarly, efforts should be made to follow up the work done in the areas earlier. Such sustained efforts will flower into friendship between the NSS unit and the community. These activities can be arranged through one day camps and frequent visits under regular activities.