



NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME : THE PLATFORM FOR STUDENT COMMUNITY CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

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.

Aims & Objective of NSS are:

- i. To understand the community in which they work;
- ii. To understand themselves in relation to their community;
- iii. To identify the needs and problems of the community and involve them in problem solving process.
- iv. To develop among themselves a sense of social and civic responsibility;
- v. To utilize their knowledge in finding practical solution to individual and community problem;
- vi. To develop competence required for group-living and sharing of responsibilities;
- vii. To gain skills in mobilizing community participation;
- viii. To acquire leadership qualities and democratic attitude;
- ix. To develop capacity to meet emergencies and natural disasters;

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Service to mankind is service to God.

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.

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.

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)

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

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Padhao, Environment and Energy Conservation and Education, legal aid, consumer protection and allied field.

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. 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. 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.

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. The slum, tenements, Jhuggis and Jhoupris 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.

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.

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 mandal 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.

(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.

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.

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 land awareness depending on the local needs.

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.

Development of Student's personality through community service:

The Red colour in the badge indicates that the NSS volunteers are full of blood i.e. lively, active, energetic and full of high spirit. The navy blue colour indicates the cosmos of which the NSS is a tiny part, ready to contribute its share for the welfare of the mankind. Education through community service and community services through education. The NSS symbol is based on the Rath wheel of the Konark Sun Temple situated in Odisha. The giant wheels



portray the cycle of creation, preservation and release, and signify the movement in the life across time and space. NSS Badge, NSS Certificate and Identity card are the pride of NSS Volunteers.

There are four principal elements in the NSS programme process; they are *Students, Teachers, Community and the programme.*

Volunteers can visit other States/abroad through youth Exchange programmes such as National Integration Camp, Interstate Youth Exchange and Home Stay programme, Mega Camp, National Youth Festival, Adventure programmes, Disaster Management programmes and Shramdan etc.

There are mainly two type of activities i. **Regular Activities** ii. **Special Camping programmes.**

The NSS refines personality through exposure with the various segments of the society and community services within the institution and in the adopted village. The major National Level projects undertaken by NSS are AIDS awareness, afforestation, blood donation camps, RRCs, cleanliness of our environment, disaster management etc.

NSS Camp of 7 days duration in the adopted village/slum area.

One will have to get through the NSS Pre-Republic Day Parade Camp organized before Republic day at regional level. Also the volunteer must have to be a good physical health and measurements as prescribed by the Ministry of Youth affairs & Sports. Beside good physical health, height 155-165 cm for female volunteers and 165-175 cm is required for male volunteers.

It is the programme sponsored by the Ministry where NSS volunteers of one state visit another state to get acquainted with customs and tradition of Generally an NSS unit adopts a nearby village where certain projects are run by the NSS volunteers for the development of village. NSS is expected to undertake relief and rescue operations during natural calamities are close coordination with other Govt. / Voluntary organisations. The idea behind the manual labour is that the students must learn the dignity of labours has created awareness among student & masses by means of AIDS awareness rallies, seminars meeting & Quiz contests etc. Cleanliness, driver, Health awareness programmes, literacy, cultural & other related programme. NSS volunteers have done commendable work during natural calamities at the time of earthquake and Tsunami in various part of India. NSS Award is given in the name of Indira Gandhi to those NSS Programme Co-ordinators, Programme Officers, NSS



Volunteers, and NSS Units contribute excellent service for the promotion and development of NSS. Volunteers day-to-day regular work report and special camping report are recorded in a note book

Mass Programme of Functional Literacy:

A Volunteer who has completed 240hrs (120hrs X 2yrs) regular activities and seven days special camp in adopted village is entitled to get NSS Certificate duly signed by Programme Officer, Principal of the College, Programme Co-ordinator and Vice Chancellor of the University where the college/institution is affiliated to.

Government of India, the then Ministry of Human Resource Development conducted the first Republic Day Camp of NSS Volunteers in 1988 at New Delhi. Now the NSS is being run by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports. Right from the beginning, these Republic Day Parade Camps have been proved a boon for the personality development of NSS Volunteers of the country. The volunteers are imparted training in leadership development and (March-Past) parade apart from organising various socio-cultural programmes. As the participants from all states & UTs participate in this camp, the NSS R.D.Camp replicates a MINI INDIA to the nation's capital from 1st-31st January every year. It provides ample opportunities to the NSS volunteers not only to interact among themselves but also to learn and know the tradition, custom, culture, language of one state to another. These volunteers, after a month long stay together in the camp, become capable to present themselves in the better way and constitute a bond of patriotism, national integration, brotherhood, communal harmony which is the ultimate goal of the camp. The camp is managed entirely by the NSS Officials, student volunteers and contingent leaders. The participation in Republic Day Parade on 26th January is considered as a matter of great pride for the student youth. It is also treated as a recognition of the selfless community service rendered by the NSS volunteers throughout the country.

Opportunities to meet Role Models of National / International Repute:

During the camp the participating NSS volunteers are provided opportunities to meet many eminent personalities of different fields. The camp organisers invite the eminent personalities to boost the morale of NSS volunteers and the volunteers interact with them. It also helps the volunteers to broaden their knowledge base. To name a few, the Hon'ble President of India, Hon'ble Vice President of India, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports and other Eminent Personalities in the field of Education, Health, Social Service, Science & Technology, Sports, Environment, Fine Arts, Art & Culture, have addressed the volunteers. NSS Volunteers' contingent of each State get an opportunity to show their rich



cultural, performing art, heritage during the cultural programmes every evening in the R.D. Camp. This helps the other participants to understand and appreciate the richness and fauna & flora diversity of the country. In order to understand the folk art, dance, culture a cultural evening is organised every day in such a way that each and every participating volunteer gets a chance to exhibit his talent and cultural background.

Outcome:

It has been proved that the month long Republic Day Parade Camp changes the overall personality of the participating volunteers. Lots of exposure and experience gained during the camp and valuable guidance of many eminent personalities of different field helps student volunteers to take a right decision in their career. By attending the R.D. Camp the volunteers become capable of adopting a good life style like they learn group living, attain leadership quality, improve communication skills, come forward to undertake any responsibilities and fulfil them. They become capable of adopting to set their vision and mission in their life lying ahead and on the other hand this R.D. Camp inculcates a sense and spirit of patriotism, national integration, solidarity, brotherhood, communal harmony among the student volunteers which is very much essential for the betterment of the nation. The NSS Republic Day Parade Camp provides ample opportunities to the student volunteers for their integrated personality development.

The NSS R.D. Camps have created many eminent personalities in the country in the field of education, health, art & culture, cinema, politics besides IAS, IPS, IFS. Today these personalities are role models for the youth of the country and gained national recognition. The NSS Republic Day Parade Camp has become famous, favourite and of most attraction among the NSS volunteers and the youth community in the country. Personality of a student youth who has ever attended NSS R.D. Camp distinguishes himself/herself from the general mass. The contingent for NSS RD Republic Day Parade is selected from the five Pre Republic Day Parade Camps that are organised at Zonal level by the Regional Directorates of NSS on rotation basis. 200 NSS volunteers participate in each zonal level Pre-R.D camps of 10 days' duration. In these camps the volunteers are imparted training of parade (March-past) and other youth development programmes. Then a central selection Committee comprising of nominated members of the Directorate of NSS visit the five zonal level camps to select the NSS contingent out of the 1000 participating volunteers. Two categories of volunteers mainly with Parade and Cultural activities and preferable with knowledge & work of NSS activities are selected to take part in the one month long Republic Day Parade Camp. Besides that, the following basic qualities are required for selection of NSS Volunteers for Pre- Republic Day Parade Camp and the NSS Republic Day Parade Camp. Thus NSS provides the pathway for student community engagement and its contribution for our Nation Building.

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