

BASIC CONCEPTS AND COMPONENTS

The National Service Scheme was started to establish a meaningful linkage between the campus and the community. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, had recognised that the country could not progress in a desired direction until the student youth were motivated to work for the upliftment of the villages/community. For Gandhiji the villages, where majority of the population lived, represent the country i.e. India. Therefore, for the national reconstruction and national resurgence it was deemed fit that the students and teachers should be properly sensitised and utilised for strengthening the Indian society as a whole with particular emphasis on rural community. Therefore, student youth, teachers and the community are considered the three basic components of the National Service Scheme.

NSS Programme Officer

The programme officer, who is a member of the teaching faculty, provides necessary leadership to the youth/NSS students. The teacher/NSS Programme Officer has the professional knowledge and skills. He/She is also a representative of the college and the educated elite and knows the needs and aspirations of student youth. Further he/she is expected to be a role model of the values and the norms of the institution and the society as a whole. Therefore, he/she is the fittest person to provide necessary lead to the students in developing their personality through community service. In fact the Programme Officer is a friend, philosopher and guide to the students in achieving this goal.

NSS Volunteer

The NSS volunteer, who is a college/+2 level student is the main beneficiary of the programme by way of development of his/her perception about the community, his/her skill to perform certain jobs, and develop quality of a leader, organiser, and an administrator and development of his/her personality as a whole. Through NSS, he/she gets opportunities to see the community closely and thus gets an experience of human nature in relation to his/her environment. This is how the NSS programme aims to make NSS student youth better citizens through "Development of their Personality through Community Service".

Community

The community provides NSS volunteer the first hand knowledge of living conditions of masses to the NSS volunteers and thus, the process of mutual learning starts. The interaction of community with students and teachers while on one hand enrich the personality of student volunteers and on the other hand help the community to improve its living conditions.

Aims of NSS Programmes/Activities

The operational aim of NSS is to integrate the three basic components of the programme. NSS programme should provide a variety of learning experiences which must develop a sense of participation, service and achievement among the volunteers. The activities should aim at the following:

- (i) making education more relevant to the present situation to meet the felt needs of the community and supplement the education of the university/college students by bringing them face to face with the rural situation;
- (ii) providing opportunities to the students to play their role in planning and executing development projects which would not only help in creating durable community assets in rural areas and urban slums but also results in the improvement of quality of life of the economically and socially weaker sections of the community;
- (iii) encouraging students and non-students to work together along with the adults in rural areas;
- (iv) developing qualities of leadership by discovering the latent potential among the campers, both students as well as local youth (Rural and Urban), with a view to involve them more intimately in the development programme and also to ensure proper maintenance of the assets created during the camps;
- (v) emphasising dignity of labour and self-help and the need for combining physical work with intellectual pursuits;
- (vi) encouraging youth to participate enthusiastically in the process of national development and promote national integration, through corporate living and cooperative action.

While undertaking these activities, each NSS unit should envisage its programmes/activities aimed at instilling discipline, building character, promotion of physical fitness and development of culture.

Classification of NSS Programme

NSS activities have been divided in two major groups. These are regular NSS activities and special camping programme –

- (a) Regular NSS activity: Under this, students undertake various programmes in the adopted villages, college campuses and urban slums during week ends or after college hours;
- (b) Special Camping Programme: Under this, camps of 10 days duration are organised in adopted villages or urban slums during vacations with some specific projects by involving local communities. 50 percent NSS volunteers are expected to participate in these camps.

NSS Regular activities: As stated above, NSS volunteers undertake various activities in adopted villages and slums for community service. Duration of these services is 120 hours. The NSS units organise the regular activities as detailed below:

- (i) Orientation of NSS volunteers: To get the NSS volunteers acquainted with the basics of NSS programmes, 20 hours are allocated for their orientation through lectures, discussions, field visits, and audio-visuals etc.
- (ii) Campus work: The NSS volunteers may be involved in the projects undertaken for the benefit of the institution and students concerned. Such projects cover development of play grounds, laying of gardens, tree plantation in the premises, awareness programmes on drug-abuse, AIDS, population education and other projects. The NSS volunteers may work on campus projects for not exceeding 30 hours in a year;
- (iii) The remaining 70 hours will be utilised for community service on the projects in adopted villages/urban slums independently or in collaboration with others in this field, as detailed below.
 - (a) Institutional work: The students may be placed with selected voluntary organisations working for the welfare of women, children, aged and disabled outside the campus.
 - (b) Rural Project: The rural projects generally include the working of NSS volunteers in adopted villages for eradication of illiteracy, watershed management and wasteland development, agricultural operations, health, nutrition, hygiene, sanitation, mother and child care, family life education, gender justice, development of rural cooperatives, savings drives, construction of rural roads, campaign against social evils etc.
 - (c) Urban projects: In addition to rural projects other include adult education, welfare of slum dwellers, training in civil defence, traffic control, setting up first-aid posts, work in hospitals, orphanages, destitute home, environment, population education, drug, AIDS awareness, and income generation projects etc. Professional and technical institutions having NSS may have to design appropriate programmes for the community based on the needs.
 - (d) Natural calamities & National Emergencies: The NSS units are expected to utilise the services of NSS volunteers at the time of natural calamities and national emergencies for mobilising public support and rendering necessary assistance to the authorities in rescue, relief and rehabilitation. In such emergencies and calamities the Programme Officers are expected to take the initiative and offer the services of the NSS units and its volunteers to assist the administration.
 - (e) National Days and Celebrations: The National Service Scheme programmes also include the celebration of National days. The purpose of such a provision is to celebrate such occasions in a befitting manner. List of important days and weeks to be celebrated at institutional level are given in.

National Programmes: In the development perspective of any nation, certain programmes assumes special relevance in view of problems existing or anticipated. In our country, three such programmes have been launched. They are the Mass Programme of Functional Literacy, AIDS Awareness Programme and Sustainable development with emphasis on Watershed Management & Wasteland Development. It is pertinent to mention here that NSS Volunteers have come forward with zeal to make these programmes a great success.