

POTENTIAL OF NSS TO CHANNELISE YOUTH ENERGY

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Preface

Rakshak Foundation is a non-profit organisation that works towards moulding responsible citizens through public policy initiatives. The objective of Rakshak Foundation is to help strengthen the base of our society and reinforce the confidence of common man in the system by creating awareness about the issues affecting him. This project work is indeed an incredible opportunity provided by Rakshak Foundation in this regard.

I am Jessica Bernard, a second year Integrated MA Economics student from IIT Madras. I was overwhelmed by the platform provided by Rakshak Foundation in working towards constructing a responsible society and so joined this project. I believe that this project will widen my outlook on social issues and enhance my prospects to contribute towards bringing evocative changes in the society. Moving out of comfortable zones and witnessing stark realities of life, this internship taught me a lot and I got to work with students and mentors who really wish to be the harbingers of change and advancement.

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Executive Summary

This paper intends to study the potential of National Service Scheme in channelizing the youth energy. It incorporates the journey of NSS, these forty-three years transforming the lives of millions of students and people across the country. This report attempts to elicit the formation of NSS, its emergence and successfully trodden path. I have included the major milestones in the history of NSS, the objective behind unveiling such a project for the youth, the journey of NSS so far, the various highly successful NSS projects from various parts of India and a few suggestions regarding how NSS initiatives can be made more effective. The project deals with one of the highly relevant issues regarding the youth of our country. NSS is of immense importance to the country as it has opened up the avenues of social service to many. It has introduced our students to many stark realities of life which they would not have otherwise come across. No one can overlook the significant role NSS has played so far and which it still plays in inculcating civic responsibility and promoting nation building.

For a better understanding of the report it has been divided into seven sections. It has made the extensive work easier to comprehend.

The section one is the introduction of the project. Here I have dealt with the background information regarding National Service Scheme. The section includes the history of NSS, the objective behind its formation, the present scenario, some problems faced by it and how it is moving forward.

The section two explicates the methodology used for the research. It includes the details on the literature survey, field visits, online survey and the interviews that have been conducted to gather resources and to know the present condition of NSS.

The section three, deals with the current NGO and Government efforts in the social service scene. It elicits the various services rendered by NGOs in curbing the

problems plaguing society as well as those measures taken up by the central and state Governments.

The section four includes the results of the research. It includes the findings from the literature survey as well as field visits. The various stark facts that have been come across while researching, have been included here. The section stresses on the theoretical as well as practical data that were gathered and the analysis of those. It also includes the analysis of various gaps that exist in the system that have been causing hurdles to the progress.

The section five incorporates recommendations, scope and strategy for implementation of the same. It includes the various recommendations that have been formulated after keenly studying the present problems and weaknesses of NSS.

The section six deals with the suggestions for future work that is inevitable for realising what has been recommended. It includes the areas that are to be focussed for maximum success of NSS to channelize the youth energy.

The section seven includes the concluding remarks of the project report. It looks at the effort to study NSS in a nutshell and winds up the report.

The project report has been successful in coming up with certain recommendations for enhancing NSS activities. These include initiatives like a national NSS Annual Report, NSS web portal for universities, training for selected volunteers, Incentives for NSS volunteers like extra credit in PSC tests, Volunteer exchange programmes, collaboration with NGOs and Single NSS theme for all universities in a year to ensure follow up activities. The project has given me an opportunity to formulate practical solutions to make the initiatives of NSS more effective and to bring youth to the scene of national service. Many unexplored avenues of social service were looked upon and I was able to understand the strengths and weaknesses of NSS as compared to other such initiatives across the world. I believe that the project has helped me to devise methodologies for making the endeavours of NSS even more successful and meaningful. NSS is indeed capable of transforming the lives of millions of our Indians.

Key Findings

- The reasons behind introduction of NSS as a platform to channelize youth energy
- The strong edifice and structure that promulgates and aids NSS successfully since 1969
- The differences and similarities between NSS and national social service initiatives in other countries
- The present scenario; the number of volunteers, projects taken up, success rates and a few problems
- Remarkable projects undertaken by NSS: findings from across the country
- The significance of NSS over other initiatives like NYKS or NYS
- The gaps that exist within the system that tend to cause some weaknesses
- Views of volunteers and common man on NSS
- The drawbacks which tend to reduce the effectiveness of certain NSS initiatives
- Suggestions to make NSS more effective and the strongest medium for community development
- Methodology for such activities to be taken to the field

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background information

Young people are a major human resource for development, key agents of social transformation and driving force for economic growth and technological innovation. But harnessing these resources is a major challenge faced by countries all over the world. The youth challenge is considered as the most critical of the 21st century's economic development challenge. As the future of any society rests in the hands of today's youth, ensuring educated, skilled and empowered youth is inevitable for the progress of any nation. Youth, defined by the United Nations as persons between the ages of 15 and 24, 'is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood, represents almost 18 per cent of the current global population'. About eighty-four (84) per cent of the world's youth live in developing countries. Increase in the share of youth population due to demographic „dividend“ or the „youth bulge“ seems to be one of the sources of future economic growth in India. The proportion of people in the age-group 15-24 years has increased over time. It adds more pressure to the need to channelize our youth in the right direction.

The role of NSS becomes significant in this circumstance. Youth constitute about 25-29% of Indian population. So it becomes even more imperative for India to guide its youth in the right direction. National Service Scheme is a realisation of the dreams of father of our nation. It was he who had envisaged an India strengthened through the power of the youth. He strongly believed in the capabilities of youth to bring about great transformations and always emphasised the need to channelize the potential of youth to build a vibrant nation. He had indeed shown us a right model by including youth in the struggle for freedom. His endeavours were not ignored and those who came into power after independence carried forward his dreams. Moreover the post-independence era called for the need to introduce social service among students for their all-round development and improving quality of educated man power. This led to the formation of National Service Scheme aimed at promoting social and civic responsibility among youth. The

scheme was launched on September 24, 1969, by the then Union Education Minister Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao on the centenary year of birth of Mahatma Gandhi. We can undoubtedly say that NSS has turned out to be a strong platform that gives opportunities to youth to contribute to the development of the nation since then. From 40000 volunteers representing 37 universities in 1969, it has grown to contain about 3.2 million volunteers in 2012. NSS has successfully brought significant transformations across the country in fields ranging from literacy missions to sanitation awareness campaigns. There are even stories of villages that were immersed in ignorance and apathy being uplifted by the activities of NSS. NSS continues to take up multifaceted projects aimed at development in various areas. Through voluntary and compulsory activities NSS has introduced students to the various problems faced by people belonging to various social strata. The students have come up with innovative solutions to several problems and so far there have been many successful activities undertaken across the country.

The NSS we see today took shape after years of deliberations. There were many plans regarding how to go about involving students in social service. Right after independence the University Grants Commission headed by Dr. S Radhakrishnan recommended introduction of national service in academic institutions on a voluntary basis aimed at establishing a constructive linkage between the campus and the community. The idea was carried forward by Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) from January, 1950. The CABE conducted vast researches on the topic incorporating conditions prevailed in our country as well as how social service was undertaken in other countries. It 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”¹. Again the First Five Year plan of 1952 stressed the need to engage students in useful social service. In 1959, a draft outline of the scheme was placed before the Education Minister's Conference and it was unanimous about the need of the hour to devise a workable scheme for national service.

1.1.1 Aim of NSS: NSS aims at providing platforms to the youth to be a part of the nation building process. It taps the latent energy of youth to bring about tremendous changes in the society. The Motto of NSS is "Not Me But You", and it reflects the gist of democratic living and upholds the need for self-less service. NSS teaches the students to appreciate other person's point of view and to show consideration to other living beings. The edifice of NSS is built on the belief that 'the welfare of an individual is ultimately dependent on the welfare of the society on the whole and therefore; the NSS volunteers shall strive for the well-being of the society'².

1.1.2 The Structure of NSS: NSS is administered by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. Ministry has designed organizational structures at Central, State, University/+2 and College levels for planning and implementation of various programmes. There is a National Programme Adviser to advice the Ministry for the development of NSS programmes in all respects. It is the Adviser who makes arrangements for NSS activities through State Governments and Universities as well as training through TOCs and TORCs. There is also a Programme Adviser's Cell to assist the Programme Adviser for implementing, monitoring and evaluating the NSS Programmes.

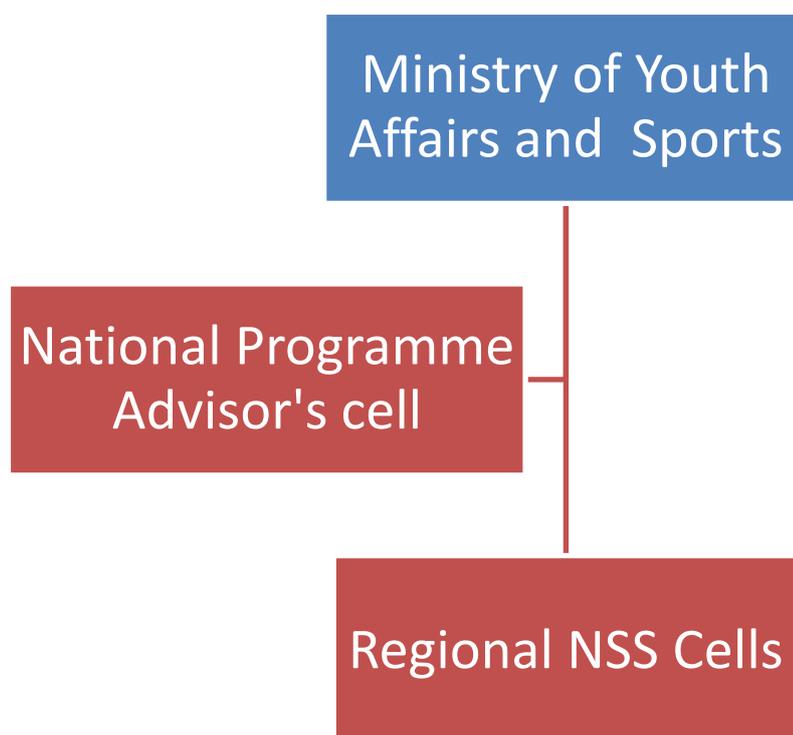


Fig:1

There are also NSS Regional Centres to maintain liaison with the State Governments, Universities, +2 Councils and TOC/TORCs for the effective implementation of NSS endeavours. There are State NSS Cells to monitor and co-ordinate NSS activities with other agencies and departments in respective states. Further every university has an NSS Cell to supervise and coordinate NSS Programmes in Colleges affiliated to it. There will be programme co-ordinators in universities to execute and evaluate the NSS activities in the right direction.

1.1.3 NSS Regional Offices and Training Centres

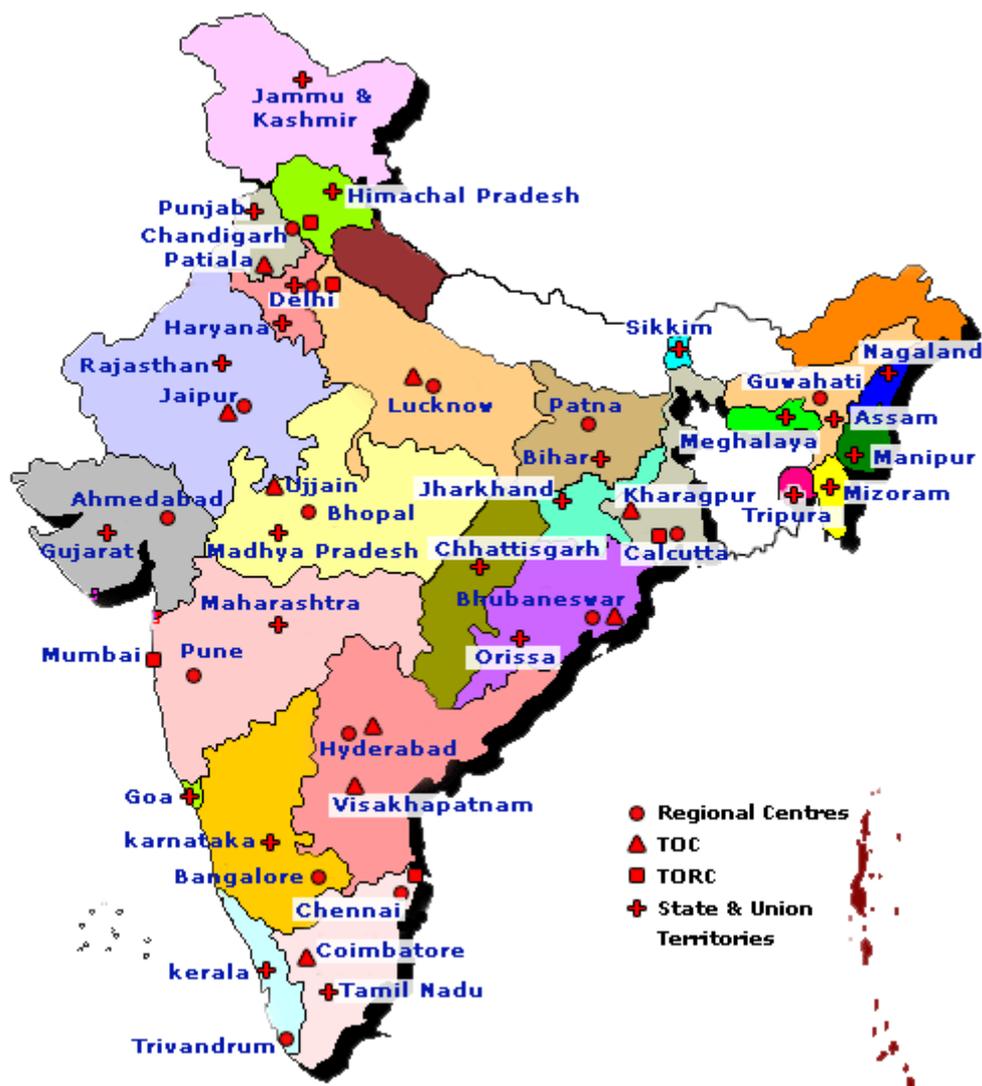


Fig: 2

1.2 Main Problems, their scope and impact on the society

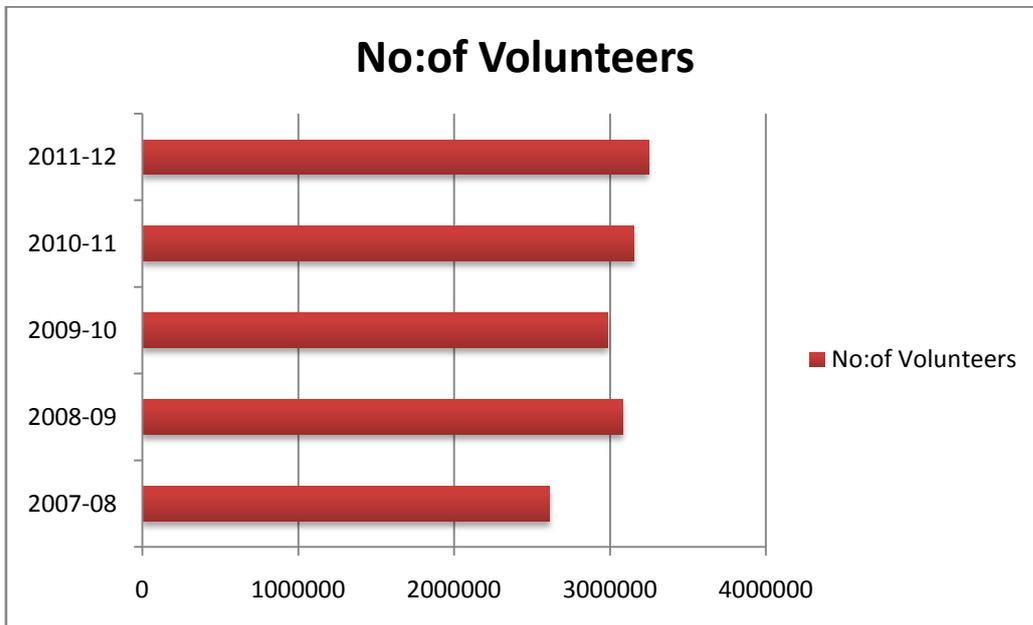
National Service Scheme is indeed inevitable for the social service activities in the country. It is in the forefront when it comes to nation building since 1969. Community service rendered by university and +2 level students has covered several aspects like adoption of villages for intensive development 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 inmates of orphanages and the physically handicapped etc. NSS volunteers did commendable relief work during natural calamities/emergencies such as cyclones, floods, famine, earthquake, etc. from time to time.

The table below shows the growth in the number of NSS volunteers from 2007 to 2012.

NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME	YEAR	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
	NO: OF VOLUNTEERS	2612351	3082744	2987186	3157503	3248670

Table 1

Growth in the Number of NSS Volunteers



The table shows the increase in the number of NSS volunteers from 2007 to 2012. It is indeed a promising picture, but considering the number of total number of students enrolled every year in our colleges, this turns out to be a meagre amount. There is huge gap between the total number of students and those who enrol in NSS. The table below shows the total number of students enrolled for higher education and the number of NSS volunteers.

Students enrolling in NSS out of total number of students

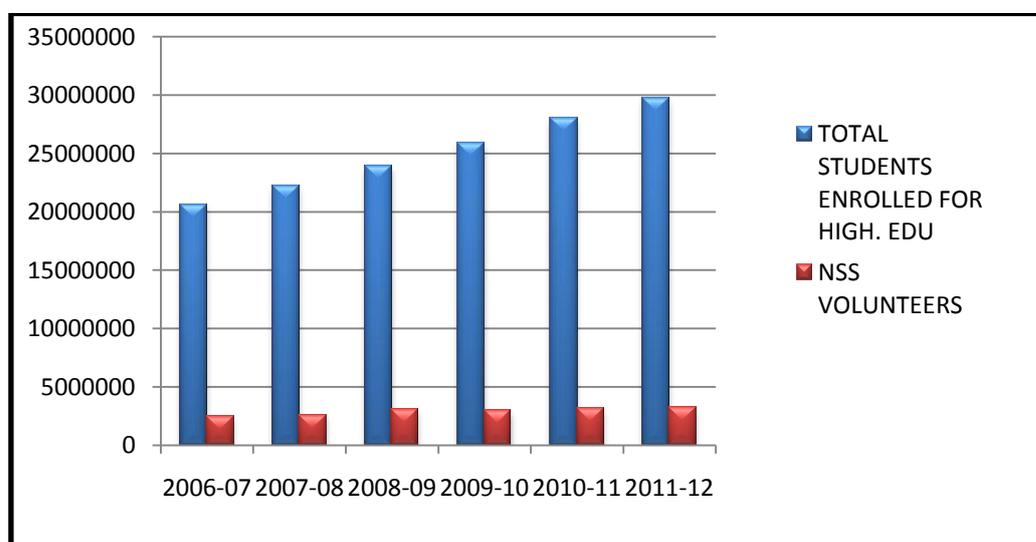


Table: 2

In 2011-12 only 11% of total number of students enrolled for higher education joined NSS all over the country. It was the same in the previous years too with minor differences. This brings out the disappointment of NSS in bringing more institutions and students to the platform of social service. It cannot be termed as a big failure on the part of NSS, but it is something that has to be improved keeping the good of the country in regard. If at least 50% of all enrolled students are brought to NSS, it can contribute greatly to our development. NSS initiatives like 'adoption of villages' can undoubtedly change the face of rural India. Considering the potential of NSS to contribute to rural and urban development, we have to tap the energy of the youth remaining out of NSS. It is high time we that we should act to bring in more youth to this forum of national service.

In spite of so many troubles and lack of attractive incentives, NSS volunteers have contributed substantially towards nation building. An example of this was the initiatives taken by the NSS units of Tamil Nadu after the disaster of tsunami in 2004. Many NSS units came forward to help the victims along the coastal regions of Tamil Nadu. They provided monetary support and clothes by tsunami help drives from other parts of the state. The local units introduced several activities like

providing moral support to the victims who were shattered mentally by the catastrophe. NSS has had many drives including mock drills for disaster management and mitigation. It has taken up disaster management as one of its major responsibility as most of our natural calamities turn out to be disastrous due to lack of timely aid from trained persons.

NSS realised that students can contribute greatly to this avenue and is promoting region specific disaster management lessons for its volunteers that can save hundreds of lives at times of crises. The NSS volunteers have also done remarkable job 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. With the available resources NSS has succeeded in taking up many missions that turned out to be highly remarkable. The NSS units of the four southern states, Maharashtra and Mizoram stand with their heads held high when it comes into the success in implementation of projects. The Northern and the North Eastern states lag behind others when it comes to taking up of new, big projects and their implementation. Lack of dedicated volunteers, difficult terrain, less informed public etc. make such endeavours difficult in these regions. If such gaps are abridged, undoubtedly NSS can touch the lives of millions. NSS continues to carry forward the spirit of nation-building among youth since 1969. Their service to the nation cannot be overlooked as they have revolutionised both the lives of millions of students and other citizens.

1.3 Goal and Objectives of the project

The project aims at looking at the unexplored avenues of NSS. The research included looking into history of NSS, the activities it has undertaken so far, the challenges it has faced and the suggestions to make NSS initiatives more robust. The objective of the project is to create awareness regarding the potential of NSS (National Service Scheme) as a medium for the upliftment of the society, collect some real success stories and propose new possibilities. The project has included some successful NSS activities that really need to be hailed to highlight the efforts

of dedicated volunteers. The project requires exploring the possibilities and proposing a methodology for harnessing the energy and capabilities of the youth through the NSS for, implementing the Right to Education, Eradication of illiteracy, specially, in the rural areas and sensitizing the youth and the public of the need for organ donation. The research has come up with ways in which extending the scope of NSS to achieve the goals listed above would solve the problem and give them a feeling of achievement in shaping the destiny of their country.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Literature Survey

I went through the available resources to get a clear picture regarding the topic and related issues. I browsed through the NSS manual by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the websites of national and state NSS units. The NSS portals of various institutes were helpful in gathering data about their various missions. The National NSS cell provided me with their reports and data regarding NSS activities which were really helpful. The libraries of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University and ICSSR were visited for further resources on the topic. It helped to gather information from several renowned books on youth and community development. The significance of rural development and the need to include youth in such initiatives were learnt from some books available there. Similar social service initiatives across the world were also studied. I went through the AmeriCorps and The Corporation for National and Community Service in USA. Apart from that I read about social service initiatives of European Union and Nigeria. A comparative study of our NSS and all these initiatives were carried out so as to gain a very comprehensible picture of the scenario. Some articles regarding the need to include the youth in social service were read which threw light upon the immense potential of youth to contribute to the nation.

2.2 Field Visits

Some field trips to see the NSS activities of various NSS units were undertaken. The field trips turned out to be really informative as they gave chances to look at the implementation of several projects about which I had read earlier. The NSS units in Kerala and IIT Kanpur had been called on for case studies. Further the NSS units of various colleges of Delhi University and IIT Delhi were visited. The teaching sessions for kids from the slums, by the NSS unit of Miranda House College of Delhi University were visited and their activities were analysed. The NSS camps of some institutes had been seen earlier and it helped me while working on this project.

More over some other areas in Uttar Pradesh were visited which threw light on the immense potential of NSS to make changes in the state.

2.3 Surveys

I had conducted an online survey to get the opinion of students on making NSS mandatory and ways to make NSS activities more effective. The survey aimed at assessing the outlook of students towards such initiatives aimed at building civic responsibility and national integration. It turned out to be an assessment of our education system on the whole as education moulds a student's personality and perspectives. The survey included students from all states of the country and even the union territories. I selected the views of about 100 from the total who participated in the survey.

2.4 Meetings and Interviews

Mentor has been a source of immense support and motivation from the beginning of the project work. She guided me through the track to be taken for carrying forward my project. Mentor has given the contact details of some eminent personalities in this research area so as to gather more details from them. The meetings I had with her helped me to clear my doubts and move ahead. She pointed out the key areas which I needed to concentrate in my project and how to go about it. Apart from my mentor, I had meetings with several officials including the National Programme Advisor and Assistant Programme Advisor of NSS. They shared their views on social service initiatives and explained the functioning and activities of NSS at present. I also had telephonic conversations with NSS Programme Co-ordinators from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. They enlightened me about the various NSS activities being taken up under their guidance. I met many NSS faculty co-ordinators and volunteers to get their views as they are the ones who take NSS to the society. I had meetings with NSS faculty

co-ordinators of IIT Kanpur, MG University, Kerala and conversations with volunteers from about 20 universities across India.

MEETINGS AND INTERVIEWS

Date	Name	Designation	Institution	Topic of Discussion
8-6-2012	Dr. H C Verma	NSS Faculty Advisor	IIT Kanpur	NSS in the campus, suggestions to improve NSS participation
10-6-2012	Shashank Shekhar	NSS Student Co-ordinator	IITK	NSS activities undertaken, views on mandatory NSS, future plans to take NSS activities to more people
17-6-2012	Prof. Sabu	NSS Programme Advisor	MG University, Kerala	Activities of NSS in MG University, suggestions to improve NSS
25-6-2012	Dr. Prakash	NSS State Programme Advisor	NSS regional Cell, Kerala	Activities undertaken by various universities in Kerala, effectiveness of various programmes
28-6-2012		NSS Programme Advisor	Regional cell, Pune	Various NSS activities in Maharashtra, Sharing experiences of being NSS National award winners
3-7-2012	Utkarsh Kawatra	NSS Student co-ordinator	IIT Delhi	NSS activities undertaken in his campus, about NGO collaboration of NSS unit of IIT Delhi

3-7-2012	Nishita Jain	NSS Student co-ordinator	LSR College, Delhi	Activities in her campus undertaken by NSS, suggestions to improve NSS
6-7-2012	Dr. Girish Kumar	NSS National Programme Advisor	NSS National office, Delhi	The present scenario of NSS in the country, the assessment of NSS activities, need to take NSS to more students
6-7-2012		NSS National Assistant Programme Advisor	NSS National office, Delhi	Various activities going on, the need to diversify, suggestions regarding need to bring in more youth to NSS
6-7-2012	Khushboo Chanana	NSS Student Co-ordinator	Miranda House, DU	NSS activities undertaken by their college, her views.

Table 3

3. Current NGO and Government Efforts

Social service is an avenue that has been successfully taken up by the NGOs for many years. They do commendable works in this area ranging from literacy missions to rendering monetary support to the poor. There are about hundreds of NGOs in the nation that works in various matters related to social and national service. They have been involving in such initiatives for many years and some of them are highly successful. NGOs have taken up projects related to matters like environmental protection, literacy missions, alcoholic addiction, disaster management and issues like e-literacy, power crisis, RTI awareness etc. in the recent times. The efforts of NGOs are at times more successful since they have more trained persons for carrying out their missions. NGOs like GreenPeace International, CRY (Child Rights and You) and MAD (Make a Difference) have many enthusiastic volunteers who make their projects more successful and known. As NSS is seen as a compulsory activity indispensable to complete their course, by many students, and a medium to gain extra credit by several others, their initiatives turn out to be just superficial at times. The lack of more interested and involved volunteers is a big drawback for NSS in comparison with the NGOs.

The following table shows the **Activities of an NGO MV Foundation in Andhra Pradesh.**

MVF's coverage	1991/92	1997/98
No. of villages	3	470
No. of mandals	1	18
MVF Employees :		
Education Activists (Volunteer Teachers)	15	1600
Supervisors	5	80

Camp teachers/District Resource Unit and office staff	15	200
Unpaid volunteers working with MVF	40	10000
No of Youth Clubs	40 (1994)	700
No of Women's Groups	10 (1994)	3000
Formation of Parent-Teacher Associations	3 villages (1993)	400 villages
Membership of the Youth Forum	40	8000
Membership of the Teachers' Forum	16	2000

Table 4

If we study the data in the table we will come across the giant leap in the achievements of the NGO in 5 years. They have been able to increase the membership of youth forum from just 40 in 1992 to 8000 in 5-6 years. And they have increased their reach into 470 schools from a mere 3 in 1991/92. This difference can be seen in the outreach of NSS and NGOs. NSS need to traverse a long distance to achieve great strides like NGOs.

Apart from NSS Government of India takes up community development through the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathans, National Youth Corps etc. The Government is taking up this issue of national service mainly through certain schemes like PMGSY, REGA, MGNREGA, as well as Prime Minister's and Chief Minister's Relief funds. Government also has societies like National AIDS Control Society, National Literacy Mission and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan initiatives to create awareness and to reach out to the public. These activities by the Government aim at the upliftment of the poor and imparting knowledge regarding the most deadly diseases as well as practices.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Findings from the Literature

NSS has been successful transforming many lives across the country. Through their nation building activities they have brought lights to the lives of many which were immersed in darkness. Started in 1969 with 40000 volunteers, now NSS has become the biggest social service scheme in the country with 3.2 million volunteers. The scheme now extends to all the states and universities in the country and covers +2 level also in many states. The need and significance of NSS has been realized by students, teachers, guardians, persons in authority in government, universities and colleges/schools and the people in general after their commendable activities. 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.

NSS has taken up literacy missions in various states which include computer literacy missions. There are projects like 'adopting a slum' that is being undertaken by the NSS units in the urban areas. They identify local leaders and in cooperation with them discuss local problems on which cooperative action can be initiated. Students are helping the local communities in launching a number of programmes like the sanitation drives, recreation, adult lad primary education, health projects like immunization, first aid centre, child care, nutrition classes, and free legal aid centres etc. They also help in forming youth clubs, children's groups, mahila mandals etc. which can sustain such initiatives in those regions.

The following table shows the enrolment and activity target as well as achievements of NSS.

Year	Enrolment		Special Camps		Adopted villages	
	Target	Achieveme	Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement
2007-08	2665894	2612351	14902	18281	14694	22389
2008-09	3112752	3082744	18051	22112	18217	25308
2009-10	3128270	2987186	13737	32517	12951	21646
2010-11	3196846	3157503	22697	22545	22439	27129
2011-12	3196846	yet to	22697	yet to receive	22439	yet to receive

Table 5

It can be seen that NSS has failed to achieve the target in case of enrolment of volunteers. Considering the academic year 2010-11 there has been a reduction in the number of volunteers by about 40000. However it is interesting to note that this lack of tremendous leap in the number of volunteers has not affected the NSS activities. Both special camps and adopted villages have surpassed the targets considerably. Adding to that there has been an increase of over 20% in Adoption of Villages in 2010-11 than the target³. It throws light upon the enthusiasm and dedication of NSS volunteers which has bore fruit.

NSS has succeeded in taking up many tasks and reaching out to the public. Through their blood donation camps and tree plantation drives they have helped in the community development. The following chart shows the number of NSS volunteers involved in certain initiatives in 2011-12.

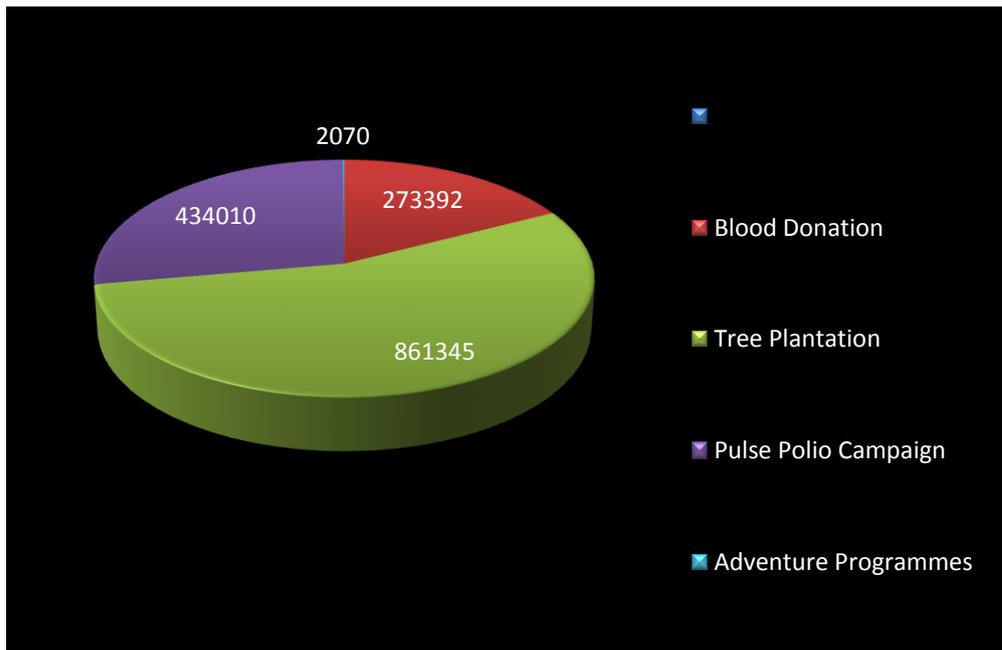


Table 6

Thus one can say that NSS has turned out to be vibrant platform that works for the upliftment of the disadvantaged sections of the society through student endeavours. Some campuses have NSS units that encourage each and every student to contribute as much as he/she can to the nation by involving in NSS activities. There are also schools which have NSS units for secondary level students. It provides an impetus to the innovations of students aimed at building a vibrant future for all. They take up social issues like awareness on sanitation, cleanliness, blood donation which form the basic need of any society. It is indeed a great opportunity for school students to gain firsthand experience regarding social service initiatives. However, these initiatives are meaningless unless the societies are equipped to carry out such missions forward, on their own without aid from NSS volunteers at every stage. So ensuring follow up missions is something NSS has to do to sustain their nation-building tasks.

4.1.1 Comparative study of social service initiatives across the world

No study would be complete if we overlook similar missions around us apart from the one we are working on. The research on NSS too proved to be the same as such initiatives across the world throws light on how such issues are perceived the world over. So such social service schemes across the world have been studied so as to get a thorough picture of such endeavours.

America is one of the countries that emphasis on the need to include students in social service actions. USA has many organisations where students can register for voluntary national service. There are organisations like AmeriCorps and Corporation for National and Community Service which provide platforms for students to be a part of nation building. The Obama administration is deliberating on implementing minimum of 50 hours of *community service a year for middle and high school students and 100 hours of community service for college students* in exchange for a \$4,000 tax credit. If it is passed, USA will have the largest social service initiative in the world encompassing people from various walks of life.

AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) is a full-time, team-based residential program for men and women of age 18–24. It envisages that every citizen has a responsibility to work for aiding other disadvantaged sections and provides scaffold for the likeminded ones to make differences in the lives of many. Members are assigned to one of five campuses, located in Denver, Colorado; Sacramento, California; Perry Point, Maryland; Vicksburg, Mississippi; and Vinton, Iowa. The mission of AmeriCorps NCCC is to *strengthen communities and develop leaders through direct, team-based national and community service*. In partnership with non-profits—secular and faith based, local municipalities, state governments, federal government, national or state parks, Indian Tribes and schools members complete service projects throughout the region are assigned. Drawn from the successful models of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s and the U.S. military, AmeriCorps NCCC is built on the belief that civic responsibility is an inherent duty of all citizens and that national service programs work effectively with local communities to address pressing needs⁴.

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)

The CNCS supports civic mission and engages more students in making a difference in their communities. Every day, college students help their communities in a variety of ways, from tutoring and mentoring children, to raising funds for worthy causes, to helping families recover from hurricanes and other disasters. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the nation has witnessed a significant upsurge in volunteering by college students. The Corporation for National and Community Service is committed to building on this momentum and supporting a culture of service on college campuses. Each year, CNCS invests more than \$150 million in expanding service-learning and campus volunteering through grants; AmeriCorps Education Awards; and research, recognition, and other initiatives. CNCS is working with other federal agencies, colleges and universities, higher education and student associations, and non-profit organizations to encourage even greater levels of college student volunteering and to ensure that college graduates embark on a lifetime of service⁵.

In European Union

There are several initiatives in the arena of national and social service taken up by the European Union within its member nations. One of the most successful projects among them is the 'Youth in Action' programme which comes under the European Voluntary Service. According to the EU, "*The Youth in Action programme offers young Europeans the chance to make a real difference to the world – and to their own lives – through the European Voluntary Service*".

The European Voluntary Service (EVS) provides young Europeans with the unique chance to express their personal commitment through unpaid and full-time voluntary activities in a foreign country within or outside the EU. In this way, it seeks to develop solidarity, mutual understanding and tolerance among young people, thus contributing to reinforcing social cohesion in the European Union and to promoting young people's active citizenship⁶. Many more such activities are being arranged by EU in order to nurture active and informed citizenship. Open to all young people aged between 18 and 30, EVS is a true 'learning service'. Beyond

benefiting the local communities, by participating in voluntary activities, young volunteers can develop new skills and, therefore, improve their personal, educational and professional development. Volunteers can benefit from specific training throughout the activity and agree on their expected learning outcomes and methods.

In Africa

National and social service have been taken up with great importance in several African nations. The universities in those countries have come up with voluntary as well as compulsory social service since the 1970s. One of the prominent projects among those is the National Youth Service Corps in Nigeria. The **National Youth Service Corps** (NYSC) is an organisation set up by the Nigerian government to involve the country's graduates in the development of the country. There is no military conscription in Nigeria, but since 1973 graduates of universities and later Polytechnics have been required to take part in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) program for one year. This is known as national service year⁷.

"Corp" members are posted to cities far from their city of origin. They are expected to mix with people of other tribes, social and family backgrounds, to learn the culture of the indigenes in the place they are posted to. This action is aimed to bring about unity in the country and to help youths appreciate other ethnic groups. The program has also helped in creating entry level jobs for a lot of Nigerian youth. An NYSC forum dedicated to the NYSC members was recently built to share job information and career resources as well as getting loans from the National Directorate of Employment.

4.2 Finding from the fields and impact on the theoretical focus of the project

The National Service Scheme is providing a platform for youth to contribute to their society. The students belonging to secondary schools and colleges are a part of NSS. They together constitute the 32 lakh strong NSS population of India. During my study I came across the immense potential of NSS to bring about transformations in our society. It can act as a medium for upliftment of our society by engaging students in activities for rural and urban development.

NSS has been seen as major platform for social service by the Government. Government has realised the significance of such an initiative taking student youth to the regions that requires their aid. From the first five year plan considerable amount has been kept aside for NSS and it continues till this day. The study of the following table shows how the grant for NSS was revised according to the need of the time. NSS is constantly guided by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports by issuing them proper budget outlay as well as sanctioning required grants. Only thing that remains now is the need to bring in more volunteers as well as making the NSS initiatives more effective and sustainable.

The financial targets & achievements of NSS activities for the years 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 & 2011-12 are as given under:

Total Allocation in 11th Five Year Plan – Rs. 425 Crores

Year	PLAN	
	Allocation of budget	Expenditure incurred
2007-08	53.9	50.89
2008-09	62.99	55.79
2009-10	95	65.69
2010-11	85.00	78.99
2011-12	90.00	48.84 (till now)

Table 7

The analysis of the above table shows that grants were never a problem for NSS. The Ministry has kept apart a considerable sum for NSS activities. It only needs to be utilised after proper planning and designing of activities. Activities particular to certain regions can be planned and carried out. Special attention can be given to North East and BIMARU states. If the available resources are utilised efficiently, then NSS can change the face of India.

The following is the state wise distribution of NSS volunteers.

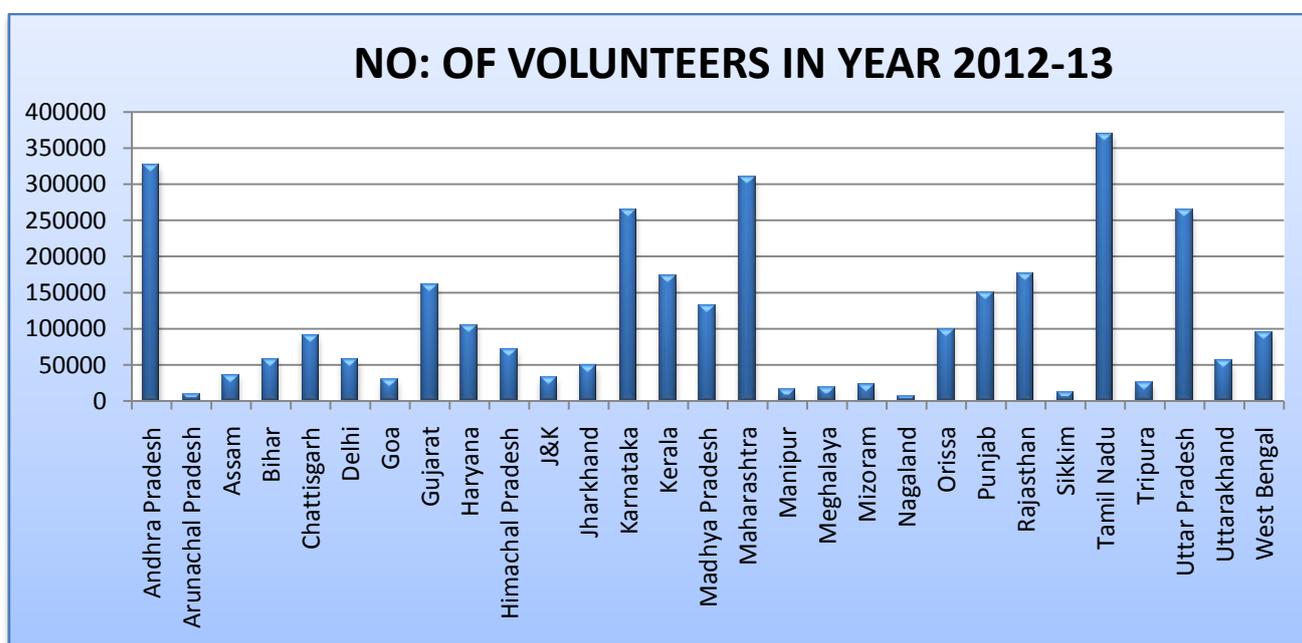


Table 8

STATES	And. Pradesh	Tamil Nadu	UP	Maharashtra	Karnataka	Rajasthan	Kerala	Gujarat	Punjab	MP
NO:OF VOLUNTEERS	325600	370018	263700	310124	263538	175692	173030	161052	150000	131768

According to this statistics by the National NSS Cell, Tamil Nadu leads in the number of volunteers in the country followed by Andhra Pradesh. The five southern states including Maharashtra score well above the others when it comes to the number of NSS volunteers as well as activities. Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat are also strong when it comes to the total number of registered NSS volunteers. They too have many NSS volunteers and numerous NSS projects undertaken. The study will not be complete if we do not include some activities to assess NSS. The following two graphs show the two major initiatives of NSS across the country for the year 2011-12. The table 9 shows the units of blood donated in various NSS regions of the country.

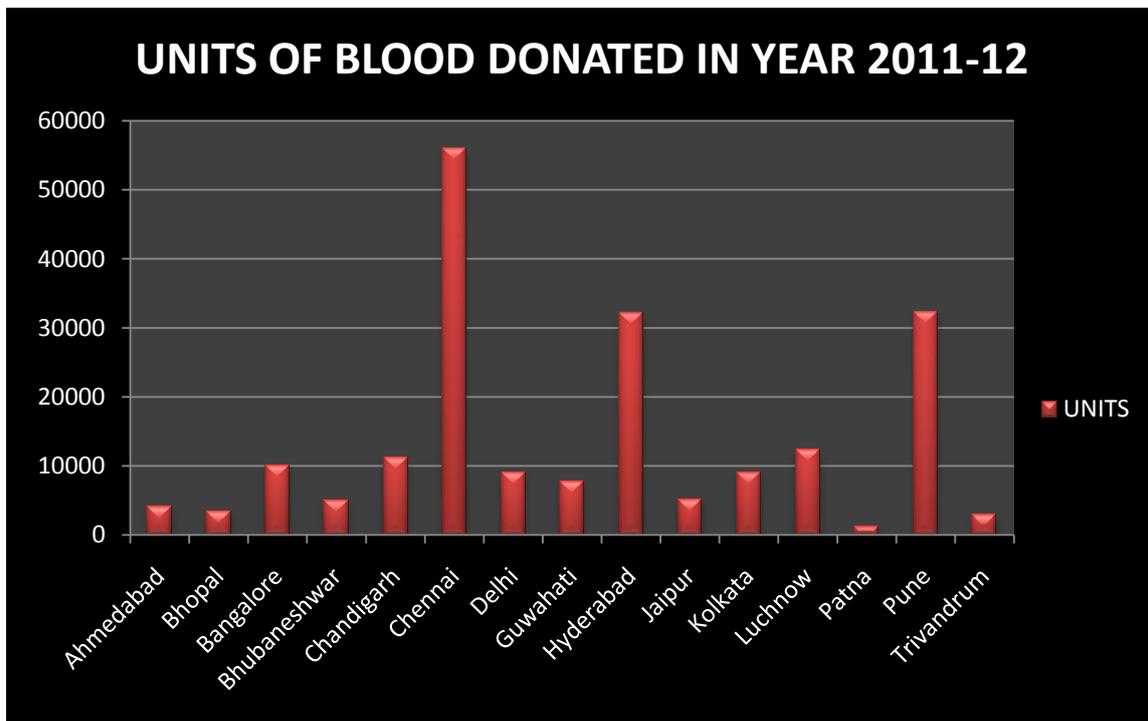


Table 9

The following Table 10 shows the number of saplings planted in various NSS regions during the academic year by NSS volunteers.

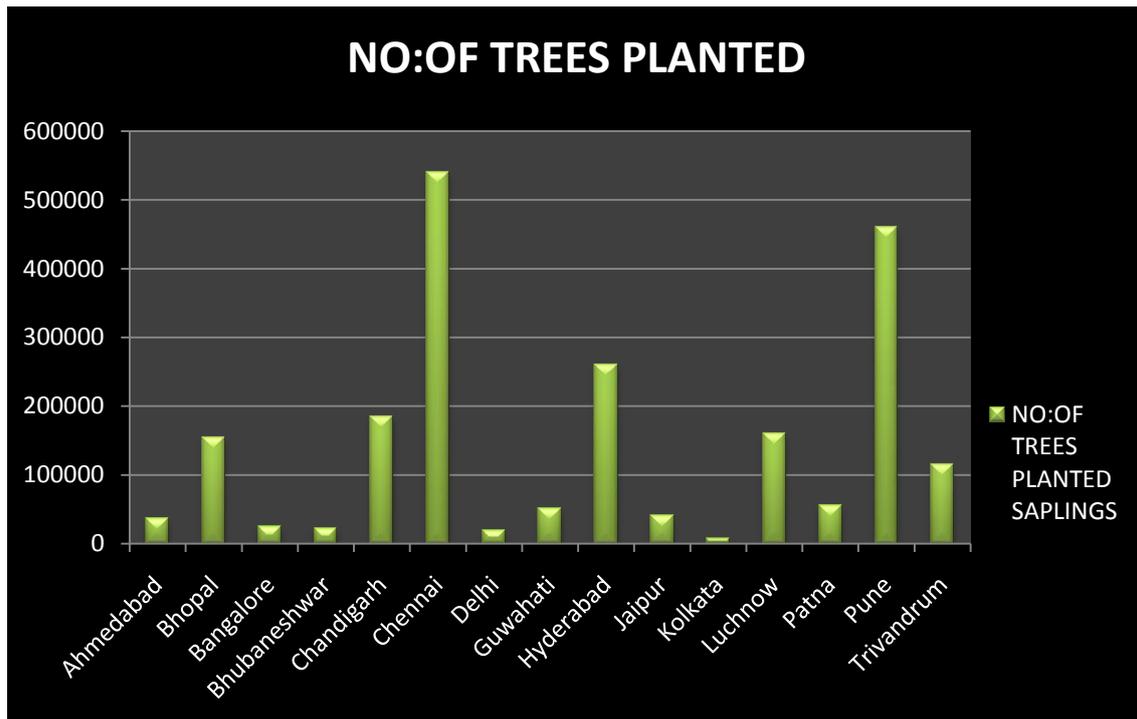


Table 10

The assessment of these activities shows the wide gap that exists between states regarding NSS activities. Chennai region followed by Pune leads in both the initiatives. With their strong volunteer base and dedication, these regions have succeeded in surpassing other regions in various NSS activities. Moreover the tree plantation drives and blood donation camps are the two highly successful missions of NSS. These activities have been going strong since the inception of NSS. Even though NSS has many innovative programmes, these two continue to be the most effective as well as the fruitful efforts of NSS.

This explicates how successful was NSS in certain regions as compared to others. The need to take NSS to the weak regions is the need of the hour. The nation has to move together for the overall progress. Moreover the Northern (BIMARU) states lag behind in the social status indicators like sex ratio, literacy, infant mortality rate etc. So it elicits the need to increase the NSS activities in these states which can in turn improve living conditions there. NSS can prove to be the medium for upliftment of society if it can work towards improving the standard of living here.

4.2.1 Successful Projects Undertaken By NSS

1. A success story from IIT Delhi NSS unit: **BloodConnect**

BloodConnect is a student run non-profit organization which works on tackling the grim situation of blood in Delhi. Started on 1st April 2010 by NSS IIT Delhi, BloodConnect has now expanded to various colleges and corporates around NCR region. It is an initiative intended to promote voluntary blood donation in Delhi by acting as a link between people who need blood and people who wish to donate blood. It has expanded to various colleges in Delhi and organized over 30 blood donation camps, handled over 200 blood requests till now.

BloodConnect was instituted to tackle the shortage of blood which was very grave in Delhi. Delhi's annual estimated requirement for blood is around four lakh units of which, only 50% is met through Voluntary Blood Donation. The shortage of blood is so acute that it leads to illegal activities like sale of blood, trade and the like. Despite a huge number of blood banks and a sizeable number of donations in Blood Donation Camps, there are still many people who die due to the unavailability of blood. This prompted the NSS unit of IIT Delhi to come up with such an initiative that continues to save lives. BloodConnect organizes regular Blood Donation Camps with Government Blood Banks in colleges, corporates as well as residential areas and handle Blood requests through its Blood Helpline Team with an aim to ensure that every patient in and around Delhi who needs blood, gets SAFE, FREE blood.

The Objectives of Blood Connect as described by its volunteers are:

- To create awareness and motivate people for Blood Donation. Starting from Colleges, now moving towards the Corporate Sector, Residential Areas.
- To help anyone, in case of any requirement for blood.
- To end the concept of replacement donation by ensuring continuous supply of blood through Voluntary Blood Donation in Government blood banks.
- To continuously organize Blood Donation Camps with all the 18 Government Blood Banks in Delhi and to have collaborations with them.

Apart from blood donation the BloodConnect is maintaining a highly commendable online portal that brings the blood requests to the group. BloodConnect has an online portal www.bloodconnect.org where voluntary donors can register by providing their details and people in need of blood can enter requests for blood. The voluntary donors are contacted if a need for blood arises. The current count of donors registered on website is around 1400. Whenever a request for blood is raised on the website, it automatically sends an SMS (using an innovative SMS application) to the Helpline Team, thus making sure that no delays are introduced in helping the needy. These measures have helped in the resolution of the problem in a structured way, using the latest Information technologies and popular Social Networking sites⁸.

2. A Success Story from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala: Adoption of Villages

The University is in the forefront considering NSS activities in the country. It has won the NSS national award several times. The NSS wing of Mahatma Gandhi University is represented by 115 colleges and a host of highly motivated and socially committed officers, 230 in number and a legion of vibrant volunteers, 23500 in number all of whom are co-ordinated under the leadership of the programme Co-ordinator. The NSS has a track record of glorious achievements in the past years. Some of the laudable activities of recent years are like building homes and tribal welfare that stands impressive and resembles an uphill task due to the quantum of work required.

One of the most successful projects taken up by the students in the University College is the adoption of a neighbouring village. 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 or where the follow up action may not be possible. From this point of view, village adoption programme ensures continuity of work vis-a-vis sustained

action, evaluation and follow up work. The students initially decided upon a village where they could make some significant changes. A detailed plan is made for the activities to be taken up in the village. In the village adoption programme, a village that is in need of assistance is found out from the nearby area and professional aid is provided for transforming it. The project was headed by the programme co-ordinator for the event. Under his guidance the students decided upon a village to kick-start their NSS mission for the academic year. The students came up with a proper outlay of activities to be started. The students were instructed to bring in the key issues that were to be dealt with. Many issues ranging from library renovation to campaign against alcoholic addiction were considered⁹.

One of the most successful projects as part of the village adoption was building houses for the poor. The 115 colleges under the university constructed about 160 houses for poor during 2008-10. The houses were built in the villages adopted by the colleges. The entire work had begun by conducting a socio-economic survey in the village. The deserving people were found out through this and are offered help. The entire expenditure and manual work for the building of houses are undertaken by NSS volunteers. The students found time on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays to finish the construction. The amount required for the houses were collected through donations. It turned out to be a successful project when students constructed houses of about 500-750 sq.ft area in less than 6 months.

3. PULSE POLIO CAMPAIGN: An all India Project

NSS has played a significant role in eradicating Polio from India. It has been a menace affecting the rural as well as urban India for years. NSS had joined the Health Ministry in their endeavours to wipe this disaster off from our land. NSS was campaigning in rural as well as urban areas for polio immunisation from its inception. NSS units of several colleges had special cells to help the health officials during the pulse polio immunisation days.

The table below shows the no: of NSS volunteers who took part in NSS initiatives to tackle polio and the number of infants covered under the programme in 2010.

NSS in Pulse Polio 2010

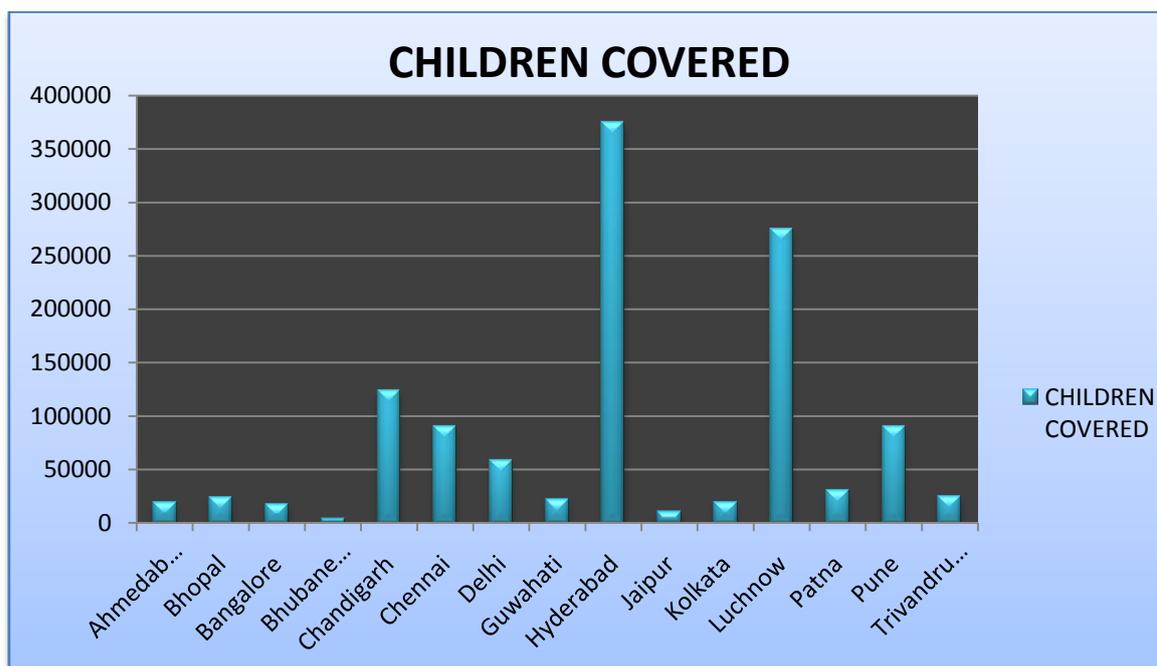


Table 11

The analysis of the above data throws light on the effectiveness of the Pulse Polio Campaigns of NSS. It is remarkable to note that Hyderabad was able to cover over 375000 children with the help of 100000 volunteers and Lucknow about 275312 children through 57228 volunteers.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) had described Uttar Pradesh as the “epicentre of the polio epidemic” in the world. As per WHO estimates, the State accounted for 64 per cent of all polio cases reported worldwide until 2009. This was not just due to mismanagement at the Government level; there were also other factors responsible for it. One such factor is the people’s apathy to such campaigns, which lack credibility. Besides, lack of information about the polio vaccine being administered and its availability was also greatly responsible for the increase. The activity of NSS have been crucial in Uttar Pradesh as it was one of the severely polio affected states. So combating polio there was inevitable for eradicating it from the entire nation. The deed of NSS becomes more meaningful here as it has succeeded in taking the drops to the illiterate crowd who were otherwise reluctant to be a part of the mission. The NSS Units of several colleges of UP took up the mission and went to wards to convince people about the need to

take drops to avoid the deadly disease. The volunteers overcame the social stigma through street plays, awareness processions, pamphlets and door-to-door campaigns. Their effort finally contributed to the giant stride India triumphed to take in the global health scene.

4. Samarth Bharath Abhiyan, Maharashtra

This successful programme was undertaken by various colleges under the Maharashtra NSS cell. It was a programme which encompassed several villages of the state. This mission was a merger of several initiatives with the 'adoption of a village scheme'. Under this initiative many development works were carried out in the adopted villages. This turned out to be a highly successful one as it was the combined effort of the volunteers and the villagers. The initial stage saw selection of interested volunteers and they were allotted faculty who could help them in those missions. The volunteers were given training before taking up their respective tasks. The volunteers then made a plan including what all are to be carried out in the village. They carried out various activities ranging from village audit to GIS mapping.

- Documenting History of Villages: Every village would have a unique history which will herald its social, economic and cultural significance. It will be an important historical account if such data are collected and recorded. It can throw light on the various important milestones in the history of agriculture, industry and thus the progress of the village. So students interacted with the villagers, especially the elderly ones and went through whatever resources were available on the required matter. Information was obtained regarding several cultural practices which lost significance with the passage of time.
- GIS Mapping: Volunteers mapped the geographic data of the region that were studied by them. The mapping includes studying the topography, hydrological features of the region, geometric networks etc. The students studied the features of the land, water sources, climate history of the region

and so on. This recoding of geographical features helped the villagers in enhancing their agricultural practices as well as tackling issues like unreliable water sources.

- **Studying Flora and Fauna of Villages:** Another activity taken up under this mission was the study of plants and animals in the regions. Volunteers carried out scientific study of flora and fauna with the help of expert biologists. The findings were recorded and the volunteers came out with handbooks including the details of plants and animals in the region. The study brought out details of some endangered species as well as invasive species which were threatening the region. It was an opportunity for students to gather knowledge about the flora and fauna whereas it helped the villagers to root out many invasive species.
- **Smokeless villages (Non conventional energy sources and Energy audit):** One of the most important projects taken under this mission was the Smokeless villages programme. It was aimed at converting the villages to using LPG, or non-conventional energy sources. In this project, the villagers were introduced to new energy sources like LPG, solar cookers, bio gas stoves etc. so as to get rid of the conventional Chulas. The project included the training sessions for villagers to get used to such new cooking techniques. Students demonstrated the new systems and it was followed up as to help the villagers even after the initial sessions.
- **Soil and Water testing:** This initiative included testing the quality of soil and water in the villages. The volunteers with the help of officials from Agriculture and Water authorities conducted scientific testing of water sources and soil. This was followed by the measures adopted to improve the quality of water and soil. The right proportions of fertilizers were prescribed so as to ensure the fertility of the cultivable lands. The volunteers visited the villages on a regular basis so as to ensure that measures adopted were well carried out. The programme was a remarkable one as it reduced the waterborne diseases in the region considerably.
- **One student, One tree Programme:** Under this scheme each student was assigned to plant a sapling either at home or in the adopted village. This is

one of the projects that have got a very strong follow up. Under this project, students assessed the green cover in the villages that they had adopted. This was followed by enlisting the plants and trees best suited for the climate and water availability. Villagers were also included in the planting sessions so as to make use of the traditional knowledge regarding pest control and manures. The saplings planted were then taken care by the students and villagers.

5. Adoption Of Villages: Mizoram

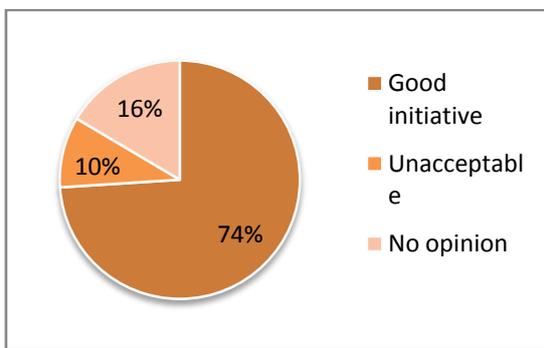
This small state with about just 23100 volunteers and with NSS units only in colleges under one university, has scored well above many others through their far reaching social service initiatives. The activities undertaken by the colleges under Mizoram University have been remarkable. They have been actively involved in all the aspects of lives in the villages they have adopted. With about 23100 volunteers in the current year they have been able to perform greatly. This indeed won them the Indira Gandhi NSS National Award for best University in 2010-11.

The NSS unit of Mizoram was certified by the state government in 2010-11 as the single largest blood donor in the state when it had donated about 3243 units of blood. It was the biggest achievement among all NSS units of the North Eastern states. The NSS volunteers of Mizoram turned out to be really helpful by their willingness to help those in trouble any time. They had many volunteers ready to donate blood in times of emergencies. Apart from blood donation, the NSS volunteers of Mizoram performed significantly in their village adoption programmes. They have constructed about 1396 urinals, 808 bus shelters and bazaar sheds. The NSS teams have so far successfully maintained all these. The significant achievement of NSS unit of Mizoram lies in the follow up actions they take. They have been properly maintaining all the urinals and bus sheds they have constructed. The NSS units have also laid park benches and water points which have turned a boon to the public. The NSS unit of this small state deserves accolades for these selfless and incredible activities.

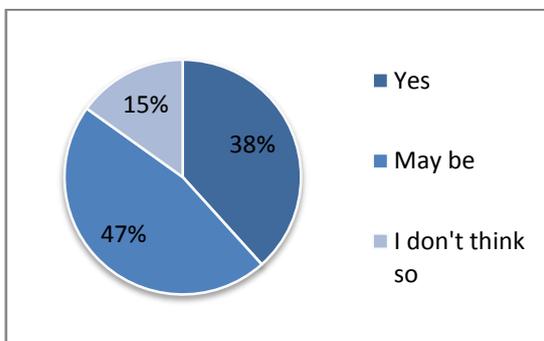
4.2.2 Results of Online Survey

An online survey was conducted to get the views of students on social service initiatives. It was conducted for college students from all states of the country. The survey was intended to get the response of students on making NSS mandatory and the need to enhance such schemes. The survey was conducted for 100 students who were randomly chosen. A few questions were sent to them and the following is the summary of the responses.

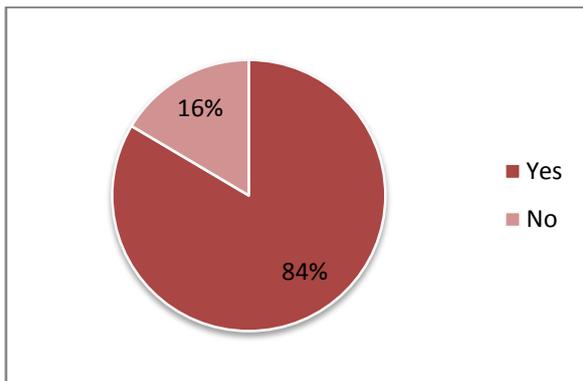
Q1. What is your opinion regarding mandatory NSS activities for college students?



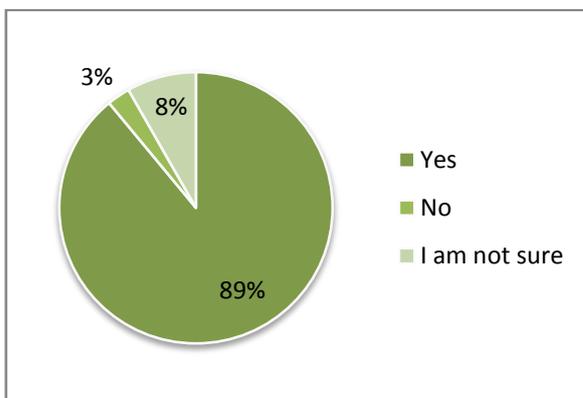
Q2. Does NSS succeed in taking what you learn from classroom to the field?



Q3. Will you join NSS voluntarily if you are given a chance to serve society through NSS?



Q4. Do you think such initiatives help in the overall development of an individual?



About 89% of those who participated in the survey agreed that initiatives like NSS are needed for the overall development of an individual. They were of the opinion that such social service platforms can teach students various things ranging from life skills to tackle hard realities of life to ways intended at helping our fellow beings. And about 84% of the respondents were willing to join NSS and serve the society. This was really an unexpected result as about 50% of them were not even part of NSS before. It shows the enthusiasm among youth to contribute to their society when they feel it is needed. Even when it was asked whether NSS can be made mandatory in colleges, about 74% of the students welcomed it as a good initiative. 10% were against such a move and about 16% had no opinion regarding this. But there was some dilemma for students regarding whether NSS succeeded in taking what you learn in class to the field. Only 38 % agreed to it whereas 47% percent gave an answer 'maybe' revealing their doubts regarding the same. Even a 15% responded as they did not feel that NSS succeeded in this mission. This calls for the need to make NSS activities more effective and known to the students.

Unless they are aware of various activities undertaken by NSS units in their colleges, they will not come forward to be a part of such endeavours. So NSS should concentrate on taking up core issues plaguing the society and should adopt measures to reach out to the aspiring volunteers.

4.3 Gap Analysis

The journey through the history and activities of NSS brought me to various gaps that existed in the system. The service NSS rendering to the nation cannot be overlooked by any chance. It continues to be one of the channels that take development to rural and urban poor. Through its numerous nation building initiatives, NSS has succeeded in instilling confidence in the missions of Government. However some gaps can be found when we analyse the targets and achievements of NSS. Still it has immense scope to improve overcoming the gaps that exist in various levels of its functioning.

The following table shows the total number of universities in every state and out of which those with NSS units.

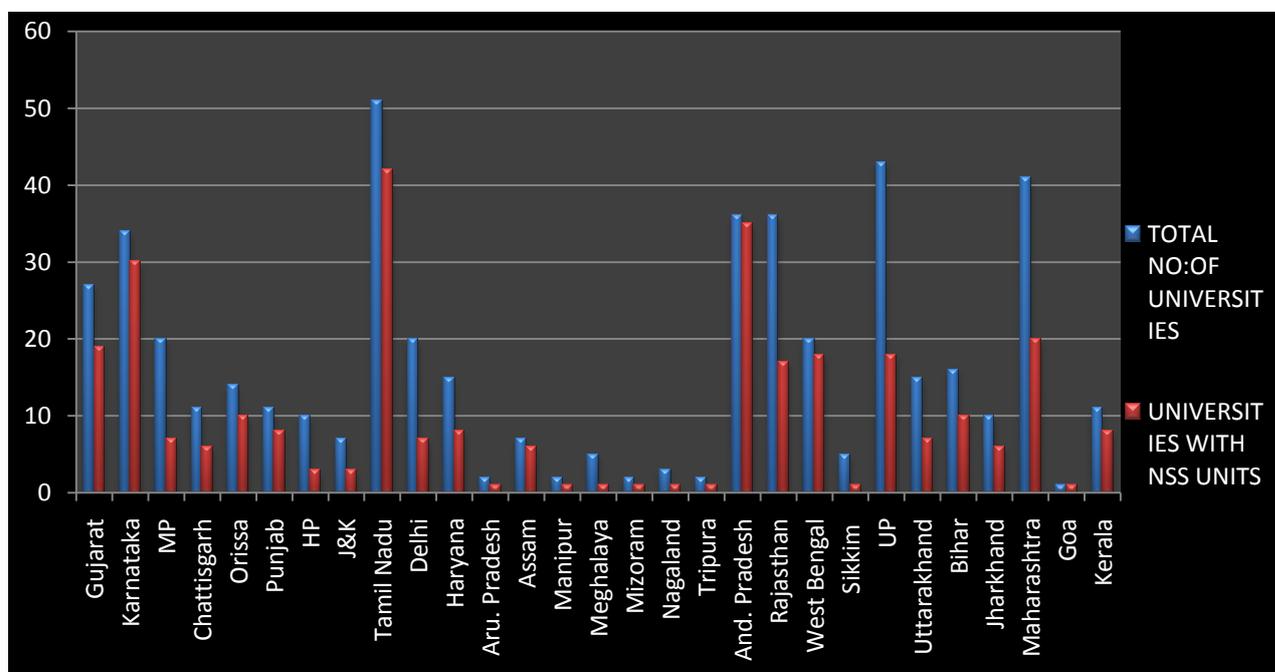


Table 12

The comparative study of no: of universities and those with NSS units turns out to be stark reality in states like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Only 40-50% of universities have NSS units in the states of UP, Uttarakhand, and Rajasthan. It is less than 40% in Madhya Pradesh. The situation is equally sad in states of J&K, Meghalaya and Nagaland. But the study has shown that the difficult terrain, terrorist threats and geographical barriers have led to decrease in diversification of NSS in these states. These factors have resulted in placing limitations over community development activities in these regions. But the lack of enthusiasm among students to join NSS cannot be overlooked in the Northern and central states. This is a gap that needs to be addressed in order to take NSS to greater heights. It calls for the need to take NSS to more colleges in these regions which can in turn enhance the community development initiatives in the states. NSS can collaborate with various ministries as well as NGOs and can thus help the citizens in matters ranging from legal awareness to procurement of agricultural produce.

However no study can ignore the highest rate of NSS in colleges of Andhra Pradesh. About 97% of the universities there have NSS units and most of them are carrying out remarkable activities. The states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Assam, also have very active NSS units with more than 85% of their universities running NSS units. Maharashtra with NSS units in around 50% of its universities is a leader in many successful NSS activities. The state of Mizoram with NSS units under the Mizoram University has been in the forefront when it comes to social service in North eastern part of the country. They have undertaken several Herculean tasks and have succeeded. The Indira Gandhi National NSS award that they bagged in 2010-11 stands a token of their hard work.

Another issue plaguing NSS in these states is the lack of trained programme officers. Lack of enough trained programme officers can cause problems at times. Students tend to take up difficult tasks without proper planning in the absence of trained programme co-ordinators. Such missions turn out to be failures and this will further adversely affect the enthusiasm of students.

The following table shows the number of trained programme officers of NSS.

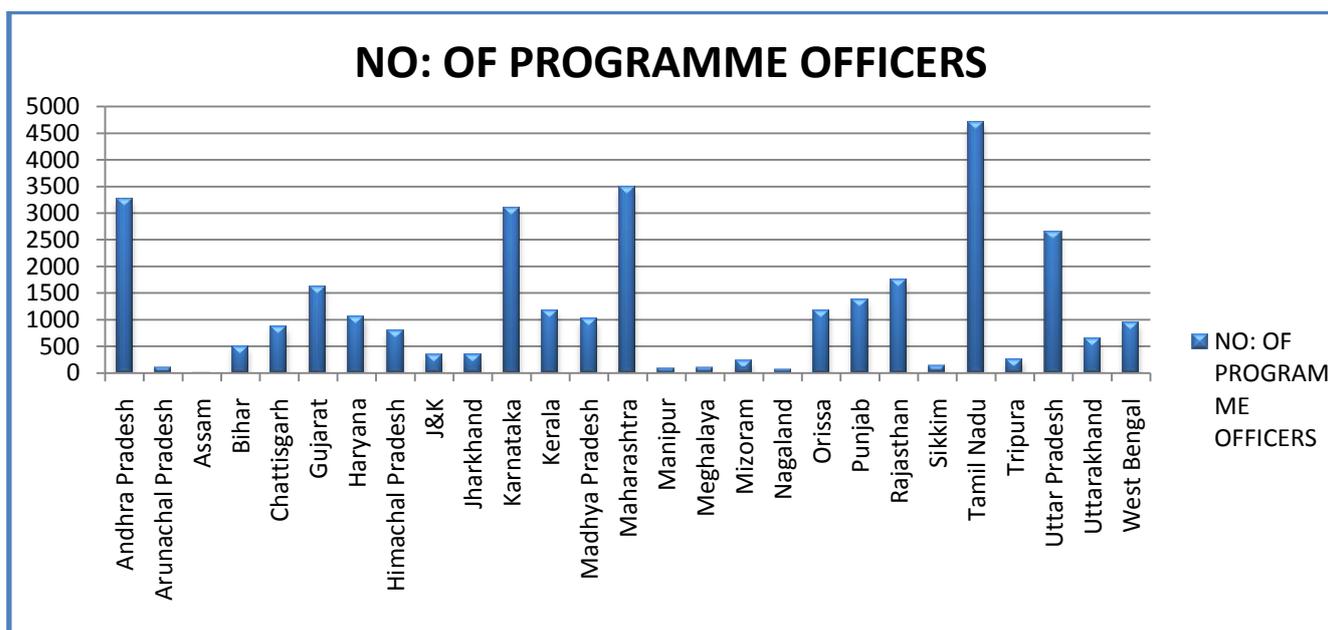


Table 13

This table shows that the states which fare well in NSS activities have the highest number of programme officers. Even though Uttar Pradesh has considerable number of programme officers, the NSS activities in the state have to go ahead a lot. This calls for the need to impart quality training to programme officers who in turn can help the volunteers to work better. Unless quality training is imparted to programme officers, it will tend to reduce the efficacy of initiatives they take up. It is essential to have more programme officers in states of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Jharkhand, West Bengal etc. which has considerable number of volunteers. Proper co-ordination is inevitable for the success of any activity and becomes even more imperative in the case of NSS. The students are to be guided properly to involve in community development activities which otherwise may end being in disorder.

Another gap can be seen in the fund allocated to the NSS and a part of which is not utilised. So activities can be planned properly to make use of the resources effectively. Thankfully the amount is not misused, but lot more activities can be undertaken with the immense resources provided by the ministry.

The following table shows the fund allocated and how much of it was utilised for activities.

Amount in crores:

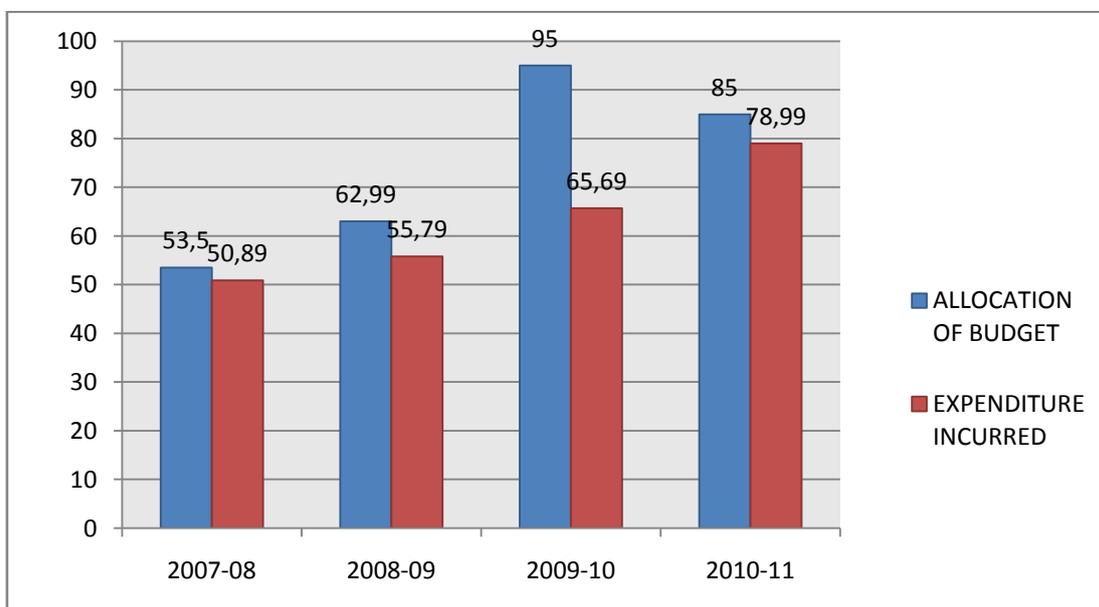


Table 14

This is high time that NSS is to be perceived with greater importance. The maximum potential of NSS is to be exploited to take the fruits of our progress to all parts of our country. More innovative programmes can be planned and information about them can be provided to colleges. Some special activities can be organised for states that lag behind in human development factors like sex ration and infant mortality rate. NSS units of colleges in areas which are performing badly can be allotted more by allotting extra tasks to them. The allotted amount to these states can be increased but it however adds to more responsibility as the expenditure is also to be recorded. Thus proper planning and allocation of funds for special programmes in these states can be undertaken after sufficient discussions. If efficiently carried out, such programmes can take India to greater heights.

4.3.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of NSS

NSS has been providing a platform to the Indian youth to channelize their energy in the right direction. It has been introducing our young minds to the multiple facets of our society. NSS so far through their numerous activities has successfully helped in combating many social issues all over the country. One of the major strengths of NSS that can be highlighted is the literacy missions they have undertaken since 1969. NSS volunteers have enthusiastically contributed to this gesture by imparting literacy in rural as well as urban parts of the country. This project was more than an NSS activity that was completed for winning credit. It turned out to be one of the path-breaking initiatives other than by Govt. Officials in the area of literacy. Along with introducing students to the social service arena, NSS has also achieved quite a success in moulding the character of its volunteers. Students were able to enhance soft skills through the various NSS activities like National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development and The Rural Youth Leadership and Personality Development Programme.

However NSS programmes have been successful in only certain pockets. The NSS cells of Southern states, Mizoram and Orissa to some extent have considerably good projects with high success and participation rates. The NSS programmes undertaken by the NSS cells of these states have had brought significant changes in the society. Let it be in the planning stage or in that of implementation, the activities by universities of the Southern states score well compared to their Northern counterparts. If the NSS activities of some colleges of North India are assessed, one will come across such stark realities including nexus between the programme advisor and the students. A lot of potential is being wasted which otherwise could have helped the nation in a significant way.

Still as compared to the fund allocated, NSS activities are not up to the mark in various parts. Despite the huge resources spent by Government on NSS, many NSS projects are only on paper. Why such discrepancies are found even in such a well planned initiative? The negligence of University NSS programme advisors has turned out to be the culprits at times. In spite of the supervision of the National NSS Cell there have been instances of mismanagement of NSS funds and

submission of fraudulent annual reports. Many annual reports present very good pictures regarding NSS activities in many institutes, but in reality most of those are just in paper, not realised in fields.

Another problem plaguing NSS activities in our country is the lack of follow up of most of the missions. How projects will be over if a sapling is planted and left uncared? Even the activities like teaching kids in schools can be sustained only if the progress of students is constantly assessed. NSS cells of various colleges hype up some of their initiatives but will be hollow if one studies it thoroughly. Many activities are not even conducted but they are sadly mentioned in the institute reports. Lack of follow up is a problem faced by NSS throughout the country. It calls for more stringent supervision as well as more practical solutions to ensure follow up of NSS missions by volunteers. It can be done by also giving some incentives to volunteers who are taking up the follow up initiatives. This can attract more volunteers to be actively part of the NSS.

Lack of interest among students to volunteer for NSS has too contributed to the plight of NSS. Many volunteers just see it as a means to get credit to finish their courses. In some states extra marks are provided for NSS volunteers, and it attracts many to join NSS. Just for the sake of winning more marks students come for social service. It has all added to the woes of this system that intends to enhance the role of youth in nation building. It is fine to give incentives to bring more people to such initiatives, but it tends to be futile when people are not utilising their maximum potential to make such efforts fruitful. So along with the credit some awards for best NSS volunteers can be given. At present these are the awards given by the ministry.

S. No.	Category	No. of Awards	Value of Award
1	University/+2 Council (State Level)	1	Rs. 2,00,000/- (For NSS Programme Development)

2	Programme Officer	10	Rs. 20,000/- each
3	NSS Unit	10	Rs. 70,000/- (For NSS Programme Development)
4	NSS Volunteers	30	Rs. 15,000/- Meant for a week in a reputed voluntary agency working in the field of Youth and Community Development

Table 15

These are some awards for volunteers right now, but they are quite less in number. It should be increased so as to stimulate people to take part actively.

The establishment of the NSS, involving thousands of students as well as the non-student youth of diverse cultural backgrounds and academic orientations, with its remarkable growth, is indicative of a constructive urge motivating the student to find channels of involvement in his society and to seek opportunities of fuller development of his personality. The significance of the NSS as an agent of human resource development naturally springs from the role of higher education in national reconstruction as well as from the psychological need of having a sense of participation in nation-building tasks. Today the NSS constitutes the only vehicle for the student community to channelize their energies for social action to reconstruct both education and environment. It is the most meaningful development that has come upon the Indian university campuses and has within it catalytic potentialities bringing to function the long-felt urgent reforms in education.

5. Recommendations, Scope and Strategy for Implementation

1. Annual Report for NSS at national level

Recommendation: There is great need of an annual report of NSS at the national level. The annual report can give a glimpse of all activities taken up in that year as well as future targets. It can be a directory with all contact details, data regarding NSS activities taken up and volunteers, presentation of issues of national importance and so on. The annual report can be despatched to every college with an NSS unit which can motivate the units in slumber to wake up and act. The annual report can include sections to highlight remarkable projects undertaken under difficult situations so as to motivate others to utilise their maximum potential. The report can also include columns with experiences of National award winning volunteers and universities which can guide other volunteers. If a printed copy to every college is expensive, then an e-copy can be released to all colleges.

Scope: An annual report can act as an information source for anyone researching about NSS. It can help the person to know and analyse NSS at a glance. A well written, documented annual report can turn out to be an asset to NSS. Universities can release their own annual reports in the light of this one and it can help students to know NSS better. If they come to know about NSS activities they may feel more enthusiastic to join its initiatives.

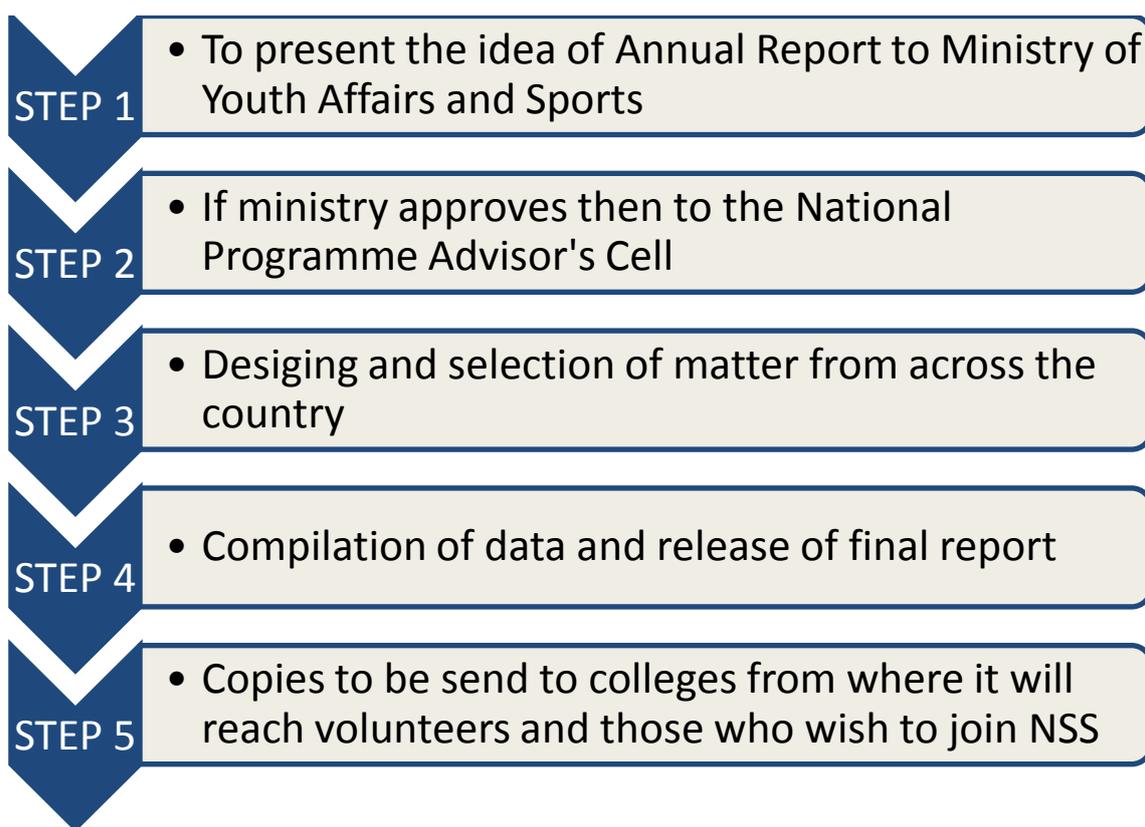


Fig 3

2. Creation of NSS Web Portal for every University

Recommendation: Every university can digitise its NSS activities for proper assessment of previous year's activities and to reach out to students. The Web portal can be used by colleges to upload the details regarding their various NSS activities as well as future plans. Moreover it can help in timely documentation of activities undertaken as well as hours completed by NSS volunteers. The Portal can include information for aspiring volunteers, updates on the new programmes to be conducted, can include data for a student from outside who wish to know about the NSS activities of the university.

Scope: The NSS Web Portal can turn out to be an online platform for NSS to reach out to more students. It can give regular updates to students which can further increase the participation in various NSS activities. It can be used to accept blood donation requirements in emergencies, monetary needs for people in critical

situations etc. A web portal can give early intimation about activities to students and can ensure greater participation in events.

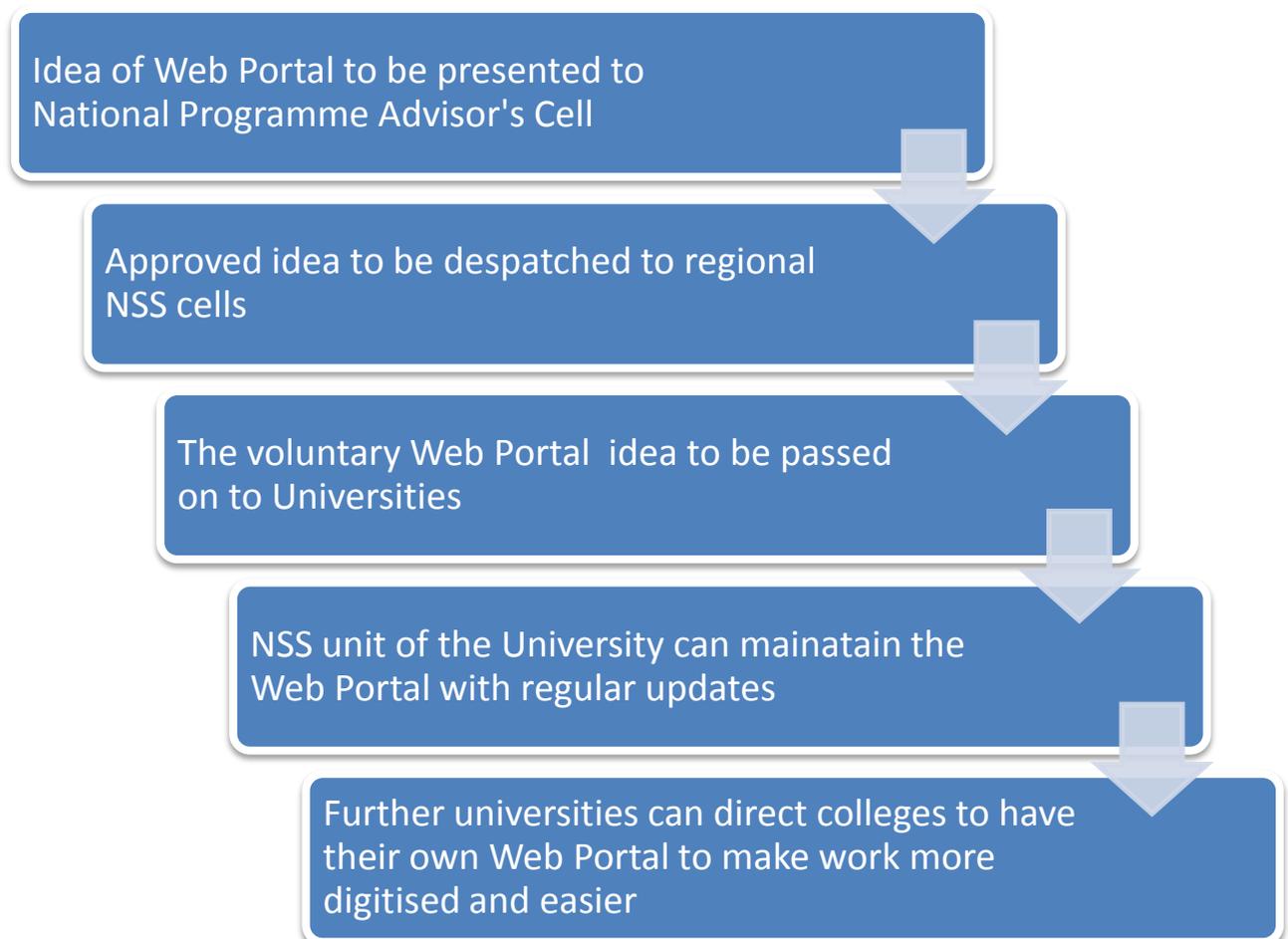


Fig 4

3. Collaboration with NGOs

Recommendation: NSS can make its activities more effective by collaborating with NGOs. It will help the NSS units to gain expertise and guidance from the NGOs. The experience and functioning of NGOs can help students to adopt the best from them. NSS units from the colleges can collaborate with NGOs that deal with issues in and around their cities. Then the NSS units can get training or some aid from the NGOs on how to go about the works. The combined efforts of NSS and the NGOs can be more effective and can make the follow ups easier. This will be of great importance in issues like RTI awareness, organ donation etc. because the NGOs

will have experts among them to explain the complications and technicalities. NSS volunteers can make use of it and can carry on the mission forward.

Scope: The collaboration with NGOs has been proved successful many times. The collaboration of NSS units of colleges of Delhi and the NGO Pravah since 2008 has been highly successful. The NSS units were able to increase their reach out by more than 50% after combined efforts. The NGOs provided the best methodologies for the volunteers and helped them with ways to go about issues. NSS initiatives can be taken to more people by collaborations with NGOs.

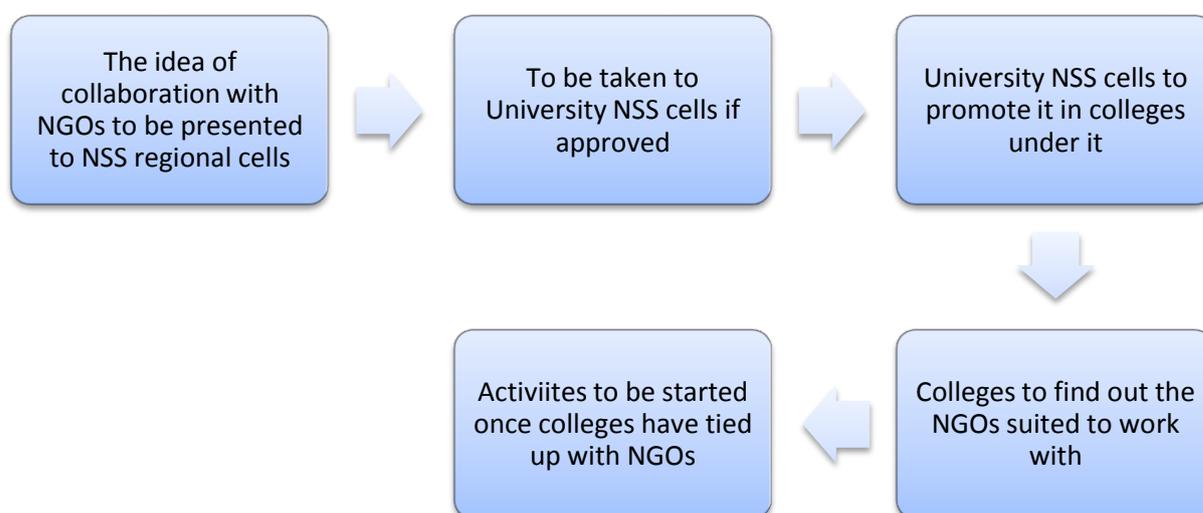


Fig 5

4. Incentives to Volunteers

Recommendation: Apart from the Indira Gandhi national NSS awards, some other incentives can be given to the volunteers. The participation in NSS can be given weightage when it comes to placements in Public Sector Companies. The NSS volunteers can be given an extra credit for state and central civil services. The participation in NSS during college days can be considered a matter for special mention for appointment to certain posts and departments. For example the PSC calls for the post of Panchayath/ Block Development officers. Extra marks can be awarded in the recruitment tests to NSS volunteers in proportion to the service

they have rendered through NSS. Apart from the extra marks added at the time of final examination in colleges, students can be given certificates with special mention for outstanding volunteers. University can congratulate the outstanding volunteers by giving some special prizes.

Scope: It can stimulate students to join NSS and to work more efficiently. This can be a driving force to bring more universities and colleges to start NSS units in their campuses.

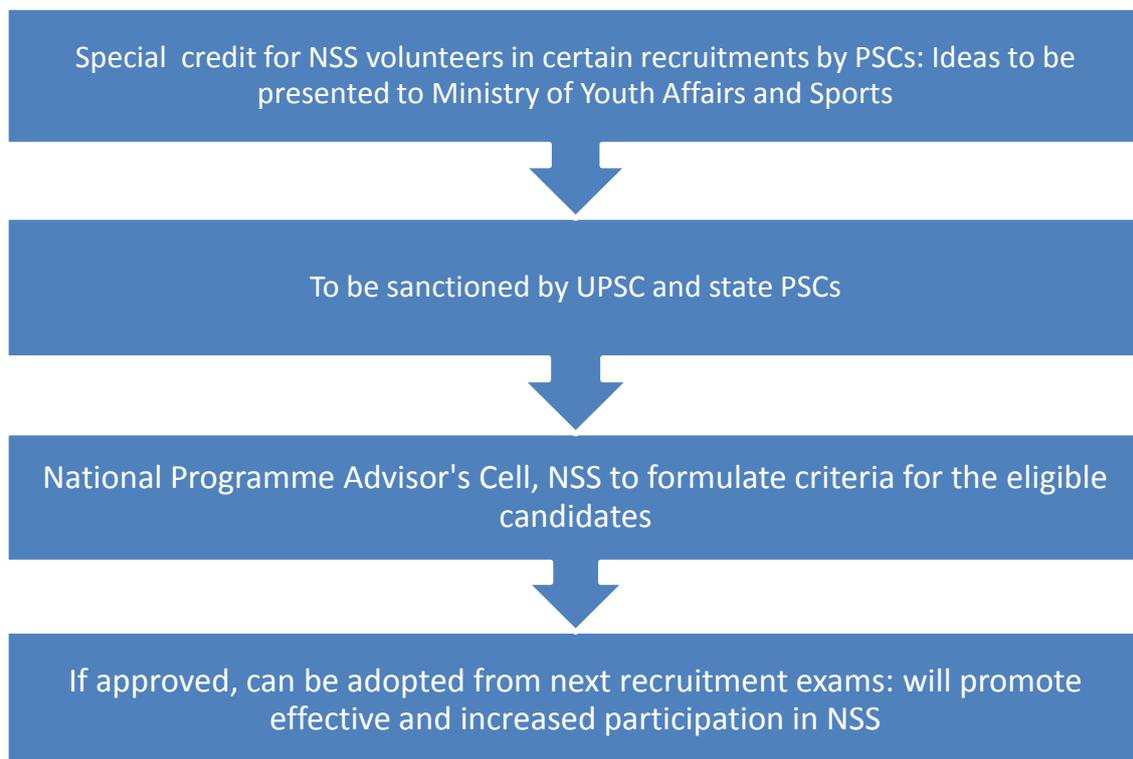


Fig 6

5. Training to selected volunteers

Recommendation: The selected volunteers after their first year of service can be given training by the National NSS Cell. It can be for a week or two under the guidance of experts from NSS and NGOs. The volunteers can be given training in how to find out issues that plague society and devise ways to tackle them. The training sessions can include assessing socio-economic status of societies,

examining problems, devising methods to solve the issues, imparting knowledge regarding social service, improving leadership skills etc. Such training sessions can help the volunteers to lead their NSS units in the next years. If the NSS student coordinators are given proper training it can enhance the effectiveness of NSS activities across the country.

Scope: It can be on the go by providing training to members from selected colleges of states that lag behind in NSS activities. Such states and colleges can be found out and enthusiastic volunteers from those colleges can be given training. The volunteers who have received such training can then go back and lead their NSS activities in a better way.

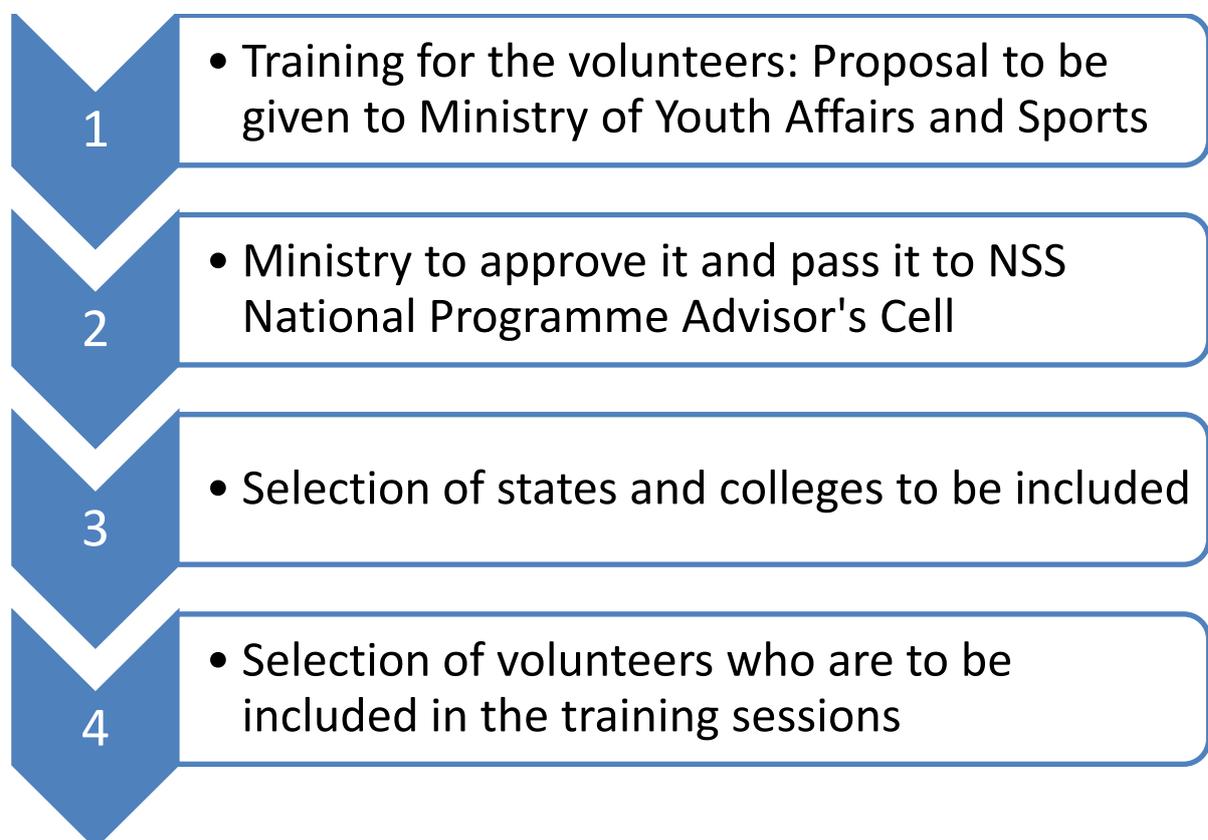


Fig 7

6. Single theme for all NSS units for a year

Recommendation: A single theme can be chosen by NSS National cell and can be allotted to NSS units of colleges to work on. The theme can be chosen in lines with the themes chosen by UN for global work. The themes can be chosen for a year or two. It can ensure proper follow up of the actions planned. For eg: if 2012 is selected as year for Sustainable Development, activities related to that can be undertaken in the year across India. This can even help colleges to collaborate and work. Colleges in an area can take up a big issue like campaign against plastic in a combined way. So students from all colleges can devise ways to reduce plastic and can promote cloth and paper bags. They can reach out to more people and that too in effective ways.

Scope: The most important advantage of such initiatives is that volunteers can focus more rather than when they involve in diffused work. It can ensure follow up and can select issues of importance rather than wasting resources on activities that can be carried out by employees under MGNREGA. Ministry can take up issues of national importance like 'Year for girl child', 'Year against Tobacco' etc. which need attention. So with the guidelines by NSS National Cell, colleges can formulate their own programmes to achieve the targets set by Ministry.

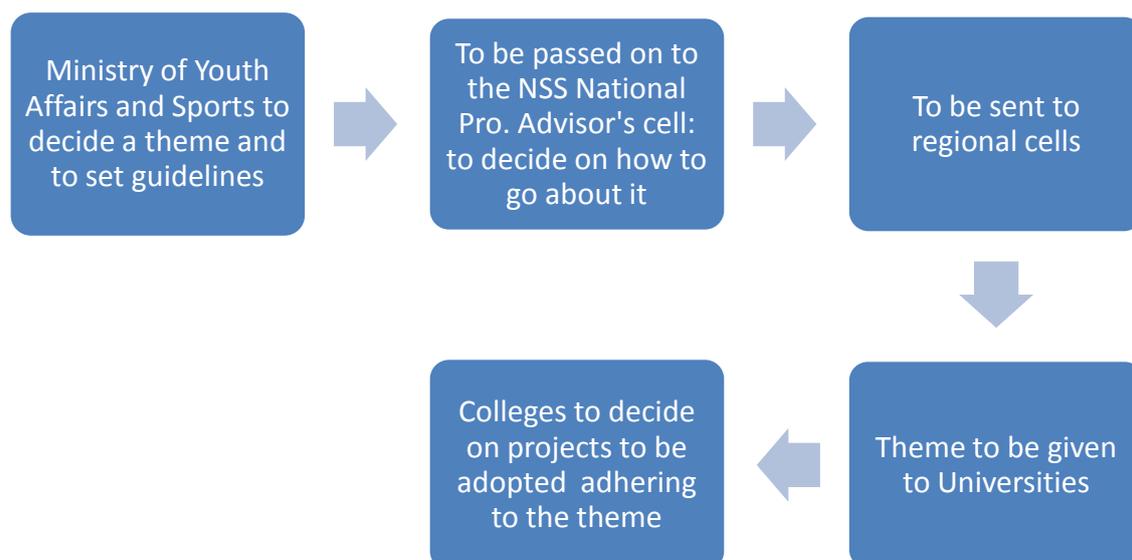


Fig 8

7. Exchange Programme for Volunteers

Recommendation: This can help in improving NSS activities in states where it lag behind. Volunteers from other states can be brought for activities for a week or two. Then the combined group can share their views and can work together to analyse the problems plaguing the society. The students can work as a group and can figure out what issues are causing the NSS to be ineffective in those regions at times. The students can share their methodologies and can adopt the best ways from their counterparts.

Scope: This programme can work out successfully if best volunteers of NSS are sent for the exchange programme. One or two days may be needed to get acquainted with the conditions in the new place, but after that the students can work together to help the people there. Students can share their different experiences and can motivate their peers to work better. Ultimately the combined efforts can really work wonders.

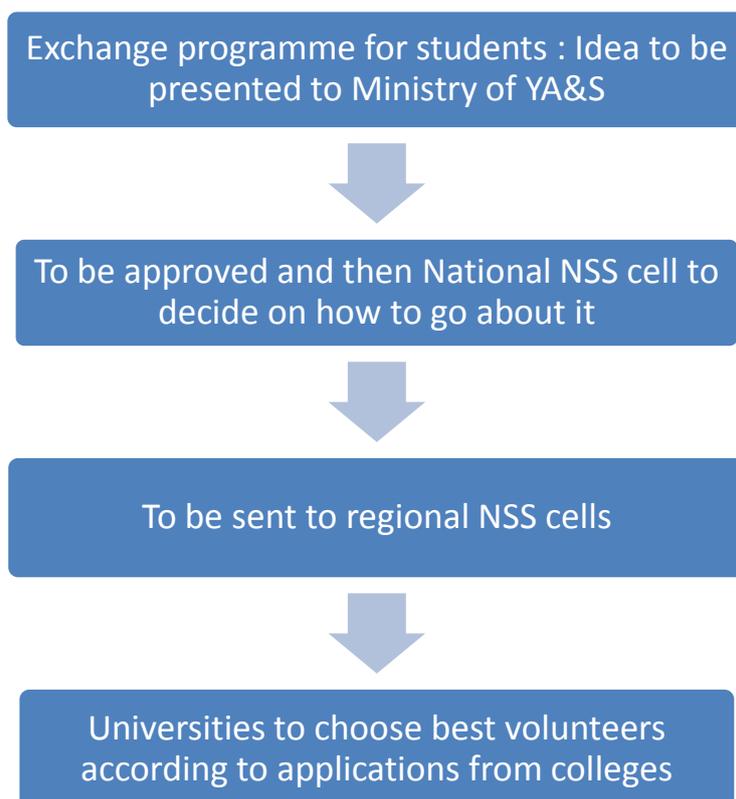


Fig 9

5.1 POSSIBILITIES OF NSS IN TAKING UP THE FOLLOWING ISSUES

a] Organ Donation:

In India the awareness on organ donation is very less but the need of organ is much higher. Donating organs is a great deed as its equivalent to donating life to another person. It is estimated that in India every year over 100,000 people are diagnosed to have kidney failure and would be in need of transplantation. Due to non-availability of organs only about 2,500 kidney transplants are done. The same thing happens for eye and other organ donations as well. This calls for the need to create awareness among people to come forward to for such a good cause. In 1994, the Government of India passed the Transplantation of Human Organs Act that legalized the concept of brain death and, for the first time, facilitated organ procurement from heart beating, brain dead donors. However, this concept has not caught on well in India for want of public education and awareness. This in turn is perpetuating the commercial sale of human organs due to the widening gap

between the demand and supply. There are rackets functioning in this sector which make organ transplantation impossible for the poor.

The following table gives the organ donation rates across the world.

An odd mix of champions
Organ donor rates per 1 million population
Selected countries, 2007

	Live	Cadaveric
Iran	22.9	2.3
United States	20.8	26.6
Canada	16.5	14.8
Pakistan	15.5*	0.0
Sweden†	13.9	14.5
Britain	13.6	13.0
Australia	13.0	9.0
Israel	10.6	7.7
Greece†	7.9	5.8
France†	4.0	25.3
Spain†	3.6	34.3
Italy†	2.1	20.9
Uruguay	1.8	18.0
Ireland	1.2	20.2

Sources: Transplant Procurement Management, Barcelona; *The Economist* *2006 †Countries with presumed consent

Table 16

In India the picture is very dismal. The current organ donation per million for cadaver in India is 0.05 per million (about 50 Cadaver donors per year). At 1 per million donation rate we would have 1100 organ donors or 2200 kidneys, 1000 hearts, 1100 Livers, 1100 Pancreas and 2200 eyes. This should take care of almost all current demands for organs.

NSS has vast potential to create awareness regarding organ donation among students as well as adults. They can take up this project and organise camps and awareness drives to sensitise people. It will be of great success if NSS could at least bring in about a hundred people ready to donate their organs. They themselves can set good examples by pledging eyes. NSS volunteers can arrange such mass programmes where they can sign their agreement to donate their eyes after death. This good gesture from them can attract others to join such good causes. Moreover the superstitious beliefs of certain groups are that making people reluctant to

donate organs. So students can organise certain programmes to ward off all the superstitions regarding organ donation. The activities can be started by including the dear and near initially and then can be taken to others. More and more people will come forward if they realise that people are indeed supporting such causes. Student initiatives can bear fruit when the social stigma attached to this is wiped off.

A Methodology for such a Programme

- An organ donation cell can be formed within the NSS unit of the college.
- The activities can be better carried out in collaboration with some NGO that works in this field. If there is no NGO in the nearby city, the NSS unit can itself go ahead with aid from some health professionals.
- They can select interested students from the college NSS volunteers to be a part of this team. A group of 5-10 members will be ideal.
- Volunteers have to be given proper training regarding the procedures, pros and cons, methods and importance of organ donation.
- After those sessions, the group can plan activities to be carried out in regard to this in and outside the campus. Initially an outlay can be made to have such programmes in the campus.
- Volunteers can conduct awareness campaigns in which they can pledge their organs, for eg: eyes, so as to prompt others to do so. Volunteers can bring in doctors or other health professionals to conduct such sessions.
- Some exhibitions, street plays and competitions can be conducted to remove the reluctance of people towards organ donation. Pamphlets can be made which can be circulated among the people as well as students.
- NSS can involve students in various activities like introducing their parents to activities like pledging eyes. In some cases students cannot make decisions regarding such matters on their own. So it is inevitable to sensitise others at home regarding such issues.

b] Right to Education

The landmark passing of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009 marked a historic moment for the children of India. For the first time in India's history, children are guaranteed their right to quality elementary education by the state with the help of families and communities. RTE provides a ripe platform to reach the unreached, with specific provisions for disadvantaged groups, such as child labourers, migrant children, children with special needs, or those who have a "disadvantage owing to social, cultural economical, geographical, linguistic, gender or such other factor."

RTE act provides free education for all children in the age-group 6-14 and ensures that any child can demand provision of free education to him or her in his or her neighbourhood right up to the 8th class. The right compels the parents to send their wards to school as they can no longer complain that the educational institutions nearby are unaffordable. The state can and should compel them to send their children to school in the interest of the future of the children, their family and the society as a whole. NSS volunteers can contribute greatly to take this act to the common man. They can create awareness regarding the prospects of this act to the rural and urban poor. NSS units can organise camps in the rural areas to sensitise parents regarding the new right and can help them to get their wards to school. As education till the age of 14 has been made compulsory, the rural people can be made aware of that. Moreover the volunteers can acknowledge them about the private and public schools in the area and how the new act gives opportunity to the student to study in the school closer to his/her home till primary level.

Methodology for such a Programme

- Form an education cell which can exclusively look at issues related to this. The cell can have about 5-10 members.
- Data can be gathered about the schools nearby and NSS can help the illiterate parents to get their wards into schools.

- More sessions during the reopening time of schools exclusively including more volunteers
- Book collection drives, extra coaching for weak students and counselling can be conducted by NSS volunteers

6. Suggestions for Future Work

The research will be incomplete if more substantial data regarding the NSS and various NSS success stories from other parts of the country are not incorporated. I contacted the National Programme Adviser of NSS from Ministry of Youth Affairs and got his view on making this voluntary service, mandatory one and regarding several other aspects of NSS. Some more states are to be studied to get a clear picture of NSS in the country. The project can be strengthened if I could meet some professors who have already worked on NSS. Other areas where NSS can make substantial impact are to be studied upon and methodologies for implementing NSS activities can be formulated. I wish to take upon the very basic issues of our society like illiteracy, dowry deaths etc. as well as the problems currently faced by urban India like pollution, slums, congestion and so on. Such issues and the scope of NSS in bringing change can be thoroughly studied.

- More areas and NSS units are to be visited to get a firsthand experience of their NSS activities.
- Need to talk to NGOs regarding the collaboration with NSS
- Any issues faced by NSS units in carrying out their actions in any part of the country
- An assessment of NSS activities of secondary schools
- NSS activities of various colleges and schools are to be seen(which was not possible due to vacations)
- Analyse the impact of NSS on various strata of society
- More research into strengths and weaknesses of National Service Scheme

7. Conclusion

Transition among youth has been faster in recent years as compared to earlier, creating additional intra-generational transitional issues. Numerous stages of demographic transition, levels of development, cultural transformations and globalisation have its impact on youth. Even as young people journey through youth, their idiosyncrasies and attitudes change continuously. The need for work orientation in the course of studies and temperamental craving for quick buck have invariably placed emphasis on the individual and tend to ignore the social reality. It is, therefore, appropriate that the focus should be shifted to the total human environment of which education is an integral part. It is this environment that is now sought to be transformed by using education as one of the chief instruments. Thus the NSS, which is an educational programme, is a significant agent of human resource development. Volunteer service is widening its scope all over the world. It has extended to those in the Peace Corps and United Nations volunteers who receive stipends, to those in educational institutions where service is seen as a vital part of the educational process, and to those in countries where service is seen as civic responsibility¹⁰. Gandhiji had urged India to form “a service army to undertake a thirteen-fold constructive program to bring literacy and healthcare and schools and agricultural co-operation and decency to every village in India”. NSS has been carrying this forward through its service-learning programmes. Let us hope and believe that NSS would make bigger strides in human resource development and become an integral part of our education system with a view to identifying social problems and cultivating the requisite skills to solve the problems and, from these two bases, enhance the frontiers of human knowledge.

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APPENDIX A

MEETING 1

Date: May 16, 2012

Time: 2. 30 PM

Duration of Discussion: 20 minutes

Discussion:

- Mentor asked to focus on the emergence of NSS and its initial activities.
- Mentor suggested me to look at the various unexplored avenues of the issue
- Mentor threw light upon various sources that can be approached to gather data regarding the NSS activities
- Regarding the various aspects of the issue to be included
- The significance of NSS to the nation was to be studied
- Mentor asked to me to look upon other such social service initiatives that have been successful so far
- Mentor asked me to add some practical suggestions to make NSS more effective

Action Items before next discussion including timeline:

- Research data further on internet related to NSS – 5 hours
- Research on diversion of NSS funds – 4 hours
- Look up on issues plaguing NSS –6 hours
- Contacting NSS National Programme Adviser
- Research on other prospective areas where NSS can render service – 4 hours
- Meet some NSS volunteers and co-ordinators of IIT Delhi and Delhi University- 2 days

- Get the views of some professors and NGOs on making social service compulsory for youth- 2 days

MEETING 2

DATE: 6/6/2012

TIME: 1.00 PM

DURATION OF DISCUSSION: 10 MINUTES

DISCUSSION

- How to get in touch with Rajiv Gandhi Centre, Chennai for more details on NSS?
- To contact a professor in TISS for some information
- How to proceed further on the project?
- Regarding incorporating more numerical data if available
- Who to contact for details from NSS national administration cell?
- Suggestions on improving what I have done so far
- Any field visits to be conducted.

ACTION ITEMS BEFORE NEXT DISCUSSION

- Gathering data from TISS and Chennai(3 days)
- Field visits if possible (2 days)
- Working on other aspects of the project(3 days)
- To contact other officials if possible (1 day)

MEETING 3

Date: JUNE 28, 2012

Time: 11.20 PM

Duration of Discussion: 10 minutes

Discussion:

- Mentor asked to go to some institutions like JNU or Indian Council for Social Science Research to get some resources on NSS from their libraries
- Mentor asked to meet NSS volunteers from various colleges across the country
- Mentor asked to come to Chennai if no resources are available in the north
- Mentor asked to find ways to make the project more analytical and critical
- Mentor asked to meet some professors who can possibly help on the issue

Action Items before next discussion:

- Research data in the above said institutions if possible (3 days)
- Meeting volunteers from various part of the country or calling through phone
- Look into some NSS success stories from various states (1 day)
- New ideas to make NSS more active (3 days)
- Critical study of NSS

Collection and analysis of data (2 days)

MEETING 4

Date of the Visit: 8-6-2012

Visit No.: 1

Goal of the visit:

1. To see the various NSS activities taking place
2. To gather data regarding their volunteers and missions
3. Get views of volunteers and their future programmes

Goals Met:

1. Got to know their various initiatives like EK SPARSH
2. Met the Professor in Charge, Dr. H C Verma
3. Gathered data regarding their various activities and future projects

Persons Met

- 1. Name:** Shashank Shekhar, NSS Student Co-ordinator, IITK
- 2. Name:** Prof. H C Verma, NSS Faculty Adviser, IITK

Duration and Timings of Discussion: 2 hours

Details of the Discussion: The discussion was mainly regarding the various NSS initiatives of IITK. The professor and the student co-ordinator spoke at length about their various programmes like teaching kids in the nearby schools, promoting quality education among the Government schools around Kanpur,

taking science to the rural areas etc. One of their recent works that has been highly acclaimed is a book Ek Sparsh on environmental awareness for schoolchildren. It is indeed a great achievement for the team of 6 who worked on it. It has good response from students among whom it was circulated. I came to know about the 40 NSS volunteers of IITK who worked incessantly for making a difference in many sectors ranging from science education to environmental protection. They have also undertaken several initiatives in collaboration with NGOs like Shiksha Sopan which aims at teaching the underprivileged kids. The science kit made by the NSS unit of IITK has also been received much accolade. The NSS team of IITK has undertaken several endeavours in collaboration with the NSS unit of IIT Delhi which too are remarkable.

MEETING 5

Date of the Visit: 3-7-2012

Visit No.: 1

Goal of the visit:

1. To see the various NSS activities taking place
2. To gather data regarding their volunteers and missions
3. Get views of volunteers and their future programmes

Goals Met:

1. Got to know their various initiatives like collaboration with NGO Pravah
2. Met the Student Co-ordinators of NSS in IIT Delhi and Lady Shriram College
3. Gathered data regarding their various activities and future projects

Persons Met

1. Name: Utkarsh Kawatra, IIT Delhi

2. Name: Nishita Jain, Lady Shriram College

Duration and Timings of Discussion: 2 hours

Details of the Discussion: The discussion was mainly regarding the various NSS initiatives of DU and IIT Delhi. The student co-ordinators spoke at length about their various programmes like teaching kids in the nearby schools, promoting quality education among the Government schools, blood donation camps etc. Details of one of their highly successful project BloodConnect were collected. I also came to know about successful activities carried out in collaboration with NGOs like Pravah. **Students Mobilisation Initiative for Learning through Exposure (SMILE)** is one of our oldest programs and has stayed on and grown alongside Pravah which now they carry out with NSS volunteers. It runs as a program across India with an aim to involve young people in activities which help them to belong and take more responsibility in whatever they do. I also came to know about several other initiatives of NSS units of these colleges.

MEETING 6

Date of the Visit: 6-7-2012

Visit No.: 1

Goal of the visit:

1. To get details of the various NSS activities taking place across the country
2. To gather data regarding NSS volunteers and missions
3. Get views of National Programme Advisors of NSS

Goals Met:

1. Gathered data regarding NSS activities in India
2. Met NSS National Programme Advisor, Dr. Girish Kumar
3. Gathered data regarding various NSS activities and future projects

Persons Met

- 1. Name:** Dr. Girish Kumar IAS, NSS National Programme Advisor
- 2. Name:** Khushboo Chanana, NSS Co-ordinator, Miranda House College, Delhi

Duration and Timings of Discussion: 2 hours

Details of the Discussion: The discussion was mainly regarding the various NSS initiatives undertaken across the country. The National Programme Advisor and the student co-ordinator spoke at length about their various programmes. Details regarding various NSS activities as well as the innovative projects were gathered. The National Programme Advisor talked about the aim and activities of NSS. It turned out to be a really informative session.

The NSS class sessions for children from slum conducted by Miranda House College was also visited. Data regarding the NSS activities of Delhi University were also collected.

RAKSHAK FOUNDATION

Rakshak Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization headquartered in Santa Clara, California. It partners with Rakshak Foundation NGO, New Delhi, India. It researches different public policy issues and creates awareness about them. Rakshak Foundation sponsors Seminars on public policy matters, sponsors activities to involve the youth in social issues including volunteerism and supports programs to help the needy. Rakshak's Summer Internship Program is aimed at providing an opportunity to highly motivated college students to work on complex real life social/national problems under the mentorship of experts and policy makers.

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