

# National Service Scheme (NSS) an Extension Education: Bridging Campus & Community- Emerging Trends in NSS with Special Reference to Tamil Nadu

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**Abstract:** *The NSS was started in 1969 during the Mahatma Gandhi birth year with a purpose to link the higher education campuses with local communities. The NSS added strength to the new extension dimension of education. The overall aim of National Service Scheme is to give orient the student youth to community service while they are studying in educational institution. As per the University Grand Commission's three dimensional higher education system (Three Dimensions 1.Teaching, 2.Research 3.Extension) the NSS a vibrant youth activity comes under the third dimension of Extension.(i.e Community service). In the 48 years (1969-2017 ) of glorious service to the student community the NSS in Tamil Nadu has grown constructively and progressively both in quality and quantity from the student coverage 3600 in 1969 to 1,82,800 in 2017. Without change there is no innovation, creativity or incentive for improvement. Those who initiate change will have a better opportunity to manage the change that is inevitable. Any programme which is not subject change and updation will be gradually faded and it becomes obsolete. The NSS in 48 years of existence (1969 to 2017) has seen constructive changes and developments and updated the programmes as per the student's attitude and interest. In this paper, the researcher made an attempt to analyze the emerging trends in National Service Scheme programmes.*

**Keywords:** National Service Scheme, Youth, Community Service

## 1. Introduction

*The word EXTENSION is derived from Latin roots. TENSIO means Stretching, EX –means Out. The term Extension Education means Stretching Out in to the villages and fields beyond the limits of the schools and colleges to which the formal type of education is normally confined.*

“**Atmano mokshartam jagata hitayacha**” (for ones liberation one should serve the society- Swami Vivekananda) In this paper, the researcher made an attempt to analyze the emerging trends in National Service Scheme programmes. The NSS was started in 1969 during the Mahatma Gandhi birth year with a purpose to link the higher education campuses with local communities. The NSS added strength to the new extension dimension of education. In the 47 Years existence 1969-2016, it is observed that the NSS programmes underwent quality and quantity changes. Kelsey and Hearne (1955) defined **extension education** as out of school education imparted to youth and adult with the philosophy of **learning-by-doing**. The over-all aim of National Services Scheme (NSS) is also to give an extension to the higher education system and orient the student youth to community services through learning by doing experiences while they are studying in educational institutes. The University Grants Commission (UGC) in 1977 incorporated extension into its policy statement for higher education when it stated that, if the university system has to discharge adequately its responsibilities to the entire education system and to the society as a whole it must assume extension as the third important responsibilities and give it the same status as teaching and research. This is new

and externally significant area which should be developed on the high priority.

In India, the father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi was the main source and mooted the idea of involving students in national service. Gandhiji strongly felt and impressed to the students time and again that they should always keep their social responsibility in mind. The first duty of the students should be not to treat their period of study as one of the opportunities for indulgence in intellectual luxury, but for preparing themselves for final dedication in the service of those who provided the sinews of the nation with the national goods & services so essential to society.

Drawing great inspiration from the father of the nation the NSS was introduced in 1969 as an educational experiment in Community Service. The basics of NSS were focused on the extension activities with special focus two important human values such as **Service and Sacrifice**. The NSS activities reflect these values and encourage students to imbibe the spirit of voluntary service while study in educational campuses. Indeed NSS serves as a bridge to connect students from campus to community in order to keep the lively link of college campuses with community to learn and realize the social realities of life.

The scheme was launched in the Mahatma Gandhi Birth Centenary year 1969 in the country, as a student youth service programme. The main aim of the scheme is to arousing social consciousness of the youth with a main objective of “personality development of the students through community service”.

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In 1969 it was launched in 37 universities in the country with the coverage of 40,000 students. In Tamil Nadu the scheme was initially launched in 1969 with the coverage of 3600 students and later on introduced to all the university and Directorates and in national level now NSS is operational in 351 universities and 42 higher secondary school directorates. ( as per the data of NSS Directorate for the year 2015-16)

**Basic concepts of NSS:**

The National Service Scheme was started to establish a meaningful linkage between the campus and the community. The overall aim of National Service Scheme is to give orient the student youth to community service while they are studying in educational institution. The reason is that the general realization that the college and +2 level students have a tendency to get alienated from the village/slum masses which constitute the majority of the population of the country. The educated youth who are expected to take the reins of administration in future are found to be unaware of the problems of the village/slum community and in certain cases are indifferent towards their needs and problems. Therefore it is necessary to awaken the social conscience of the students, and to provide them an opportunity to work with the people in the villages and slums. It is felt that their interaction with the common villagers and slum dwellers will expose them to the realities of life and bring about a change in their social perception

**NSS an Extension activity (Community Service):**

As per the University Grand Commission's three dimensional higher education system (Three Dimensions 1.Teaching, 2.Research 3.Extension) the NSS a vibrant youth activity comes under the third dimension of Extension.(i.e Community service). The community provides NSS volunteer the firsthand knowledge of living conditions of masses to the NSS volunteers and thus, the process of mutual learning starts. The interaction of community with students and teachers while on one hand enrich the personality of student volunteers and on the other hand help the community to improve its living conditions.

The father of the nation said the first duty of the students should be, not to treat their period of study as one of the opportunities for indulgence in intellectual luxury, but for

preparing themselves for final dedication in the service of those who provided the sinews of the nation with the national goods & services so essential to society. He strongly advised them to form a living contact with the community in whose midst their institution is located. The NSS extension activities resulted in creation of durable assets and conduct of several awareness creation programmes in the adopted areas. The one of the innovative programme done by NSS Kerala the home for homeless is a commendable one.

**Table 1: NSS achievements bridging Campus with Community: (Major Achievements)**

Name of the activity	Achievements in three years			Total
	2015	2016	2017	
No of Trees Planted	173224	78413	59498	311135
No of units Blood Donated by NSS volunteers	33632	15169	16983	65784
No of Medical camps organised	2544	2833	4209	9586
Social issues awareness programmes	140	597	7952	8689
No of Manual Labour programmes	5152	5025	4247	14424

The table 1 narrates the contributions of nss volunteers in last 3three years 2015 to 2017. It is seen that 65784 units of blood donated, 311135 tree sapling planted and 9586 medical and health camps organised.

In the 48 years (1969-2017 ) of glorious service to the student community the NSS in Tamil Nadu has grown constructively and progressively both in quality and quantity from the student coverage 3600 in 1969 to 1,82,800 in 2017. The national level also it has seen tremendous growth from 40,000 in 1969 to 36, 00,000 in 2017.The details given in Table.2

S.No	Year	Tamil Nadu	India
1	1969	3600	40,000
2	1979	40000	4,75,000
3	1989	140000	7,70,000
4	1999	1,65,000	17,00,000
5	2009	3,70,018	32,57,104
6	2016	3,90,700	36,00,000
7	2017	3,90,700	36,00,000

**Table 3: Shows the status of Indian Higher education and NSS in 1947, 1969 and 2017**

Year	Total No of students in Higher education	Total no of NSS volunteers	Total No of Universities	Total Universities with NSS	Total no of colleges in India	Total no of colleges with NSS
1947	2,10,000	-	20	-	500	-
1969	13,84,694	40,000	61	37	2111	-
2017	265.85 Lakhs	36 Lakhs	758	351	40,760	16,056

Ref: UGC Annual Report 2014-15 & UGC higher education institutions data in 2016

The table.2 shows that NSS volunteer strength increased from 40,000 to 36,000,00and still it could cover only 351 universities. India has 758 universities (Private Universities-228, State universities-353, Deemed Universities-125, Central Universities-46 and Universities funded by Govt of India directly-6, total 758) and yet 407 university students to be covered by of NSS. The NSS provides the students an opportunity to understand the community they work for; understand themselves in relation to their community;

identify the needs and problems in community in the solutions of which they can be involved; develop among themselves social and civic responsibility; apply their education in finding practical solutions to individual and community problems; develop competence required for group living and sharing responsibility; gain skills in mobilizing community participation. It is evident from the table 1 the contributions of NSS volunteers in nation building activities are very productive hence the

Government make necessary policy guidelines to provide opportunity to every student in universities and colleges to experience the National Service Scheme (NSS) extension activities and make them a responsible student.

The NSS is a two year programme wherein every student who joins in NSS is required to do the following activity so as to eligible to get a University/Directorate certificate.

**Regular activity:** 120 hours of regular activity in an academic year and 240 hours in two years. In 240 hours the NSS volunteers undertake various self and social development activities in campus and community during weekends or after college/School hours.

**Special camping Programme:** It is a 7 days residential camp which will be normally conducted in the adopted areas. The camp provides rich experience to the students to develop qualities like character, courage, confidence, comradeship, decision making, democratic attitude, resourcefulness, leadership, cooperation, Team work, sacrifice, tolerance. The primary purpose of special camping programme is education through community work.

**Year wise revision of NSS financial pattern:**

The initial financial pattern to NSS is being shared by the Central and the State Governments in the ratio of 7:5. The contributions of NSS in Various fields to the community have encouraged the Government over the years to revise the NSS Grants. With effect from the year 2016 the Government of India releases 100 % grants for implementation of NSS activities to all the states & Union Territories.

The details NSS grants revision is given below.

**Table 4**

S.No	year	Regular Activity amount per student per year	7 days Special camp amount per student per camp
1	1970	Rs.60	
2	1984	Rs.80	
3	1990	Rs.120	Rs.200
4	2000	Rs.160	Rs.300
5	2008 to 2017	Rs.250	Rs.450

**The focus Shift of NSS activities:** In 1969 the NSS was started with a view to promoting social consciousness and a sense of responsibility as well as a sense of discipline and mainly focused on dignity of labour among the college students. The special camping programmes organized under the different themes and activities were organized during the NSS camps in the adopted villages/areas are given in Table.5

S.No	Year	Theme of the NSS special camp in various years
1	1976-81	Youth for rural reconstruction
2	1981-82	Youth for Eco development
3	1982-1986	Youth for rural reconstruction
4	1986-88	Youth for better environment
5	1989-1993	Youth for mass functional literacy
6	1993-95	Youth for national integration

7	1995-99	Youth for sustainable development
8	1999-2001	youth for waste land development
9	2001-2002	Youth for Hariyali ( Tree planation)
10	2002-2003	Youth for Jal Samvardhan( water preservation & Management
11	2003-2005	Youth for Swatchatha ( Cleanliness)
12	2006-2009	Healthy youth for healthy India
13	2009- 2013	Youth for development of environment, health, population control
14	2014-2017	Youth for Swatcha Bharat Abiyan ( youth for Clean India )
<i>Ref: NSS Manual (Revised-2005) Govt. of India, Ministry of youth affairs and Sports, New Delhi</i>		

NSS has always played a vital role during the natural calamities by extending its hands by organizing special camps to the nation in the form of relief and rescue operations as well as giving a human touch, sympathetic and moral support to the victims of the disasters. Disaster Management is one of the key areas of NSS activities and the volunteers have shown exemplary work during various natural disasters.

**The New Initiatives in NSS:**

In 2009 the Ministry of youth affairs & sports has added two new programmes

- 1) **Mega Summer Camps:** Two Mega Summer Camps of 400 students each, for a 12 days' duration, are held in one of the four regions North, East, South and West.
- 2) **Rajiv Gandhi Adventure Programme:** 10 days adventure training is provided to on a yearly basis for 2000 NSS Volunteers with at least 50% of the volunteers being girl students in order to develop and promote leadership qualities, fraternity, team spirit and risk-taking capacity amongst the youth. These camps are held every year in Himalayan Region during May to December.

**Other important Programmes:**

- 1) Desert Safari –Jaisalmer desert, Rajasthan (June – August )
  - 2) Himalayan summer Adventure – Manali (May – July)
  - 3) South Zone Pre Republic day parade camp (October – November)
  - 4) Republic day parade camp – New Delhi (30 days in January )
  - 5) National Youth Festival – (12-16 January )
  - 6) Himalayan Winter Adventure- Dharmasala – (May to December)
  - 7) NSS Summer Mega Camp June/July (12 days )– south India
  - 8) NSS Winter Mega Camp September (12 days ) - New Delhi
  - 9) Indira Gandhi National NSS Awards ceremony 19<sup>th</sup> November – New Delhi.
  - 10) National Integration Camp ( July – December )
  - 11) Interstate youth exchange programmes ( July–February)
  - 12) International youth Exchange programme (June – December )
- (South Korea, China, Malaysia, Japan, Maldives)

**Republic Day Parade Camp:** NSS volunteers participate in the Republic Day Parade on Rajpath every year. The first Republic Day Camp of NSS Volunteers was held in 1988. Right from the beginning, these Republic Day Parade

Camps have proven a boon for the personality development of NSS volunteers who participates in the 30 days NSS Republic Day Parade camp at New Delhi every year.

**Youth to the Edge Scheme:** A new scheme “Youth to the Edge” to promote the adventure activities in the north eastern states of India, the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DONER) in collaboration with Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports. Under the scheme, 2000 NSS volunteers from across the country will visit Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland for adventure training Programmes.

**NSS Awards /NSS Grace Marks given by the Kerala State to the outstanding performers:**

The NSS awards also underwent changes and the no of awards and awards money have been increased during the 48 years (1969- 2017) of NSS existence. Table 5 shows the Kerala state awards details and its changes happened.

**Table 6: NSS Tamil Nadu State Awards (Instituted in 1991-92 )**

S.No	Details of Awards	Awards
1	University/Directorate -1	Rs.3000 Cash Award, Citation and Certificate
2	NSS UNIT -15	Citation and Certificate
3	NSS Prog Officers -15	Rs.3000 Cash Award, Citation and Certificate
4	NSS Volunteers -35	Rs.2000 Cash Award, Citation and Certificate

The NSS functionaries in Colleges and schools in Tamil Nadu and their strong support and motivation to the NSS volunteers and officers resulted in receiving the honour for Tamil Nadu State being the only state in the country which received 30 National awards under different categories of best NSS programme Coordinator, best NSS programme officer, best unit, and best volunteer. The following table shows the NSS National awards details Received by Tamil Nadu from 2010 to 2016. In seven years 30 Awards ( 2015-16, 2014-15, 2013-14, 2012-13,2011-12, 2010-11, 2009-10.) Table.7

**Table 7: Indira Gandhi National NSS awards received by Tamil Nadu under four categories**

YEAR	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Nature of National of award								
Best NSS Coordinator		1	1					2
Best NSS Programme Officer	1		1	1	1	2	1	7
Best NSS unit	1		1	1	1	2	1	7
Best NSS Volunteer	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	14
<b>total awards in last 6 years</b>								<b>30</b>

(Ref:Indira Gandhi National Service Scheme Awards (2015-16) booklet, Ministry of youth affairs& sports, New Delhi)

**Table 8: Indira Gandhi NSS National Awards past and present status**

S.No	IG awards 1993 to 2010	Revised in 2010-11	Revised in 2014-15
1	University - 1	University - 1 –Rs. 2 lakh Silver Medal, Certificate	University –Rs. 3 lakh Silver Medal, Certificate
	Upcoming university -1	prize Rs. 1 Lakh, Silver Medal, Certificate	prize Rs. 2 Lakh, Silver Medal, Certificate
2	NSS Programme officers (PO) – 6 – Rs.10,000 each	NSS Programme officers (PO) – 10 – Rs.20,000 each Silver Medal, Certificate	NSS Programme officers (PO) – 10 – Rs.70,000 each
3	NSS Unit – 6 – Rs.35,000 each	NSS Unit – 10 – Rs.70,000 each	NSS Unit – 10 – Rs.1,00,000 each
4	NSS Volunteer – 16 Rs. 8,000 each	NSS Volunteer – 30 – Rs. 15,000 each, Silver Medal and Certificate	NSS Volunteer – 32 – Rs. 50,000 each, Silver Medal and Certificate
S.No	IG awards 1993 to 2010	Revised in 2010-11	Revised in 2014-15
1	University - 1	University - 1 –Rs. 2 lakh Silver Medal, Certificate	University –Rs. 3 lakh Silver Medal, Certificate
	Upcoming university -1	prize Rs. 1 Lakh, Silver Medal, Certificate	prize Rs. 2 Lakh, Silver Medal, Certificate
2	NSS Programme officers (PO) – 6 – Rs.10,000 each	NSS Programme officers (PO) – 10 – Rs.20,000 each Silver Medal, Certificate	NSS Programme officers (PO) – 10 – Rs.70,000 each
3	NSS Unit – 6 – Rs.35,000 each	NSS Unit – 10 – Rs.70,000 each	NSS Unit – 10 – Rs.1,00,000 each
4	NSS Volunteer – 16 Rs. 8,000 each	NSS Volunteer – 30 – Rs. 15,000 each, Silver Medal and Certificate	NSS Volunteer – 32 – Rs. 50,000 each, Silver Medal and Certificate

The Government of India Instituted Indira Gandhi NSS National Awards to recognise the contributions of the NSS Programme Coordinators, Programme Officers and Volunteers and motivate them to sustain the spirit of volunteerism in their life. After witnessing the constructive contributions by the NSS functionaries the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India revised the

award values and increased the numbers of awards. The details were given in the Table No.8.

**Other new initiatives in NSS:**

**UGC's support for promotion of NSS in universities and colleges:** The UGC Secretary Shri.Akhilesh Gupta in his



letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> April and UGC Secretary Prof. Jaspal. S. Sandhu in his letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2015 addressed to all Vice Chancellors of the universities in the country to recognize the NSS as a co-curricular activity under the credit based semester scheme for both under graduate and post graduate programmes and consider giving grace marks for admission to graduate and Post Graduate levels.

**Self-Financing Units:** Further, to enhance the coverage of NSS, the Government actively encourages Self Financing Units (SFUs) which can undertake NSS activities with similar recognition and participation.

## 2. Conclusion

Without change there is no innovation, creativity or incentive for improvement. Those who initiate change will have a better opportunity to manage the change that is inevitable. Any programme which is not subject change and updation will be gradually faded and it becomes obsolete. The NSS in 48 years of existence (1969 to 2017) has seen constructive changes and developments and updated the programmes as per the student's attitude and interest. The NSS provides wide range of activities to not only enrich the personality of the students but also make the participant a socially relevant and responsible one. The extension activities and its rich experience nurtures students' intellectual domain (Head) and emotional Domain (Heart). The NSS programme strengthens extension education and makes the higher education meaningful. The Government's new initiatives and incentives encouraged and attract students towards extension activities through NSS and which was well established in Tamil Nadu NSS volunteer's contributions. The induction of new programmes and incentives in NSS has infused fresh energy among the youth to keep the student community motivated to build Healthy Youth for Healthy India. Keeping the rich benefits of NSS in student's life the Government of India can initiate necessary policy guidelines and provide opportunity to introduce NSS to 407 universities so far not covered by NSS in India and reap the rich benefits of National Service Scheme (NSS) and develop the student into a responsible citizen.

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