Conclusion and Suggestions
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National Service Scheme programme was launched on September 24, 1969 in 4 universities with 2500 students on a pilot basis. The cardinal principle of the programme was that it was to be organised by students themselves and both, and teachers through their combined participation in social service, were to get a sense of involvement in the tasks of nation building. Presently, the objective of the scheme is 'development of the personality of students through community service which is sought to be achieved by enabling the students to: (i) understand the community in which they work; (ii) understand themselves in relation to their community; (iii) identify the needs and problems of community in the solution of which they can be involved; (iv) develop among themselves a sense of social and civic responsibility; (v) apply their education in finding practical solutions to individual and community problems; (vi) develop competence required for group living and sharing responsibilities; (vii) gain skills in mobilizing community participation; (viii) acquire leadership qualities and democratic attitude (ix) develop capacity to meet emergencies and natural disasters; and (x) practice national integration (NSS Manual; 1987: 9-10). Started with these noble pursuits, NSS got tremendous response from students and teachers and scope of this scheme has been expanded to cover 22 universities, institutions of higher learning, +2 systems with over 1.10 lac student volunteers. But, the scheme has not been able to effectively achieve its basic
purposes of involving undergraduate students in community service in order to acquaint them with the real needs and problems of the people and motivating them to solve these needs and problems by providing them opportunity for acquiring necessary skills through actual practice of social service. The scheme has not been successful in making a desired, positive dent on society. Reasons may be many, but weak organizational structure, right from national to college level, emphasis on quantity rather quality, politicking in selecting programme coordinators and programme officers, adhocism and tokenism, non-cooperation of university and college administration etc. may be specially mentioned as the causes of its ineffectiveness. Consequently, the scheme needs some special efforts at university and college levels, in order to save it from getting a bad name, and to demonstrate its positive impact on students, teachers and the community. Some suggestions are being presented in the ensuing paragraphs.

(1) The responsibility of programme coordinator should be given to those teachers who have an aptitude of social service and are capable and able to know human sufferings. They should be dynamic and good at human relations because this scheme demands cooperation and collaboration of different departments, agencies, functionaries, personnel etc.

NSS advisory committees should be constituted and at least two meetings of the committees should be ensured every year. The programme coordinator should take special initiative in contacting each and every member of this committee at different points of time every
year, so that they remain informed about the activities of the scheme.

The University cell should be fully mobilized so that all instructions received from the central government/state government could be executed and the decisions of the state level and university advisory committees could be implemented on time. All letters received by the cell should be properly filed and immediate action, within 24 hours, on every letter should be ensured, so that it is not felt at different levels (college/university/state government/central government) that the cell is inactive. Adequate arrangements should be made for getting the cell inspected every year by appropriate authorities.

In order to make the working of programme coordinator more effective, at least two NSS programme officers, one male and a female, should be attached to the NSS cell for one year on rational basis as per their seniority at programme officer level.

Every month on a fixed date, a meeting of programme officers must be called in order to acquaint them about the activities of the schemes and to solve the problems coming in the way of the implementation of these activities. Representatives of governments, state and central, should be invited to attend this meeting. The vice-chancellor of the university, as per his convenience, should also be invited to address the programme officers.

In the beginning of every year, a meeting of principals of different colleges affiliated with the university should be called under the leadership of the vice-chancellor in order to involve them in chalking
out NSS programmes and activities for the year, so that their cooperation, participation and direction to the scheme can be assured.

For the successful implementation of NSS scheme at university level, administrative leadership of the vice-chancellor should also be procured. For this, a report containing activities of the scheme, difficulties being faced and efforts undertaken by coordinators and programme officers for making the scheme more effective should be sent to the vice-chancellor by the programme coordinators.

At the level of programme coordinator, a list of government and semi-government organizations as well as departments, voluntary organizations and respected persons etc., who can be helpful in NSS activities and whose cooperation can be sought for the effective implementation of these activities, should be prepared and given to every programme officer.

At the level of programme coordinator, wide publicity of NSS work should be assured through newspapers, radio, television etc. For this purpose, guidance from state information and public relations departments may be taken. The system of yearly evaluation of the activities and achievements of programme coordinators should be introduced and properly developed, in order to keep programme coordinators active, agile and concerned, towards NSS responsibilities.

(2) College level NSS advisory committee must be constituted and its meeting, within a period of two months, should be assured.

The principal of the college should actively be involved in NSS
activities. The programme coordinator should establish regular contact with the principal and impress upon him that he is expected to (i) interpret the importance of the NSS to the members of the college and to the community; (ii) integrate NSS with other related activities in the college to the extent possible; (iii) select a suitable NSS programme officer; (iv) guide in planning NSS activities with the help of the programme officer/officers; (v) constitute the advisory committee and convene its meeting at least once in two months; (vi) ensure implementation of suggestions given by the advisory committee; (vii) extend support to the NSS programme officer for the effective functioning of the NSS and provide secretarial assistance, accommodation etc.; (viii) depute teachers for training/orientation etc. when requested for, (National Service Scheme Manual : 1987 : 21-27)

NSS cell should also be established at college level and inspection of this cell should be done yearly by programme coordinator. In colleges having more than one NSS units a programme officer should be designated as incharge of programme officers, either on the basis of seniority or on the recommendation of principal in ordr to ensure uniform implementation of the scheme.

Minutes of meetings of committee/committees constituted at college level should be procured and implementation of decisions taken in the meeting should be ensured by programme coordinators.

Propagation of different aspects of NSS including financial aspects/should be ensured.
(3) The programme officer of NSS should be appointed according to the procedure laid down by NSS Advisory Committee but in case of appointment of college programme officer, principal of the college should be made party to his appointment.

Every newly appointed programme officer should be requested to act according to the 'NSS manual', a copy of which should be available with every newly appointed programme officer. However, preliminary orientation of the programme officer regarding constitution of NSS units, programmes and activities, records related to NSS activities, expenditure procedure etc. should be done by the programme coordinator. These programme officers should be sent for training and orientation courses within one year of his/her appointment.

Every programme officer should have a "work diary".

Evaluation of the working and activities of programme officer should be done every year.

Short term training and orientation of programme officer should be arranged for the implementation of special programmes launched by state/central government from time-to-time.

(4) There should be a fixed date for the constitution of NSS unit the proper propagation of the scheme should be done before the constitution of NSS units through introductory lectures delivered by programme officer to students.

Relevant information regarding constitution of NSS units should be sent to state/central government departments dealing with NSS.
The NSS cell at university and college levels should keep preliminary information (name, father's name, address, class, year, enrolment no., hobbies etc.,) about students admitted in the scheme. This can be done by developing a proforma and getting it filled in triplicate by the students of a college and in duplicate by the students of a university, so that one copy of the proforma could be sent to the respective cells.

An orientation of 25 hours (general orientation-3 hours, special orientation-10 hours and programme of skills learning-12 hours) should be given to every student enrolled in NSS. Every NSS volunteer should be given a NSS badge and a work diary. Regular entries in the work diary should be made. These entries should be checked by programme officers of the unit and sample checking of these diaries should be done by programme coordinators also.

(5) Area development approach should be adopted for the programme planning and development in NSS. Consequently, a certain area should be allotted to each NSS unit for its total development. The programmes should be chalked out according to the capacities, interests and resources of NSS units. However, a minimum programme to be implemented by each unit should be drawn in the beginning of the year. In this programme every volunteer should be expected to perform at least 120 hours of work in one year in an adopted area. The strategy and objectives for the implementation of this programme are being presented in ensuing paragraphs.

Every NSS unit should adopt a slum area/village from the area allotted to a unit for its total development. In terms of families, every
unit should take up the responsibility of 200 families for their multipronged development and the concerned programme officer should try to identify himself with these families in such a way that a permanent relationship is established between NSS and the families.

The main aim of slum/village adoption is to improve quality of life of residents by ameliorating their housing, health, education, nutrition, recreation etc., so that they may be able to define their general and individual needs and problems; set-up priorities among these needs and problems; make cooperative and collaborative efforts by uniting themselves for the fulfilment of these needs and problems; and mobilize as well as utilize internal and/or external resources for this purpose. Specifically, the objectives of slum/village adoption should be as under:

(i) To know about adopted slum/village specially about its physical conditions and problems; its population structure; social and cultural status of people; available resources and organizations.

(ii) To locate immediate community needs and problems and to make people conscious about them.

(iii) To secure maximum participation of people in providing and preserving basic services needed by them.

(iv) To bridge the gap between the educational institutions and the surrounding communities.

(v) To establish two way link between the people of the adopted
slum/village, government agencies and voluntary agencies in solving the problems of the area.

(vi) To create responsible citizenship among the students.

(viii) To motivate the students and teachers to channelize their energies for improving the quality of life of residents.

(viii) To utilize the available human and material resources in an effective manner.

(ix) To inculcate the feeling of mutual responsibility among the residents in solving their immediate needs.

In order to fulfil above aims and objectives, the following programmes should be launched in the adopted slum/village.

The programme officer should establish initial contact with adopted slum/village people in order to acquaint themselves about NSS programmes and to know their initial reactions.

After initial contact, the adopted slum/village should be surveyed in order to know about the structure of population, physical conditions of the area, problems and difficulties of residents, inputs available in the area, inputs needed from outside for improving the conditions of the selected community, agencies (both governmental/non-governmental) which can be mobilized for providing services in the adopted slum/village etc. This will further strengthen the contacts of programme officer with the people of the community.

On the basis of analysis of the collected information through
micro survey, priorities should be established among immediate community needs and problems. However, the following programmes can be undertaken in the adopted slum/village through NSS volunteers with the cooperation and collaboration of residents as well as governmental, semi-governmental and voluntary organisations.

(6) Functional literacy programme is a programme of national importance and is being carried out as a mass movement. Presently, this programme tops the list of NSS programmes which is evident from the latest list of NSS programmes circulated by the government of India (1991-Annexure); which consists of (i) Mass Programme for Functional Literacy (MPFL); (ii) Environment enrichment and conservation; (iii) Health, family welfare and nutrition; (iv) Programmes aimed at creating awareness of improvement in the status of women; (v) Special service programmes; (vi) Production oriented programmes; (vii) Programmes for working during emergencies; (viii) Programmes of education and recreation; and (ix) National projects.

Two strategies i.e. establishment of adult education centres for imparting functional literacy to adult learners at centres; and area development approach in which functional literacy is being imparted by involving educated persons on the principle of 'each one teach one' are being adopted in the implementation of functional literacy programme. Mass programme for functional literacy belongs to the second strategy in which NSS volunteers can be involved indirectly, (i) By taking up such activities which may lead to the generation
and creation of a climate conducive and favourable to the organisation and implementation of this programme e.g. identifying the illiterates, motivating the learners, supplementing the instructions given to them, organising follow-up programmes and providing wide variety of post literacy services like library and supply of reading material etc. and directly,

(ii) By participating in the actual process of imparting instructions to adult illiterates.

(iii) NSS volunteer should be involved in mobilizing governmental and non-governmental agencies concerned with pre-school and primary education in the adopted area.

(iv) Residents of the adopted area should be motivated to cooperate and participate in the activities of these agencies.

(v) NSS volunteers should also try to mobilize the activities of 'anganwadi' centres established under integrated child development schemes. The functionaries of ICDS should also be approached to open new centres as per the requirements of the area. The residents should be motivated to avail of the services of these centres.

(vi) NSS volunteers should be engaged in locating wasteful and stagnant cases. The reason and circumstances of wastage and stagnation should be analysed and suitable measures must be taken so that their number may be reduced to nil.
(7) The following activities should be undertaken by NSS volunteer in the adopted slum/village with the involvement of outside organisations, both voluntary and governmental.

In slums, NSS volunteers should be encouraged to take initiative in helping people to do small tasks like writing letters of complaints to concerned authorities about administrative inaction/lethargy, arranging contacts with related functionaries etc. pertaining to their problems regarding cleanliness and sanitation of the area, disposal of waste water, availability of potable water, arrangement of latrines etc.

NSS volunteers should act as links between officials and people of the slums and render needed help and support to the people to represent their views regarding non-availability of basic social services in the area.

NSS volunteers should organize group/discussions for creating awareness among people regarding pressing social issues, concerned legislations including legislation related to slum improvement and clearance; needs and problems of the area on which immediate action is required so that their overall quality of life may be improved. This awareness will also generate good habits, such as dumping garbage at one place; putting restraints on open defecation; making adequate arrangements for disposal of waste water etc., among people of the area.

Sanitation drives should be organized from time-to-time jointly by NSS volunteers, residents of the locality and concerned officials.

Maintenance of lanes, recreation places such as parks etc. should
be done with the help of municipal authorities. In villages, NSS volunteers should be involved in the constructions, repair and cleanliness of roads, village streets, chak roads, irrigation channels etc. NSS volunteers should be engaged in the preservation and up-keep of places of worship, wells, ponds, schools and other monuments and public places. Adequate arrangement of the disposal of rain water should be done with the help of NSS volunteers.

NSS volunteers should create consciousness among villagers regarding problems and challenges of environment, plantation, preservation and up-keep of trees; preservation of cultural heritage etc. as well as problems related to social issues.

Special tree plantation drives should be undertaken on vacant lands available in the adopted village by NSS volunteers and with concurrence of villagers. These newly planted trees should be named as "NSS trees".

(8) Programme of mass and continuous immunization should be launched with the help and support of health department and NSS volunteers of medical institutions. People of the adopted area should be motivated for enlisting services of the health centres/subcentres/anganwadi centres.

Efforts should be undertaken for arranging potable drinking water by mobilizing concerned officials for installation of hand pumps, laying down pipe lines etc. NSS volunteers should be engaged in arousing consciousness among people towards health, sanitation, nutrition etc.
by organizing educational and extension activities.

Anti-drug addiction drives and prohibition propaganda should be organized. Propagation of small family norm should also be arranged with the help of NSS volunteers.

NSS volunteers can also be engaged in organizing medico-social surveys, blood donation camps, eye relief camps, AIDS awareness camps etc.

(9) The programme of campus improvement and maintenance should be made compulsory on each NSS unit and as per the needs, campuses should be interchanged for the implementation of this programme. The following activity should be undertaken in this regard.

(i) Cleanliness work of big halls, rooftops of campus buildings, parks, nurseries and play grounds should be undertaken every year by launching cleanliness drives by NSS volunteers.

(ii) Writing of names of offices, departments, residential premises, laboratories, roads, lanes etc. should be undertaken by NSS volunteers.

(iii) All the cultural and literary groups active within the campus should be attached to the NSS units so that NSS volunteers and students active in these groups should get an opportunity to be mutually benifited from each other in organizing various kinds of competitions such as debates, essays; poster-making, skits etc.
(iv) NSS volunteers should be engaged in guiding and helping other students, especially new entrants in removing their difficulties regarding fulfilling of admission formalities, getting accommodation in hostels in case of outside students, making them acquainted with the campus etc. If the university/college has information centre, that should be managed by NSS programme officer with the help of NSS volunteers. This will certainly lessen the growing influence of greedy student leaders who unnecessarily exploit these students.

Voluntary and statutory agencies such as community centres, correctional agencies, residential institutions for children, women and aged; and institutions for the handicapped should be adopted and NSS volunteers should be placed in these institutions as per their interests, choice and capacities. In these institutions, they may (i) help inmates and staff by arranging outings, taking part in fund collection drives, reading and writing letters who are unable to do so etc. (ii) act as 'readers' for blind inmates, (iii) assist in the rehabilitation work of the disabled and destitutes etc; (iv) establish hobby centres and so on.

(10) Each NSS unit is supposed to organise special camps of generally 10 days duration during vacations. Only 50% strength of NSS unit is supposed to participate in these camps. The universities and colleges have a special role to play in this regard in collaboration with other development departments and local authorities and should
adopt a village or groups of villages/urban slums for intensive socio­economic upliftment drives where special camps are organized by them year after year to create tangible and durable community assets, leading to creation of permanent rural centres to consolidate NSS activities in the villages (NSS manual: 1987;67).

Following efforts should be taken for making the special camping programme more effective:

(i) Organization of special camps every year should be made compulsory on each unit. NSS out of pocket allowance payable to programme officer should be given only when he/she manages to complete both normal as well as special camping activities.

(ii) The camps should be organized in an adopted area with the aim to develop permanent assets after two or three years of continuous effort.

(iii) NSS volunteers should be given adequate orientation before organization of the camp. The residents of the area, where camp is to be organised, should also be told regarding activities and programmes of the camp before hand, so that their cooperation can be acquired.

(iv) Timely communication of final dates of camps to the programme coordinator of NSS in the university, state government, training and orientation centres should be assured.
(v) Camp should be regularly inspected and for this work committee of programme officers can also be constituted.

(vi) As soon as the camp is over, a detailed report by programme officer to the programme coordinator of the concerned universities, concerned training and orientation centre regarding the activities of the camp should be ensured.

(vii) The details of the camps should also be sent to the organization designated for evaluation of the camping activities.

(viii) Daily routine of the campers should at least constitute 5 hours of manual work, 2 hours of discussion on topics of social and cultural relevance and 2 hours of evening cultural programmes/community singing.

(ix) The following activity should be undertaken during camps.

(a) Manual work for cleanliness of village/slum; repair and maintenance of lanes; construction; maintenance and cleanliness of nallahs for the disposal of waste and rain water; cleanliness of guts and irrigation channels; tree plantation; lectures on AIDS awareness, cleanliness of ponds; wells and places of worship; community laying of gardens etc.

(b) Discussion on topics relevant to the problems of the area, social evils, propagation of small savings, health, improvements in agriculture etc.
(c) Besides these above mentioned activities, propagation of prohibition, providing education and generating awareness among weaker and vulnerable sections of society regarding facilities/safeguards available to them, screening of educational films, surveying of the problems of people of the area etc. should also be arranged and organized.

(d) Short term programme of adult education should also be organised.

(x) Adequate attention should be given to proper publicity of the camps planned/organized at the university/college/village level so as to create an awareness of the importance of the programme in the process of village/slum adoption and development.

(11) Utilization certificate of grant utilized by programme officers be timely procured from them and a consolidated statement should be sent to respective governments within stipulated time so that next instalment of grant should not get delayed. Suitable action should be recommended against defaulting programme officers.

Distribution of grant to NSS units should be ensured within 20 days of the receipt of grant. For college level units, grant should be released in the joint name of principals and programme officers through 'account payee' cheques. Separate account for NSS fund should be opened at university level as well as for every NSS unit.

Utilization of grant should be ensured according to the procedure
and norms prescribed by university level NSS Advisory Committee. Necessary purchases for the constitution of unit such as non-consumable items, stationery etc. should be done by a "purchase committee." At university level this committee should be constituted by programme coordinator as convener; all programme officers; finance officer or his representative as members at college level, this committee should be constituted by the Incharge of programme officers as convener, all other programmes officers of the college concerned and principal or his representative as members. At field level, day-to-day expenses should be carried out by a "purchase committee" constituted by three volunteers as members and programme officer of the unit as convener.

All expenditure vouchers should have the seal of purchase committee and duly signed by members of the committee. The statement of accounts should be signed by the concerned programme officer and countersigned by the principal of the college.

Proper arrangements should be made for regular stock taking of the articles purchased by NSS units and a "condemnation committee" consisting of the programme coordinator as convener, concerned programme officer, finance officer or his/her representatives of state/central government as members, should be constituted for deciding perished articles purchased under the scheme. Every year bank reconciliation certificate should be procured.

Adjustment of advances taken by programme officers and
consequent upon the issuing of 'no dues' certificates to concerned programme officers should be speedily managed so that programme officers who have submitted their accounts properly and timely would not face any difficulty in the future.

It should be made certain that special camps would be held within 20 days after the receipt of grant. As soon a camp is over, all expenditure vouchers in original alongwith a statement of expenditure should be procured.

Audit of NSS accounts should be conducted every year and the report should be placed before NSS Advisory Committee.

In the end, it is about time to recall the glorious achievements of the NSS programmes. However, it is also a time for self-introspection and critical analysis of the programmes of social service, as envisaged in this scheme. The youth mobilization through this scheme is at present a short lived phenomena and lacks continuity. To make the scheme more effective, social service should become an integral part of the curriculum. More imaginative schemes should be evolved to involve the youth in constructive social service in post-NSS days.