CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The study, A History of National Service Scheme in Kerala has mainly focused on a historical analysis of the scheme as a change agent of students, in their capacity building process, through the medium of voluntary community service. The study has scanned the functioning of the NSS apparatus as a unique model of youth development for national development and the researcher submitted a road map for its future. It has been proved that the National Service Scheme aims at personality development of the volunteer. Community service is only a means by which the volunteer acquires personality development. Hence, it is purely a student-centered programme where the major focus is the student and his/her personality. The benefit to the society is only a byproduct of the process. Even so, the study proves that the benefit derived from the NSS projects far outweigh the cost involved, apart from the personality development of the volunteer. These projects seem socio-economically viable, and can be encouraged as a means for creating community assets.

The world of education that had remained aloof has been drawn closer to the community. Therefore, NSS stays on the national scene, along with other programmes of the Government of India providing venue for youth involvement in national development perpetuating self-development in the process. With the growth of regular and special camping NSS programs, the gulf
between campus and the community has been considerably reduced. The study has been based on the personal field experience of the researcher as an NSS Kerala state Liaison Officer, interaction with the stakeholders at the grass root level, the nature of work undertaken, achievements, shortcomings and follow-up activities envisaged to overcome the problems and strengthen the programme.

The following are some of the highlights expected to shape a future Kerala model in prospect. The NSS of Kerala has notably introduced grace marks to volunteers. It updated all the Panchayath websites in association with Information Kerala Mission.

The NSS collected data pertaining to mapping higher education facilities in Kerala, as per the direction from the Kerala Higher Education Council. The NSS launched Environment awareness programme in Sabarimala during pilgrim season in association with Pollution Control Board and won appreciation of Dr. M. S. Gill, the then Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India. With cooperation of Local Self Government and the Department of Agriculture, NSS undertook paddy cultivation project in many units and initiated steps to empower the underprivileged by implementing projects like ‘Miss a Meal’ Programme, Care and share, NSS Helpline, Remedial tuition Programme etc.

The NSS of Kerala constructed 297 houses for the homeless. On the whole, it equaled an asset of Rs.3.10 crores. The NSS constructed 32 eco-
friendly houses at Nilakal and Kombukathy for the tribals, and 176 libraries in adopted villages, hospitals, anganwadies and Jails. The NSS constructed 300 sanitary latrines, 60 bus shelters, and distributed 340 wheel chairs.

The NSS has been undertaking environment conservation. A glaring example of environmental concern of NSS is evident from a state level camp organized at Ponkunnu Kozhikode district, in December 2003, by the state Level NSS cell, with the collaboration of Sathya Darsana Sailam, a local group actively involved in the environmental conservation under the leadership of Prof. Shobindran, winner of Vriksha Mitra Award 2008. The prime objective of the camp was conveying the message of water conservation and sustainable development of the NSS volunteers. The NSS contributes to the Eight Point Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations Organization, signed by 189 countries in September 2000. The NSS has been substantially contributing to fulfill the sixth and seventh goals. The involvement of NSS in the programmes cited shows its commitment to the three Millennium Development Goals of the UNO.

The Millennium Development Goals represent a global partnership aimed at responding to the world’s main development challenges, including poverty reduction, opportunities for education, better health, gender equality and reducing child mortality, AIDS and other diseases. The MDGs are set of goals to be achieved by 2015.
The goals are:

Eradicate poverty and hunger.

1) Achieve universal primary education.
2) Promotion of gender equality and empower women.
3) Reduce child mortality.
4) Improve maternal health.
5) Combat AIDS/ HIVS mortality and other diseases
6) Ensure environmental sustainability.
7) Develop a global partnership for development.

Although the NSS is focusing mainly on service, it has been contributing for the socio-economic development in a variety of ways. Empowering and enlightening the student volunteers through the platform of the NSS, strengthened their employability. In effect it acts as a catalyst for poverty reduction.

The construction of village roads to remote areas of Kerala, right from the beginning of NSS (1969-70), as part of the Ten/seven day special camping programme, improved the access to health service as well as other sectors. In the contemporary globalized scenario where not only the marks of the public examinations but also personality of the candidate is considered in recruitments, the experience of the NSS volunteer is significant.
Notably, the overall objective of NSS is personality development through community service. Thus, NSS enrich employability of its volunteers.

Amartya Sen’s development economics theory, Development as Freedom, identified many unfreedoms as obstacle for development. Development as freedom, entails, a set of linked freedoms: political freedoms and transparency in relations between people; freedom of opportunity, including freedom to access credit, and economic protection from abject poverty, including, income, supplements and unemployment relief. The absence of any of these constitutes unfreedom. Development cannot be reduced to simply increasing basic incomes, or to rising per-capita income, rather it requires a nested package of overlapping mechanisms that progressively enable the exercise of growing a range of freedoms, which allow meeting basic needs and the exercise of innate abilities and self-determination.

The concept of capability developed by Sen in his article ‘Equality of What’ (1971), the capabilities of citizens should be measured. As education is one of the prime capability building processes, the barrier for acquiring education is to be removed, and then only the citizen can act out of personal choice. It is upto the government to guarantee minimum capabilities for its citizens. Even after 66 years of independence, the state and union governments, are striving yet to get it materialized. Here comes the role of voluntary action by the NSS, for literacy and sensitization of citizens on health, environment and disaster management. In other words, NSS activities are
contributing to supplement community development at local and institutional levels. In the process, people especially the marginalised sections are more benefited and ultimately it is a learning and unlearning exposure and experience for the NSS volunteers.

Amartya Sen asserts that, ignorance, illiteracy and absence of roads connecting villages with towns are glaring examples of unfreedoms. Right from its inception, major activities of NSS in Kerala, includes literacy activity. For example “Each One Teach One” programmes, sensitization campaign on HIV/AIDS, contagious diseases, environmental problems, cleanliness, voluntary blood donations, dignity of labour, communication skill etc. The cited NSS activities can be construed as a liberating force from different unfreedoms to the freedoms, which according to the theory of development economics facilitates and promote national development at the grassroot level. In the ultimate analysis, it can be established that the National Service Scheme, is substantially contributing for community development and thereby national development. Therefore, the Scheme should be supported by both the Union and State Governments. The NSS units in Kerala have been engaged in many innovative activities enriching the latent skills of the student volunteers. Thus the NSS prepares volunteers to face personal and national challenges. The documentary proof and spot verification of NSS activities show that NSS has been addressing the governing misconception of the campus youth that “manual labour and ‘blue collar jobs’ are below dignity of the ‘educated youth’. Thus, the NSS activities are for the personality development of the personality of the
student volunteers by helping the community to build the nation from below by responding their felt needs.

**Challenges faced by the NSS in Kerala**

Campus disturbances, postponement of examinations and other social and political disturbance adversely affected the NSS programmes. Time constraints of Higher Secondary School students due to coaching classes for medical and engineering entrance examinations, inadequacy of self-motivated teachers and reluctance of most of the lady teachers to undertake the charge of NSS, insufficient availability of fund for regular activities and special camping programmers, delay in releasing NSS funds are some of the major challenges faced by the NSS in Kerala.

**FINDINGS.**

- National Service Scheme functions as a vehicle to share the learned experiences of the students from the campus to the community.
- The National Service Scheme improved overall performance of the students in general and in particularly their performance in languages.
- Sharing of the stage by the volunteers as well as the non-student youth volunteers of a given locality in the event of special camp, a cultural fusion takes place.
- National Service Scheme, in effect, act as a finishing school for development of communication skills in the youth volunteers.
The volunteers become self-confident and self-reliant.

Taboo attached to the free social mingling of girls and boys in the campus has been liberalized during the activities of the NSS.

Only 23.33 percent of the volunteers are fully aware of the objective of National Service Scheme.

NSS Volunters, in effect are social free booters, whose community service causes social enlightenment.

NSS promotes Jnana (Knowledge) and Karma (Action) go together.

Girl volunteers are more empowered in women’s colleges, as they have to do all the work, generally shared between girls and boys in mixed colleges.

The volunteers are practically tested and learn to live a community life to discharge their duty with limited resources.

The NSS summer/Special camp provides a forum for brain storming interaction between the participating volunteers and the resource person through activities lectures, Group discussions and similar interactions.

The National Service Scheme, though in a limited extent, has been used as a tool for reviving the deteriorated values in education especially with reference to the dignity of labour.

The leadership quality is higher among NSS volunteers.

National Service Scheme volunteers are comparatively more active and dynamic in co-curricular activities than non-National Service Scheme.
Among all category of students who have knowledge about disaster management, the National Service Scheme volunteers stood higher in number.

For all categories of students the percentage of those who know about artificial breathing is higher among volunteers.

The NSS could break the schema that the student in the higher education sector are not doing any socially useful productive work.

The community felt that the National Service Scheme was acting as a bridge to link the community with the campus for socially useful productive programmes.

Percentage of those who are aware of Golden Hour in disaster management, are higher among volunteers.

Knowledge about artificial breathing is higher among males than females

National Service Scheme can be considered as a vital agency for the physical empowerment of female students in the campuses of higher education.

Knowledge about giving artificial breathing and knowledge about disaster management are higher among National Service Scheme volunteers than non-volunteers.

The NSS can be considered as an agency to divert the attention of educated youth from indulging anti-social and anti-national activities.
The NSS is a creative minority of students, responding the challenges of the campus and the community positively and constructively and thereby making ripples of humanism and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- NSS in consultation with the Nehru Yuvak Kendras (NYKs) and the Common Wealth Youth Programme Asia Centre, Chandigarh, must identify areas where the three can work in concert, pooling their resources so that they would be able to perform better in several fields.
- The NSS in consultation with the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute for Youth Development (RGNIYD) Sri Perumbudur, Chennai should strengthen its current organizational practices, especially in matters relating to planning and delivering programmes supervision, reporting system, intra organisational management and assessment of its personnel.
- It must tie up with international organisation with a view to enhancing collaboration and support.
- The NSS should set up a National Advisory committee for the effective implementation of the Programmes.
- Role of NSS in Disaster Management

Disasters are directly related with the development of the nation. They are potential villains to draw the community backward by arresting
development. To address this issue at the grassroot level, the NSS can be used to mitigate its impact. It has done its duty voluntarily during many such occasions. The best example is S.N. Women’s college, Kollam Kerala made a commendable intervention in the Relief Camps of Tsunami victims in December, 2004.

SUGGESTIONS

- Mainstreaming disaster management as part of the NSS regular activities by Providing the facts about following:
  - Sensitize them about their responsibility for mitigation (Prevention) and preparedness.
  - Train them in life saving skills with emphasis on safety by doing the greatest good for the greatest number.
  - Each NSS unit to have Organize teams under the leadership of its programme officer for immediate help, until Government services reaches in the spot of disaster.
  - Prepare and elaborate note on the local history and tradition of the locality were special camps are organized, with the support of Local Self Government Institutions, Village offices and using the other available human resources
  - Reform and revamp NSS as an agency of skill development along with labour intensive service. e.g, Life skills identified by the WHO and other skills like swimming, climbing trees, cooking etc..
THE NSS CAN BE UTILISED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF KERALA IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER

- Understanding of community needs on the basis of scientific survey and conduct programmes on sensitive environmental issues awareness.
- Access to social and population groups that may avoid interaction with government officials.
- The ability to make decision outside of government process.
- The benefits of NSS and emergency management partnership are enormous.

They include the following:-

- NSS and emergency management partnership support the reduction of disaster risk, even in highly resource constrained situations.
- Mitigation activities can keep experienced volunteers active and enthusiastic even in and recovery skills are not needed.
- Programmes and activities maintain community interest and increase awareness regarding disaster risk reduction and preparedness.
- Community members acquire a sense of empowerment through reducing their disaster risk.
- Specific felt needs of LSGIs are to be identified and entrust the NSS with support of clubs. Inculcate patriotism with the message that “I am proud to be an Indian”.

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Formation of Consumer Clubs

The consumer clubs were formed with a view to educate consumers according to Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and to mobilize youngsters by instilling the spirit of protection of the consumer rights in them. The potential and dynamism of NSS is under-estimated and under-tapped. So it is to be fully utilized as a finishing school in Higher education.

In the light of the experience and exposures in the campus and community by the researcher, it can be established that the NSS, as an extension component of higher education is to be more effectively implemented. To address the national and local issues at grassroot level, the NSS has been doing diversified social services for the last four decades. The campus experience and exposures of the NSS is facilitating its student youth, to have a cumulative effect in moulding their personality positively. It is evident from the preceding five chapters of the study that the National Service Scheme is implementing its Programmes in the state, as per the motto and objectives enshrined in its manual. As recognition of the commendable contributions made by the NSS, the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India selected Mahathma Gandhi University, Kottyam, for its first Indira Gandhi NSS Award, in 1994. This prestigious National Award was won by the NSS of the University of Kerala, Thiruvanthapuram, in 2006. Apart from this, NSS volunteers bagged many National Awards. Moreover the NSS of Kerala have many creative innovations in socio-economic development of the country, like
dynamic role of NSS in making Kerala as the first total literacy State of India in 1996, Asset Survey of Panchayath Raj Institutions, in 2004 Home for the Homeless Project (Ongoing), Pain and Palliative Care Project, etc.

The researcher could examine the documentary evidence from the annual reports of the NSS made available to the universities and educational directorates of Kerala and could physically make spot verifications, about the claims of their community services, intending for the personality development of its student volunteers. Based on the cited data, which has been graphically represented in the preceding chapters, it can be convincingly concluded that the NSS has made significant strides in enhancing the skills and potentialities of student volunteers, especially the much needed, and identified skills by the World Health organization, as the Ten life Skills for all kinds of leadership. They are critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, communication, decision thinking, self-awareness or relations, coping with stress and coping with emotions. During the camps of the NSS at institutional/ University/ State/ National levels, the student volunteers are exposed lot of opportunities to practical purposes in all cited life skills, which are critical for acquiring leadership qualities.

The impact of the NSS on the society is examined, in general and specifically by attempting a case study, on the community living in the premises of a natural water tank, known as Chenkal valiya kulam in the Neyyattinkara taluk of the Thiruvananthapuram revenue district in Kerala.
The socio-economic and scientific development of the country, in general, and Kerala in particular have to be taken into consideration for a fair evaluation of NSS in Kerala. The pace of changes in the NSS activities are not corresponding with the felt needs of its student volunteers and the community in the adopted village or in the premises of the educational institutions. Analyzing the activities of NSS it can be stated that, in spite of periodic reforms, there is an anachronic sticking to the mindset of 1960s. To illuminate minds of the educational policy makers, there need be national consultation for the optimum utilization of the creativity of this national venue of the student’s youth.

In the light of the study after meticulous scanning of the history of NSS in Kerala, it has been proved that most of the national objectives, targeted by the Government of India, are to a large extent, materialized in Kerala. It is evident, from the first national award, won by the Mahatma Gandhi University of Kerala. The subsequent national recognition for many of the innovation projects of NSS like Asset survey of Panchayati Raj Institutions, Home for the Homeless Project, the first 100 percent literate state in India etc are glaring examples of the enviable position of NSS in Kerala.

In these circumstances, the educational advancement and socio-economic development of Kerala are to be considered well. The modifications in the NSS are to be made to make it more attractive to student volunteers and to cater their aspirations and satisfy the felt needs of the community. In the
ultimate analysis the suggested paradigm shift, in the orientation of the NSS activities are to be made only after an indepth analysis of the historical forces worked, over the years, from 1969 upto 2013.

Based on an empirical study of the history of NSS in Kerala, the researcher has tried to analyze the Scheme from a developmental perspective and submitted an alternative in the functioning of the NSS. The impact of constitutional Amendment (Articles 73 and 74) in 1994, on devolution of powers and decentralized planning, the advancement in Information Technology, the drain of the spirit of volunteerism due to the inculcation of competitiveness in the young minds by parents and teachers are some of the historic development which necessitated restructuring NSS in Kerala. On perusal of the NSS function for the last 44 years, it can be observed that, many of the community service activities undertaken by the NSS volunteers, have now become part of the projects of Local self-Government Institutions Eg. Construction of rural roads, watershed development planning, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guaranty Scheme etc. The messages of the health and other related awareness programmes disseminated by the NSS volunteers by door-to-door visit, by circulating notices and sensitization workshops are no longer relevant today. Nowadays all such messages reaching their drawing rooms through the electronic media. As the students have little time under their disposal after attending regular classes and entrance examination coaching, the spirit of voluntary service is ritualized in almost all the educational institutions. To make matters worse, the parental pressures and the negative attitude of
many teachers towards all the extension activities, including NSS and NCC, complete the dearth of interest in the scheme. Based on the growing negative tendency, it is high time to rejuvenate the voluntary Scheme to revamp the extension dimension or the third dimension of higher education. Moreover, the UNO has lauded volunteerism as a spirit to plug the developmental gap of nations. Voluntary service to humanity is one of the eternal values in human behavior. Reviving it amounts to value addition to higher education and patronizing the dying cultural component of human civilization.

Despite its shortcomings, the NSS of Kerala has made its mark in the centers of higher education, as extension component, promoter and practitioner of voluntary service upholding the spirit of national service. On close observation of the mode of implementation of this national scheme, it can be proved that the NSS is moulding a Kerala model engaged in value addition in the higher education sector.

To conclude, the study evaluated the past experiences of NSS in Kerala in the light of the present realities and analyzed the local and national need. The cited strategy is for revamping NSS in accordance with the felt needs of campus and the community and for engaging students in the national reconstruction programmes. Here the objective is utilization of enthusiasm of the vibrant student youth in the national development programmes. It appears that NSS is an under-utilized mine of youth energy holding immense human resource development potential that may be used for the national development at the
grassroot level as an extension of campus to community. The researcher felt that he stands confidently with his one foot solidly placed in the past and the second foot on the limelight of the present, looking forward to reshape the scheme by reading the murals of the era. It is upto the higher education policy makers and the stakeholders of the NSS to realize the dream.