CHAPTER - VIII

THE PROBLEMS* OF THE NSS

This chapter addresses itself to the problems of the NSS. It is expected that a country-wide agency like the NSS will have a host of problems. The problems are not only actual but also potential. Some of the activities of the NSS

* The material for this chapter has been collected by the researcher not only from the various documents, books and papers etc. but also from his personal jottings and discussions with colleagues and friends and with the opposite numbers from the other universities in the country. One may say that when a person works as an NSS official at the university level, he is immersed in the various ideas and activities which constitute the NSS functions and ethos. Every time one completes a camp or comes across a difficulty, one learns from experience and becomes wise. In this sense not only observation but also participant observation of the NSS roles and functions as perceived by the researcher have provided material for the discussion of the NSS problems. The researcher has also observed from close quarters how the other NSS officials, both at college and university levels, have functioned and what their successes or difficulties have been. Some of the questions discussed in this chapter figure in some of the conferences or seminars of the NSS officials. Here the problems are analysed and reactions or brief solutions are indicated on the basis of overall experience and observation of the NSS functions and duties. The personal opinions or reflections that are generated while one is in the NSS office or while one is watching camps conducted by others may be said to be written about in this chapter. Some kind of theorising is done in this chapter so that the theory, what little there is, may be useful to the researcher and others in understanding and conducting better the NSS programmes and activities.
have been analysed in a number of chapters elsewhere in this thesis. It is certain that more work and better work can be done by the NSS units if some of the snags, handicaps or constraints faced by the NSS are tackled. These problems, if left untackled, will block not only the potentialities of the NSS but also weaken the current performance of the NSS. These problems have been faced by the NSS officials at the college and university levels, at the state level and at the all-India level. Some of these problems have figured in the discussions and consultations among the officials. But there is a need for a systematic identification of the different problems faced at different levels and a satisfactory solution of the problems so that the record of the NSS can be brighter and will continue to be so.

One of the major problems of the NSS is that the goals and objectives of the NSS are numerous and universities as well as people have high expectations of the NSS volunteers. The NSS volunteers are supposed to understand the community around, identify its needs and find solutions for them, acquire skills for mobilising community participation, acquire leadership qualities and democratic attitude and come forward to tackle the situations created by emergencies or natural disasters.
The volunteers are also supposed to work hard for national integration. Thus there is a whole list of tasks which are supposed to be done by the NSS volunteers and their mission is truly daunting.

At the same time the NSS volunteers do not have all resources at their disposal. They themselves are young boys and girls at colleges and until they get their degrees they have at their disposal a time of two years or so. If they continue the postgraduate studies they may get another two years of time. During this relatively short period of time and within the framework of rules and regulations they have to try hard to realise the numerous goals and objectives set before them. So it is no wonder if the universities or people or political leaders develop a feeling regarding the NSS that the tasks are too many or too great but the work done is not enough. This can be said to be a serious initial disadvantage in the programmes of the NSS.

Further from the viewpoint of the organisers, leaders or NSS officials at the university and college level, there are other problems too. One very serious problem is that of finance. In a developing country like India, there is always a shortage
of resources and one may be pleasantly surprised if the budget of an institution in a particular year is comfortable if not surplus. The NSS, at the university level in particular runs short of money. In the absolute sense such a shortage may not occur if the earmarked or admissible grants from the government of India and the state government are released in time. This however seldom happens. Most spending departments in India generally seem to be overburdened or slow-moving and therefore finances are not released adequately or in time. This is a continuing problem with which the NSS officials or organisers have to learn to live. In this situation what they can do and should do is to secure short-term finance from their university from some account or the other and make use of the funds for routine as well as non-routine or special programmes of the NSS. After the usual, committed grants arrive from the government of India and the state government, the repayment of the finance obtained temporarily may be made.

It is not unoften that the government of India and the state government do not release finance for the simple reason that accounts are not rendered, proposals are not in order, audited statements are not furnished or utilisation certificates are missing. Until all these are set right, the government of
India and the state government will withhold the finance.

Besides these deficiencies on the part of the NSS officials, it is possible that the central or state government has its own difficulties. The concerned minister may be out of town or he may not have yet been appointed. It is possible that the cabinet has not yet taken a decision or certain matters are not yet clear and hence the grants cannot be released. The bureaucracy of the central government as well as the state government has its own inertia. Papers move slowly. "Immediate" may mean two months and "urgent" may mean several weeks. "Today" may mean a week at least. So the proposals for grants are not examined in time and the grants are not released in time.

On the other hand, the important task of compiling accounts, annual or periodical reports, audited statements and utilisation certificates etc. may be held up because the bureaucracy of the NSS may also be slow-moving or indifferent. The clerks, peons and the accountants may be more interested in dearness allowance, earned leave, and restricted holidays, than the pending work of the NSS. Virtually in any government office in India, central or state or local, one finds that there is a situation of over-employment in the sense that there are too many employees where a few would do. All these people
have to be reckoned with if any NSS business is to be done. In several cases these people have a poor motivation. The NSS officials may have to spend a good deal of psycho-physical energy to motivate or activate these otherwise slow-moving people. Once in a while one may be surprised to come across a good typist or a good accountant or a hard-working peon. But such things are only surprises. They do not happen routinely.

The NSS staff at university level or the administrative staff in general always stand in need of training. Officially candidates are selected to work in the universities on the basis of their qualifications and degrees or certificates. Further there are different training schemes conducted by the universities or outside government agencies which provide training or refresher courses to the non-teaching staff. The NSS non-teaching staff are supposed to benefit from these training facilities. However in actual practice the non-teaching staff assisting the NSS officials are found to possess a very low level of competence and training. Often they are temporary. They are posted temporarily in the NSS unit from other sections of the university and they are liable to transfer. This applies particularly to the clerks and peons who constitute the bulk of the non-teaching contingent of the NSS unit at the university.
level. At the college level too, the non-teaching staff assisting the NSS officials is generally of similarly low competence and efficiency. This situation is not very hard to explain. The post-independence years have seen a general decline in administrative competence and skills and it is not very easy to motivate or activate the non-teaching staff to do their best. Once in a while an official may insist on a sound performance from his employees and once in a while he may get it. But we cannot come across such a sound performance routinely. The deterioration in skills, skills of drafting, writing, making notings on files or papers or generally dealing with the other sections of the university, has been considerable. The school certificates or university degrees which these employees possess are silent about the decline. But the decline is faced in actual practice. These employees, before they come to the office, are very poorly equipped. Their capacity to draft or write is very low. This applies not only to the English language but also the non-English languages which they may be allowed to use at times. In case of the NSS employees however, English continues to be used and in a way is insisted on because the NSS units at the college and university level have (also) to deal with the central and state governments and with the universities or institutions of
other states in the country. In such inter-state contexts, we find that the employees are not able to prepare letters or drafts, put up proposals or type letters or produce cyclostyled documents. This is the state of affairs in which practically most colleges and universities find themselves. In such a situation the NSS office in the universities cannot be an exception. There are a few employees who have sound knowledge and skills required for their duties. But such employees are mostly found in private offices or industries or manufacturing centres or maybe in a few elite educational institutions in the country. But, in general, in most universities this is the state of affairs.

There is one more factor that the NSS officials at the university level have to reckon with. This factor is that of an unruly or undisciplined behaviour of some employees. It was all right that Mahatma Gandhi taught Indians the techniques of Satyagraha and non-cooperation and civil disobedience etc. But these techniques were to be used expressly against the British colonial authorities. Now the Gandhian training given to the Indians seems to used against the Indians by the Indians. In most universities in India, as well as some colleges, there are unions of non-teaching employees. Since union is strength, it
gives strength as well as confidence to the employees who work in the NSS office also. Because of this unionism the tendency to wander away from one's job or take it less seriously becomes strong. And the erring employees tend to have less fear because the union is there to protect them in case of trouble. This has tended to bring down the level of efficiency in the colleges and universities and to this extent the NSS work is affected at least indirectly.

On account of this factor of indifferently educated and trained employees the NSS officials who are keen on delivering goods in a time-bound fashion have a hard time getting the work done from the employees. As a matter of fact, the NSS officials at the university level need some very good stenographers, typists, cyclostyle assistants and good peons to do the numerous messengerial tasks. Generally it is found that the NSS officials are not in a position to give dictation to the stenographers or typists. This has several aspects. With departure of the British from India in 1947, the practice of dictation to stenographers has been on the decline and today there are fewer and fewer stenographers in the universities in the country who take dictation from officers. Today the officers, including the NSS ones, do not have the training or
ability to give dictation to the stenographers. As a result, the stenographers, where they are available, have no practice of taking dictation and their skills remain unused and they tend to be used merely as typists. Once the stenographers tend to be replaced by the typists, other things being equal, the volume of work increases enormously and it is difficult for the NSS officials to do or manage the volume of administrative work, disposal of files and correspondence at the university level.

The NSS office workers continue to use traditional office equipments and this is right also in a way. Although several universities in the country have acquired computers, most of the computer capacity is being used for examination work at present. It is only recently that libraries are being asked to prepare data bases with the help of computers. Usually statistics and physics departments are given computers. But the NSS office has not been given any computers as yet. There are no word processors either. Maybe in course of time a computer terminal may be provided in the NSS offices. But all this is about five to ten years away. At present the NSS office staff is not able to use even electronic typewriters which are routinely available in the market. This is because
the consumables such as ribbon and paper etc. are very expensive. Further the typists feel unfamiliar with the electronic typewriters. At present the device which is used routinely is the calculator. Another factor which inhibits the use of the new devices is the fact that once they go out of order there is no local help available. If something goes wrong, some engineer or mechanic has to come from Bangalore all the way. Sometimes the Bangalore persons arrive in time, sometimes there are delays. So the NSS office staff are mostly inclined to use the old typewriters, the old forms and the old machinery in general. However it may be pointed out here that even this old machinery, if there is an all-round cooperation and if office employees are rightly motivated and fairly well-trained, can turn out fairly efficient and speedy work.

Vehicles and telephones constitute another problem of the day-to-day work of the NSS at the university level. The NSS officials generally do not have their own vehicles such as cars or motor-cycles. Such vehicles are very essential because the NSS officials have to keep in touch with various colleges and go to the bus-stand or railway station or the AIR or newspaper offices and, even on a campus, distances can be fairly long and tiring when it is a question of meeting different
authorities located at different points. The NSS officials generally engage the vehicles of the universities from time to time. But sometimes there can be difficulties at the eleventh hour. In the nick of time a vehicle may not be available or there may be delays in securing the use of a vehicle. Often times therefore the NSS officials make use of autorikshaws or taxis as and when required for urgent business. Sometimes buses and trains are useful when distances are fairly long. There is hardly any occasion for the NSS officials to make use of an airline. Maybe once or twice a year plane service may be useful for going to Delhi to attend some all-India conference or seminar. For such a long trip by plane the NSS officials have to make special cases. Otherwise they may be advised to go by train. For smaller distances therefore usually the bus or train service is used. A general factor which comes in the way of an airline journey is that several small-town universities in India are not on the air-map. Often therefore those who wish to make a plane journey must undertake the irksome task of reaching the nearest airport by effecting a fairly long rail or road journey.

Telephones are a headache in India. This remark has been heard time and again and people have gone to the extent
saying that one of the reasons why foreign businessmen feel
deterred to work in India is the telephone system of the
country. This remains largely true even today. This is
primarily because the technology is old and the operating staff
is slow-moving. The old technology is being replaced by the
new technology. Beginnings are made to introduce a new type
of telephone service etc. However, whenever there is a
question of getting services from human beings, one can come
across a great many obstacles. This is where the telephone
system is most problematic. (Even) local calls may be difficult
to get through. People may not pick up the receiver soon and
there may be no telephone attendants or secretaries to do the
job. The answering or message-taking devices have not yet come
into vogue. There is definitely an improvement inasmuch as
STD (subscriber trunk dialling) is available and it works via
a satellite. The STD device is very useful for contacting
parties over large distances in the country. Otherwise, when
trunk-calls are to be made, the task continues to be very
frustrating as in the olden days. There are difficulties in
the use of extensions or intercoms because the exchanges in
the Indian universities, as elsewhere, continue to be old-
fashioned and it is only now that efforts are being made to get
electronic or automatic exchanges to do away with the delays
and difficulties caused by the presence of the human beings. The NSS officials will get the benefit of these improvements but perhaps not so soon; maybe they will get it after five or ten years.

The problem of accounts and audit is a typical Indian problem. No NSS officials can hope to be successful or efficient if they do not come to grips with the problem of accounts. The problem of accounts has two sides. One side is the NSS office at the university level and the other side is the accounts office of the university or office of the Registrar or other offices in the universities, and/accounts offices of the central and state governments. The NSS officials can at most make sure that the staff under their control prepare papers and keep accounts up to date. However the accounts office at the university, variously known as finance office or bursar's office, has its own speed and way of doing things. It would be no exaggeration to say that most accounts are found to remain pending and files remain on the tables or in the cupboards without being attended to. There are arrears of work pending for weeks or months and some issues are not tackled at all because the particular case workers are transferred or have retired or the new accounts officers have not yet seen those
particular files. In India, in several cases accounts officers of universities are deputed government servants, sent on deputation by the state government. Some universities have their permanent accounts officers. But in Karnataka usually the accounts officers are sent to the universities on deputation from the state government. Some accounts officers are of course enthusiastic and helpful and they assist the NSS officials in streamlining the NSS accounts. Others may be over-strict or rigid and this may hold up the accounts or may cause delays in receipt of funds or grants by the NSS offices. As we have mentioned elsewhere, the fund-granting authorities from the central and state governments are rigid and insist on the submission of previous accounts and audited statements etc. but there are delays and accounts and audited statements may not be available for transmission because the accounts office has not been able to come forward with prompt or speedy action. Sometimes prompt or speedy action to help the NSS is not possible unless the employees of the accounts office take interest or work overtime or extra time and then the question may arise as to who should pay for extra time and why, why the work was allowed to pile up and so on. The NSS officials may not be able to answer these questions and therefore they may not be able to get the extra work done fast and, unless that is done, the accounts may not be ready.
Just as accounts can create delays, audit also can create delays and difficulties. In Karnataka state, universities have their audit cells and these audit cells are generally managed by officials of the state audit department. The audit cell has its own rhythm and has its own style of work and these can affect the NSS work. Therefore in order to get speed and economy of time and labour in compiling accounts and getting audited statements, the NSS officials not only send their clerks and messengers to the accounts and audit offices, often times they themselves go and contact the various employees to see that the files are attended to and keep moving. This can be a time-consuming business and many valuable manhours have to be spent thus chasing papers and seeing that they do not get blocked in the way. Some NSS officials have thought it necessary to associate the accounts and audit officers and the others in the universities such as the Registrar and the Vice-Chancellor, with some of the programmes or functions of the NSS. The idea is to familiarise the accounts and audit officers with the actual work of the NSS so that the preparation, submission and clearance of accounts become easy. In the absence of such actual visits, the NSS papers and files can get held up because, strictly speaking, they cannot move much because the existing accounts procedures and rules do not help.
sufficiently. The accounts and audit officers have to possess the right type of understanding and discretion and put the right interpretation on the numerous items pertaining to the NSS files and programmes. This complex and time-consuming task has to be performed with patience and perseverance by the NSS officials.

Keeping in touch with the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar of the university is a very crucial task for the success of the various NSS assignments at the university level. Those who know the Indian university set-up will realise the importance of keeping in touch with these main functionaries. In northern India the position of the Registrar is not so crucial as several of his functions may be exercised by the Deans. In western and southern India however the Registrar is central to the administration. Depending on the personality and leadership qualities of the Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar at times can be more crucial to the administration than the Vice-Chancellor. Cases are not unknown in which Registrars have overshadowed the Vice-Chancellors. But, by and large, the Vice-Chancellor is the most important functionary in the university and he is supposed to be the academic as well as administrative head of the university. The others who share the administrative
responsibility with the Registrar in the university are the Finance Officer, Controller of Examinations, the Librarian, the Director of College Development Council, the Dean or the Director of Student Welfare and so on. The Syndicate and Senate and the Academic Council are the usual bodies which are in charge of policy-making and rule-framing for the universities. As far as the NSS officials are concerned, they have (also) to keep in touch with the various deputy registrars and assistant registrars working under the Registrar for all the day-to-day movement of papers, clearance and decisions on various items. Often times the NSS officials may be stuck for want of the "administrative sanction." Situations may arise in which decision and action have to be taken fast, otherwise work will not be done or there will be loss of money, and yet money cannot be obtained or taken back etc. For this purpose the NSS officials, clerks, peons and messengers have to keep in touch with the Registrar's office and even his clerks and personal assistant and make sure that papers reach the Registrar's office and they are cleared and decisions on them are taken. Often times, the Registrar may be out of town or he may be in a meeting or conference or he may be just busy with administrative work. In such a case he is not available for doing the NSS work. If the attitude or mood of the Registrar is not all right, if he is not well
disposed to the NSS work, then this fact can represent more or less a handicap for weeks and months until his attitude changes for the better. The NSS officials may not be in a position to stage a confrontation with such a difficult Registrar. In most cases therefore the NSS officials have an obligation to see that they are on the right side of the Registrar most of the time, if not all the time.

The relations with the Vice-Chancellor are even more crucial. He is the overall head of the university. It is up to him to direct the Finance Officer or the Registrar to make sure that administrative sanction or financial clearance is accorded to the NSS plans or activities; and if there is no money in the NSS accounts, some funds are made available from some other account or head in the university so that the NSS activities continue uninterrupted. It is quite possible that in the various forums of the university such as the Syndicate, Senate and Academic Council, there may be a hostile criticism and there may be individuals who are not happy with the NSS officials and this may mean that the NSS programmes will come under criticism. On such occasions the support and defence of the Vice-Chancellor is most crucial. Of course, as the top leader of the university, the Vice-Chancellor is in a way duty-bound
to protect and defend the programmes of the NSS. But sometimes
the difference between the NSS officials and the Vice-Chancellor
may be so wide that the Vice-Chancellor does not provide the
needed defence. This can be unfortunate for the NSS. Much before
this happens, the Vice-Chancellor may snub or scold the NSS
officials or may find some fault with the NSS officials or their
work. This is a signal for the NSS officials that the
Vice-Chancellor is unhappy with their work or other things
and they should take corrective action. Until this is done,
the NSS officials may have to work under a bad handicap. Normally
the NSS officials see to it that there is no occasion to rub the
Vice-Chancellor on the wrong side. Even with such care, on a
few occasions, it is quite possible that the Vice-Chancellor gets
upset or irritated by a particular action of the NSS officials
and in such a situation the NSS officials are generally well
advised to make amends and restore working relations.

The role of the Vice-Chancellor is very crucial in
obtaining for the university NSS office accounts and reports
etc. from the NSS units in the constituent and affiliated
colleges in the university jurisdiction. If some college accounts
are pending for a long time or not given at all, it is scandalous
from the viewpoint of the university administration and it
becomes difficult for the university-level NSS officials to claim funds from the central and state governments. Yet it is not always possible to be strong, firm and insistent in getting accounts or refunds, where applicable, from the college units. Sometimes the college principals are very strong and they may be on the Syndicate or Senate of the university and the NSS officials just cannot go on pressing the NSS officials of the colleges of such principals. In such a case a lot of tact and persuasion have to be employed in causing the college-level NSS officials to give their accounts and straighten the record. Sometimes disputes arise between the college principals and NSS officials and while the principals are generally strong, cases are not wanting where the NSS officials also turn out to be very powerful. Sometimes the college NSS officials have their own complaints. They do not receive funds in time or sometimes the officials and volunteers are not selected for a particular programme. For a long time the NCC (National Cadet Corps) officers and the NSS officials, though of the same level, are not treated on par and this is seen as most painful when it comes to the payment of the out-of-pocket allowance. The NCC officers get a higher allowance than the NSS officials. This is seen as unjustified. The National Cadet Corps is not actually on par with the army, navy or air force. Not all the NCC students join
the defence services. If this is so, then there is no need to treat them as important as the defence personnel. At the official level, the National Cadet Corps officers or cadets and the NSS officials or volunteers should be treated on par since both of them are engaged in the task of nation building and development etc. This dispute has been going on for quite some time and this can be settled when some kind of parity is secured between the treatment and allowance of the National Cadet Corps and those of the NSS. In this dispute too, the role of the Vice-Chancellor is very crucial. The Vice-Chancellor can help to reduce the difference and disparity and try to secure comparability between the two wings of the NCC and the NSS in the university. So far this has not happened and therefore one very important problem faced by the NSS officials continues to remain unsolved.

As we have mentioned earlier, one of the best ways found by the NSS officials to streamline and accelerate their work is to take the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar to the actual programmes of the NSS. As it is, it is customary to send invitations to the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar and other various functionaries to the programmes organised by the NSS. However the NSS officials have found that they should not stop at the formal invitations. They should go out of the way to
take the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar, or at least the Vice-Chancellor, to the various functions or activities of the NSS. This helps the NSS officials to familiarise the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar with the complexities and difficulties of the organisers of such programmes. When all these people come back to the university headquarters, the task of forwarding or moving papers or obtaining permission or administrative sanction becomes easy. Sometimes persons or elements that are on the wrong side of the NSS officials are interested in vitiating the opinion of the Vice-Chancellor or the Registrar regarding the NSS officials and programmes. Office politics and tale-carrying are standard activities of some people not only in office in India but around the world. The NSS officials cannot close their eyes to this aspect. However dedicated and hard-working they may be, they need the goodwill and understanding of the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar. Association of these central functionaries with the NSS programmes is one of the ways of ensuring that they have a working degree of familiarity and goodwill for the NSS activities. In the Indian situation when a top official like the Vice-Chancellor is associated with the programmes, coordination and cooperation of the lower officials or the wings of the university become easy. If the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar are not associated with the functions,
then the NSS officials have to work extra hard and even then sometimes cooperation may not be given. What is true of the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar is also true to some extent, of the Finance Officer to whom we have already made a reference. Sometimes if the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar are not available, then some of the Syndicate members or Senate members may be invited to the NSS functions and programmes. This helps to project a helpful image of the NSS functionaries and programmes and once public relations are established in this way, opposition in the university forums in respect of the NSS functionaries and programmes becomes less. The invitation to the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrars and Syndicate members etc. to the programmes of the NSS or their association with the programmes may cause some criticism in some quarters, and a few shrewd and ambitious persons in the university may think that the NSS officials are trying to be over-friendly with the key officials of the university. Such an impression should not be allowed to arise because that can lead to difficulties in the path of NSS work and activities. So the NSS officials have to do a delicate job of inviting the key functionaries to the NSS programmes but of not appearing to take undue advantage in the process.
In some cases, the NSS officials have to be all the more careful because they are selected from among the college NSS officials and work at the university headquarters on deputation from their respective colleges. Their position is temporary. At the end of the deputation, usually, after two years, they go back to their college posts. If the deputation is renewed for another term, then they stay at university headquarters for another two years. This temporary nature of the posting of the NSS officials can create a lot of instability and half-heartedness in organising the NSS programmes and activities. If the NSS officials are appointed on a permanent basis, they may be able to develop the university-level NSS programmes on a long term basis and attract more funds from the central and state governments. However in this matter the NSS officials themselves can take little initiative. Permanent posting of such persons has to be secured by the university and that means the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor has to push this subject with the relevant ministries of the state government. The state government will sanction the posts and obtain the necessary funds for them from the central government. The Vice-Chancellor has to reckon with the cooperation or delay in this matter from the state government. The state government has to come forward with certain percentage
of grants or aid for the creation of such posts. At times the state government may tell the university to go ahead with the creation of the post and sanction funds pending the receipt of the funds from the central government. For this purpose the Vice-Chancellor has to go out of the way and contact the chief minister or the state Governor who is the Chancellor of the universities and the secretaries of the various government departments in the state secretariat. Such extraordinary efforts are seldom made and therefore the posts of the NSS officials in the universities continue to be deputation posts, temporary ones. The posts of a similar, sister department, of Adult and Continuing Education, also continue to be deputation posts. In some of the universities however these posts (the latter) are permanent posts, with their own independent office, staff, vehicles etc. When the NSS officials have to organise their programmes and activities, they have to keep all these vital factors in view while chalking out their time-table and activities.

The NSS officials must necessarily be young although there is no objection of course if they are mature in experience. The functions and duties of the NSS officials at the university level are so numerous and so demanding that the energies of the
NSS officials are taxed to the utmost. As we have seen, the NSS officials must run a full-fledged office efficiently. The paper work and correspondence must be handled promptly. Instructions must be sent out in time. Reports of compliance, of accounts or audit etc. must be sent to the respective offices. Further the on-going programmes must be pursued vigorously. There may be deadlines. These deadlines have to be met. After one deadline is over another comes up. The NSS officials find from experience that the schedule is hectic. They have to work not only the whole day but also a good part of the night. There is no such thing as office hours in the sense that the usual, routine, 11 to 5, office time-table is not enough. The officials have to work in the mornings as well as late in the evenings. Further they have to ensure communication not merely by correspondence but also by telephone and personal visits. They have to attend meetings at the university campus as well as in the various colleges. When the camps are in progress, for days together, they have to be present at the camps and, while doing so, they must frequently keep in touch with the NSS office, so that paper-work and urgent business are not held up. In view of such a demanding schedule of activities, entailing stress and strain, it is necessary that the NSS officials are young. It appears that they have to be looked upon more or
less as badminton or boxing champions. Age is very crucial because the activities have to be pursued with speed and promptness. It is doubtful if persons who are above 50 can carry out successfully the duties and responsibilities of the NSS office. In sheer physical terms, persons who are very old are likely to break down or find themselves wanting. In case, on exceptional grounds, old persons are appointed as NSS officials, in all likelihood, they will have to be assisted by younger persons on the staff or from outside so that the movements and activities required are pursued. The older persons may be good at office work or giving suggestions when they are available at the work site or camp site. But the NSS work is such that one cannot afford to sit in one place, whether it is office or camp site. One has to keep in touch with various college NSS officials, principals, government officials such as the deputy commissioner, conservator of forests, deputy director of public instruction, social workers, officials of the All India Radio, television, members of the press and so on. Such a contingency of older persons manning the NSS offices has not generally arisen. So far, fortunately, most NSS officials who have been selected for the university level from the ranks of the college NSS officials have been generally young. Most of them happen to be between 30 and 40. But experience has
generally shown that, after 30, older the person greater the 
strain shown by him from the multifarious programmes and 
activities of the NSS. Since the college professors or even 
university lecturers are usually appointed for career (until 
they retire at the age of 58 or 60), if permanent appointments 
are made, the question of over-50 persons being found in the 
NSS office will have to be faced. This question may be partly 
solved in case a provision is made for transfer of such persons 
to more suitable duties, in the teaching departments or research 
laboratories or cells etc.

One valid way of putting more strength into the NSS 
programme is to accord greater credit for the NSS work done 
by the officials as well as the volunteers. At present, at 
times, at the college level in particular, it is seen that 
professors of other departments do not bother much about helping 
the NSS officials in carrying out the NSS programmes. They say 
that the programme is the official's headache and they should 
look after it. We have already mentioned the discrimination 
regarding the out-of-pocket allowance being paid to the NSS 
officials. In this connection it would be a good idea if the 
NSS officials are compensated with the out-of-pocket allowance 
on par with the out-of-pocket allowance paid to the NCC
officers. Where necessary, the NSS officials should be given some concession regarding the work-load, of both the teaching of classes as well as extra-curricular activities. Once these two things are attended to, the college as well as NSS authorities are justified in expecting and demanding more work of better quality from the college NSS officials. Similarly the NSS volunteers need to be given more credit than they are given at present. At present the NSS volunteers are given some concession in terms of their admission to the postgraduate classes. At the postgraduate level, the NSS certificate-holders are clubbed along with sons or daughters of ex-servicemen, NCC certificate holders and the physically handicapped students. In several cases, an NSS certificate-holder does not get even 1/4th a seat if the total sanctioned strength of a class is, say, 40 or 60. In such a case the NSS certificate is of no avail. To overcome this situation it is necessary to provide better encouragement to the NSS volunteers who have to their credit two years of NSS service at the college level. These volunteers should be given a higher quota in admission: at least 2 to 5 per cent of the sanctioned strength of a class. Without such a definite percentage the NSS certificates of the boys who come from the colleges have no meaning. Similarly, if the NSS volunteers are given a definite weightage in
employment in the public as well as private sector, one is justified in demanding better performance from the volunteers. At present, the NSS certificate is just one more document attesting to the extra-curricular activities of the boys and, while this is helpful and helps one to form a good opinion about the boys, it does not help the boys in the difficult employment situation in the country. It is necessary therefore to provide some kind of mandatory reservation of, say, one or two per cent of seats or places, to be filled under the public as well as private sector. This will help the NSS volunteers to get employment after their graduation or postgraduation in the various central or state government undertakings, railways and post offices, the All India Radio and the numerous private companies in the country. There has been a great deal of talk of how the NSS programmes can be fitted into the academic programmes or regular syllabi of students at the college level. Such efforts will have a meaning and the boys can devote themselves to the NSS projects with greater enthusiasm if they are assured employment to some extent. At present the NSS volunteers join the NSS as an alternative to the NCC (National Cadet Corps). Several of them show enthusiasm and put in a lot of hard work. If their participation in the NSS is given more
and definite incentive, as indicated here, one can expect them to devote themselves better to the programmes of the NSS.

A minor problem which one faces with regard to the facilities provided to the NSS volunteers is that of uniform. The NSS volunteers point out that the NCC students go about in uniform while they have to go about in the ordinary clothes. It shows that the boys can be very particular about noting the discrimination and lack of facilities. If uniforms are given to these boys, then the morale of the boys would be definitely high. But this would also push up the cost of the NSS programmes. As yet, the NSS authorities or leaders do not seem to have given any thought to the problem. One comes across such things even at the university level where the players of the postgraduate gymkhana ask for shoes and blazers before participating in matches. Sometimes there are budgetary constraints and the president of the postgraduate gymkhana has a hard time convincing the boys that they cannot be issued the shoes and blazers because of the budgetary constraints. It appears that in all these matters, when different streams of boys and girls are participating in the NCC, in the NSS and the gymkhana sports etc. at the postgraduate level, there is a need for a comprehensive and fair policy and the students should be told
in advance, in clear terms, what facilities they will get or will not get. If there is a discrimination, then every effort should be made to remove the discrimination so that one may expect better performance from the students.

Another usual difficulty faced by the organisers of the MSS camps is the shortage of a definite time for organising the camps. These camps are supposed to be organised during the summer vacation or Diwali vacation. But during these periods it is quite possible that the university examinations are held, for which students have to appear. Sometimes there is a very limited period of time available for the camps after the examinations are over. In India examinations, at least in some subjects, have a way of getting disorganised or postponed. Examinations in some papers may be held again. Such staggered or postponed examinations generally interfere with the MSS camp time and cut into the time of the MSS camps. When this happens, some students are not available for the MSS camps. The attendance at the camp is affected. Here there is a need for coordination and sticking to a definite schedule. The college and university authorities as well as others have to come together and see that the MSS camps are given a definite and undisturbed schedule by holding the examinations as per schedule.
Usually, at the university headquarters, meetings of the advisory committees of the NSS are held periodically and these committees, under the leadership of the Vice-Chancellor, do a lot of good work. However, at the college level, the attendance at the advisory committee meetings is not so full. The government officials or outside persons who are members of such committees find it difficult to attend the meetings and hence the quorum at these meetings cannot be expected to be very high. This has been the weakness of the college advisory committees. The weaknesses can be overcome by changing the composition of the advisory committees and inviting only fewer government officials who can attend the meetings or who can depute their colleagues or subordinates to see that the NSS programmes receive their backing and support at the college level.

We have indicated above some of the problems and difficulties in respect of the NSS policies and programmes. Our analysis is by no means exhaustive. It is quite possible that there are different problems and difficulties in the context of different universities and states in the country. Here only those problems have been outlined which have drawn to themselves particular attention of the NSS officials in course of their day-to-day duties.
In this chapter we are presenting some broad conclusions and observations on the basis of the enquiries and analyses provided in the various chapters so far. As we have seen, the National Service Scheme in India has been devised after several comparative studies and reflections on the subject. The experiments of similar plans and activities conducted in other nations have been taken into account while formulating the NSS in India. The NSS in India has been provided as an alternative to the National Cadet Corps or NCC and the sports activities to be chosen as alternatives by students in the junior and degree colleges in the country. The postgraduate students also have the choice of NSS activities but here, at this level, there is no alternative of the NCC. In general the NSS at the postgraduate level (as a unit of operation) is not so strong as it is at the junior and the degree college levels.

The mandate for the NSS students is very wide ranging. The students are asked to create awareness of various types
among people. They are asked to identify and study the various socio-economic and educational problems of people and devise suitable projects or programmes to fulfil the needs of urban as well as rural people. The students are supposed to perform the various tasks along with their regular academic studies. They are to pursue these activities under the guidance of their NSS officers who are, usually, their professors. The orientation of the NSS is educational and not military.

In the foregoing chapters we have recounted the success stories of the various colleges in the Karnataka University area. Students have performed tasks like bunding works, building and repairing roads, desilting of lakes and wells, construction of school buildings and temples, and arranging lectures and demonstrations on various subjects for the enlightenment and guidance of people. The NSS students have often functioned in collaboration with local citizens and service clubs like the Rotary Club and Lions Club and associations like the Indian Medical Association. They have also been given guidance and assistance by the respective government departments. These students have carried out a variety of activities and when we take a look at these range of the activities, we are convinced that their contribution to the improvement of the quality of life of people is really considerable.
The students have helped with the tasks of slum clearance and building new houses for the slum dwellers. In several villages they have helped with the repairs of houses and provision of roofs, walls or extensions as required. Their help with regard to the improvement of sanitary works has been important as they have helped with the construction of latrines, soakpits, cleaning of roads and construction of gutters as required in various places. With the assistance of the medical and local self-government authorities, they have conducted various health camps or vaccination camps. At these camps inoculations against various diseases have been provided and medical check-up has also been given to a number of people. Often times medical treatment has been arranged for the cattle population of the various places. Many of these activities are highly labour-intensive and the students have taken the help of the local youth and other categories of volunteers. Their performance in the field of tree plantation is particularly spectacular. Tree plantation has been a labour-intensive task, and, as we have seen, in the Hirkal Dam area, tree plantation on a large scale has been accomplished by the NSS students. Similarly the Vriishaganga project was conducted to plant a large number of saplings in the traditional arid region of the Bellary
district. Besides these various activities, the volunteers have helped a great deal in the creation of the right kind of awareness among the forest areas and villages. The adventure promotion programme should be cited in particular in this context. The western ghat trekking programme has helped a great deal in developing in the NSS students a spirit of adventure and a concern for natural and clean environment. In the process they have influenced the whole populations in favour of cleanliness and health of their environment, particularly forests, mountains, river streams, animals, various creatures that inhabit the forests and so on. The potential of the NSS activities is also seen in the various plays, music performances and skits or dances and songs rendered to arrange publicity for various social concerns such as cleanliness, environmental protection, self-employment, education of the youth and so on. The NSS volunteers have conducted indoor campaigns for adult literacy classes and craft classes etc. for the benefit of the desirous youth and other categories. The micro-area integrated development project taken up at Devar Nimbaragi in the Bijapur district has shown the weaknesses to which the NSS projects and programmes may be exposed. Here, as we have seen, the motivation and the concern of the villagers were very strong in the beginning, but they took for granted the continuity of the leadership of the NSS
and the government officers. These leaders and officers thought that the project had already taken off and they could now afford to be away for various lengths of time and the villagers would be able to carry on in their absence. This proved to be untrue. The micro-area project also revealed weaknesses at the level of the universities and the government in the sense that running of the NSS activities in such contexts is not so thorough inasmuch as continuity of leadership is not ensured. What was administratively desirable, transfer of particular officers elsewhere, was not necessarily in the best interest of the micro-area project. If the particular NSS coordinator of a university had completed his term, then of course it was administratively desirable to replace him. But the replacement should have ensured leadership for the micro-area project or, alternatively, the old incumbent should have been given some extension until the micro-area project reached a particular (viable) stage.

As regards the potentialities of the NSS, these can be developed by reorganising and streamlining the working of the NSS at all levels. This could be done partly by tackling efficiently the problems of the NSS. One very important area in which the potentialities can be developed is the interlinking
which should be provided between the academic studies and activities of the students or volunteers. As it is, in several universities in the country and at the postgraduate level in particular, departments such as those of anthropology, social work, sociology and archaeology do require some kind of field-work. Sometimes a whole paper like that of industrial sociology is to be studied by students and one key component of this paper is the field-work and the report on it. This can be recommended and implemented at the undergraduate level too. The number of volunteers at the undergraduate level is comparatively large and the field-work and the facilities to be provided for the implementation of the field-work requirements have to be considered carefully. But once such a policy and field-work are laid down, it is possible to have a fairly large quantity of field-work done by the volunteers. At present Indian education continues to be blamed as unnecessarily (old) British-style education and education which is oriented to the production of clerical job seekers. One of the reasons for this phenomenon is the emphasis on book learning and virtually no emphasis on practical or field-work. This situation can be remedied by providing a link between academic studies and field-work. In subjects like economics, political science, public administration, sociology, psychology and
geography etc. which are taught at the undergraduate level, students can be suitably required to undertake field-work and undergo training in lieu of one or two papers. It is not too much to include in the syllabus even a whole paper or two devoted to practical training or field-work. Then the students or volunteers will have a justification and scope for doing more field-work, and they can have a significant impact not only on their various fields in which they do their work but also generally in terms of the work atmosphere they create and the awareness they generate. Some such experiments were launched by Mahatma Gandhi under his new pattern of education (or Navi Talim). But the conventional, mainstream, system of education has not adopted these policies at the undergraduate level. The national service scheme as a whole seems to be a kind of concession or response of the educational system to the demands of the Gandhian leaders to make our education practical and realistic. Thus working of the NSS and the educational system at the undergraduate level can be improved remarkably by extending the scope of the NSS and making the NSS, instead of a seasonal affair as at present, a regular year-round subject of study, project work, practical experience etc.
Another way of developing the potentialities of the NSS is to provide facilities to the officials and students of the NSS on par with those of national cadet corps. As it is, effort is made by the government at all levels to provide facilities and benefits to the civilian employees comparable to those of the military ones. The same principle may be adopted by upgrading the facilities and allowances of the NSS officials and volunteers. In the British days, the military employment was regarded as standard, status-bearing and even financially attractive. Today this is no longer the situation.

The non-military employment has been growing in scope as well as diversity and it is tending to be more attractive in several ways. Some lines of military employment have to be advertised "aggressively," mentioning attractive packages of salaries and benefits to the potential recruits. In this situation, it is natural and necessary that the assignments and the work entrusted to the volunteers or students of the NSS are given a significant weight (in terms of status and benefits) in comparison with the weight of the national cadet corps. This will go a long way in improving the potentialities of the NSS.

As regards the problems of the NSS, these have to be solved because their solution will considerably develop the
potentialities of the KSS. As we have seen, most of these problems at the university level relate to the finances and organisational aspects. In fact, from a general point of view, the problems of the KSS administration are part of the problems of the overall administration in India. Finances may not be released in time or fully because they are not received in time and they are not released in time because the reports or utilisation certificates or audit clearance have not been sent. There are bureaucratic problems everywhere. These cannot be tackled only by means of confrontation. Besides, the KSS officials or students are not those who are supposed to engage in confrontation with the university or the government regarding the operation of the KSS. Hence the best way of streamlining the KSS programmes and activities is to work hard and imaginatively and secure as much cooperation of the various authorities concerned as possible. A great deal can be achieved if this approach is adopted. In the Indian situation, including in the matter of the KSS, motivation and hard work are generally lacking and if these are supplied by the KSS officials, several programmes and activities of the KSS can be carried out successfully. There is a case for associating the Vice-Chancellors, the Registrars, the finance officers etc. with the activities of the KSS. Experience has shown that such an association goes a long way
in making these officers aware of the various dimensions and
problems of the IBS and the difficulties which are to be
overcome. At the same time, in this approach, there is a
danger of further bureaucratisation of the NSS programmes and
activities inasmuch as the organisers have to wait upon these
officers for carrying out the programmes at different levels.
There is also a case for strengthening the office of the NSS
coordinators at the university level and also a case at the
colleges for providing them with better clerical and administrative
assistance and where possible computerised assistance. A number
of Indian and international computer companies are coming forward
with their computer facilities and the various sections of the
university administration are feeling persuaded to computerise
their various operations. Banks on the university campuses,
finance offices and libraries are being computerised. Computer
help has been sought at the various levels in the examination
work for about two decades now. There is no reason why the NSS
office, its various clerical tasks and records cannot be
computerised and linked with the records of the overall university
administration. This has not been done yet. But this needs
to be done urgently. There is some genuine apprehension in India
that the computerisation of the programmes and activities will
cause a decline in the scope of manpower employment. This need
not be so. Experience has shown that even after computerisation, there remain a number of tasks and activities which are not computerisable but which have to be performed in the interest of overall efficiency of organisation or administration. These tasks or activities have to be performed by human beings in the administration. Hence the human beings will be needed. In a number of organisations or offices it has been found necessary to retain employees or engage them on different tasks in view of the changed circumstances. Only a few of them seem to be fit cases for straight retirement or retrenchment. In general however, if the employees are properly motivated and hard-working, it is not difficult to find some useful work for them. This applies to the situation in which the conduct of the NSS programmes and activities is contemplated. Following computerisation of the NSS work, it is possible to visualise a situation in which progress reports are transmitted speedily, tele-conferences are held periodically and finances are released without any loss of time. A number of offices of the central government and state governments in India have been computerised and so also the several offices of the other all India bodies such as the University Grants Commission and the railways. In this rapidly changing situation, it is high time that thought was given to the computerisation of the NSS records.
and activities so that the problems of the MSS can be solved without wasting much time or other resources.

Besides these measures the coordinators and officers at the university and college levels can be trained better and better and more frequently. Steps can be taken to reduce their load of teaching and research work so that they can devote more time to the organisation of the MSS programmes. Assistance and cooperation can be also requested from the college principals and professors (of other departments) so that there is a horizontal cooperation available for the various programmes.

At the college level, the managements which are in several cases in private hands need to be properly informed regarding the value and the potentialities of the MSS so that they come forward with their cooperation and resources to improve the working of the MSS.

As regards more research work to be done in the field of the MSS, it would seem unnecessary if we consider the fairly numerous office records, reports, publications and reviews etc. However this is admittedly only on the official side. The central and state governments spend sizeable sums on the NSS and the universities and colleges provide infrastructure and
incidental facilities for conducting the NSS programmes. It is
natural therefore that the reports are submitted and examined
from time to time on the finances spent and facilities provided
by these various bodies. But apart from this, much other work
can be done on the programmes and other aspects of the NSS. One
type of work is the reports that can be prepared by the university
and college coordinators and officers of the NSS. These should
represent the side of the NSS leadership in the educational
institutions. The NSS coordinators and officers at the university
and the college levels bear the organisational brunt of the
programmes and activities and what their difficulties and problems
are should be known by them, collectively, and by the others.
The potentialities of the NSS can be fully exploited if the
coordinators' viewpoints and interpretations are given the due
weight. From this angle, it would be necessary that coordinators
in the various parts of the country take up their own studies
covering their respective fields and come forward with their
conclusions. Similarly student surveys would seem appropriate.
Millions of students are engaged throughout the country as NSS
volunteers and they produce awareness as well as practical
results in terms of tree plantation, road repairs, gutter
construction, organisation of vaccination camps and other health
programmes and so on. It is necessary to see how the energies
and time of these volunteers are used in producing these various results. Student surveys may be conducted by the coordinators themselves who are professors and researchers, or others. In addition to this, it would be proper if studies of citizen reactions are conducted. Citizens are after all the people who ultimately foot the bill of all these programmes and activities. Their money goes to fund the NSS activities though it does not go directly but goes via the parliament and the government departments at the centre and state levels. It is necessary to seek the views of citizens on the various types of programmes and activities carried out by the NSS volunteers and on how the citizens have been affected by these. Their suggestions and criticisms would be valuable in improving the policies and programmes of the NSS and in seeking the wider support for the NSS policies and programmes. This is how a comprehensive account of the NSS is possible when these different studies with their respective perspectives, conclusions and observations, are available. This study is to be taken as one of the numerous studies required to map the vast and complex and decidedly important field of the NSS programmes and activities.