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**Paper No. Ist**

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**Lecture Title : Development and Achievements of NSS**

### **Introduction**

In India, the idea of involving students in the task of national service dates back to the times of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation. The central theme which he tried to impress upon his student audience time and again, was that they should always keep before them, their social responsibility. The first duty of the students should be, not to treat their period of study as one of the opportunities for indulgence in intellectual luxury, but for preparing themselves for final dedication in the service of those who provided the sinews of the nation with the national goods & services so essential to the society. Advising them to form a living contact with the community in whose midst their institution is located, he suggested that instead of undertaking academic research about economic and social disability, the students should do "something positive so that the life of the villagers might be raised to a higher material and moral level".

The post-independence era was marked by an urge for introducing social service for students, both as a measure of educational reform and as a means to improve the quality of educated manpower. The University Grants Commission headed by Dr. Radhakrishnan recommended introduction of national service in the academic institutions on a voluntary basis with a view to developing healthy contacts between the students and teachers on the one hand and establishing a constructive linkage between the campus and the community on the other hand.

### **Origins and Establishment**

The idea was again considered by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) at its meeting held in January, 1950. After examining the various aspects of the matter and in the light of experience of other countries in this field, the Board recommended that students should devote some time to manual work on a voluntary basis and that the teachers should also associate with them in such work. In the draft First Five year Plan adopted by the Government of India in 1952, the need for social and labour service for students for one year was further stressed. Consequent upon this, labour and social service camps, campus work projects, village apprenticeship schemes etc. were put into operation by various educational institutions. In 1958, the then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his letter to the Chief-Ministers, mooted the idea of having social service as a prerequisite for graduation. He further directed the Ministry of Education to formulate a suitable scheme for introduction of national service into the academic institutions.

In 1959, a draft outline of the scheme was placed before the Education Minister's Conference. The Conference was unanimous about the urgent need for trying out a workable scheme for national service. In view of the fact that education as it was imparted in schools and colleges, left something to be desired and it was necessary to supplement it with programmes which would arouse interest the social and economic reconstruction of the country. It was viewed that if the objectives of the scheme were to be realized, it was essential to integrate social service with the educational process as early as possible. The Conference suggested the appointment of a committee to work out details of the proposed pilot project. In pursuance of these recommendations, a National Service Committee was appointed under the Chairmanship of Dr. C.D. Deshmukh on August 28, 1959 to make concrete suggestions in this direction. The committee recommended that national service for a period of nine months to a year Deshmukh on August 28, 1959 to make concrete suggestions in this direction. The committee recommended that national service for a period of nine months to a year may be made compulsory for all students completing high school education and intending to enroll themselves in a college or a university. The scheme was to include some military training, social service, manual labour and general education. The recommendations of the Committee could not be accepted because of its financial implications and difficulties in implementation.

In 1960, at the instance of the Government of India, Prof. K.G. Saiyidain studied national service by students implemented in several countries of the world and submitted his report under the title "National Service for the Youth" to the Government with a number of recommendations as to what could be done in India to develop a feasible scheme of social service by students. It was also recommended that social service camps should be open to students as well as non-students within the prescribed age group for better inter-relationship.

The Education Commission headed by Dr. D.S. Kothari (1964-66) recommended that students at all stages of education should be associated with some form of social service. This was taken into account by the State Education Minister during their conference in April 1967 and they recommended that at the university stage, students could be permitted to join the National Cadet Corps (NCC) which was already in existence on a voluntary basis and an alternative to this could be offered to them in the form of a new programme called the National Service Scheme (NSS). Promising sportsmen, however, should be exempted from both and allowed to join another scheme called the National Sports Organisation (NSO), in view of the need to give priority to the development of sports and athletics.

The Vice Chancellors' Conference in September, 1969 welcomed this recommendation and suggested that a special committee of Vice Chancellors could be setup to examine this question in detail. In the statement of national policy on education of the Government of India, it was laid down that work experience and national service should be an integral part of education. In May, 1969, a conference of the students' representatives of the universities and institutions of higher learning convened by the Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission also unanimously declared 'that national service could be a powerful instrument for national integration. It could be used to introduce urban students to rural life. Projects of permanent value could also be undertaken as a symbol of the contribution of the student community to the progress and upliftment of the nation.

The details were soon worked out and the Planning Commission sanctioned an outlay of Rs. 5 crores for National Service Scheme (NSS) during the Fourth Five Year Plan. It was stipulated that the NSS programme should be started as a pilot

project in select institutions and universities.

On September 24, 1969, the then Union Education Minister Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao, launched the NSS programme in 37 universities covering all States and simultaneously requested the Chief Ministers of States for their cooperation and help. It was appropriate that the programme was started during the Gandhi Centenary Year as it was Gandhi ji who inspired the Indian youth to participate in the movement for Indian independence and the social uplift of the downtrodden masses of our nation.

### **Development and Activities**

The cardinal principle of the programme is that it is organised by the students themselves and both students and teachers through their combined participation in social service, get a sense of involvement in the tasks of national development. Besides, the students, particularly, obtain work experience which might help them to find avenues of self-employment or employment in any organisation at the end of their university career. The initial financial arrangements provided for an expenditure of Rs. 120/- per NSS student per annum to be shared by the Central and the State Governments in the ratio of 7:5 i.e. the Central Government spending Rs. 70/- and State Governments Rs. 50/- respectively per NSS student per year. An amount of Rs. 120/- per NSS student per annum on programmes to be shared by the Central and State Governments in the ration of 7:5. Keeping the inflation in view, it is now under consideration to revise the amount for Special Camping and Regular Activities.

The scheme now extends to all the states and universities in the country and covers +2 level also in many states. Students, teachers, guardians, persons in authority in government, universities and colleges/schools and the people in general now realize the need and significance of NSS. It has aroused among the student youth an awareness of the realities of life, a better understanding and appreciation of the problems of the people. NSS is, thus, a concrete attempt in making campus relevant to the needs of the community. There are several instances of excellent work and exemplary conduct of NSS units which have earned them respect and confidence of the people. The special camping programmes organised under the

themes of 'Youth Against Famine (1973)', 'Youth Against Dirt & Disease (1974-75)', 'Youth for Eco-Development' and 'Youth for Rural Reconstruction' 'Youth for National Development and Youth for Literacy (1985-93)' 'Youth for National Integration and Communal Harmony (1993-95)' have resulted in gains both to the community as well as to the students. The theme for the year 1995-96 onwards for Special Camping is 'Youth for Sustainable Development with focus on Watershed Management and Water land Development'. Themes have been selected in accordance with national priorities. Also, from 1991-92 onwards NSS has launched a nationwide campaign on AIDS Awareness called "Universities Talk AIDS" (UTA) which has earned international attention and appreciation.

### **Community Service**

Community service rendered by university and +2 level students has covered several aspects like adoption of villages for intensive development work, carrying out the medico-social surveys, setting up of medical centres, programmes of mass immunization, sanitation drives, adult education programmes for the weaker sections of the community, blood donation, helping patients in hospitals, helping inmates of orphanages and the physically handicapped etc. NSS volunteers did commendable relief work during natural calamities/emergencies such as cyclones, floods, famine, earthquake, etc from time to time all over the country. The NSS students have also done useful work in organising campaigns for eradication of social evils, and popularization of the nationally accepted objectives like nationalism, democracy, secularism, social harmony and development of scientific temper. The main objectives of National Service Scheme (NSS) are :

- I. understand the community in which they work
- II. understand themselves in relation to their community
- III. identify the needs and problems of the community and involve them in problem-solving
- IV. develop among themselves a sense of social and civic responsibility
- V. utilise their knowledge in finding practical solutions to individual and community problems
- VI. develop competence required for group-living and sharing of responsibilities
- VII. gain skills in mobilising community participation
- VIII. acquire leadership qualities and democratic attitudes

- IX. develop capacity to meet emergencies and natural disasters
- X. practise national integration and social harmony

**Coverage:**

Started initially in 37 universities involving 40,000 volunteers, the scheme has grown over the years and it is implemented today with an involvement of more than 2.6 million volunteers spread over 200 Universities, Polytechnics and +2 Systems. The efforts of NSS volunteers have been widely acclaimed by the community, universities, colleges and general public as the NSS volunteers have been rendering selfless service to the community.

**Motto:**

The Motto of NSS is "Not Me But You", reflects the essence of democratic living and upholds the need for self-less service. NSS helps the students develop appreciation to other person's point of view and also show consideration to /other living beings. The philosophy of the NSS is well doctined in this motto, which underlines the belief that the welfare .of an individual is ultimately dependent on the welfare of the society on the whole and therefore, the NSS volunteers shall strive for the well-being of the society.

**Symbol:**

The symbol for the NSS has been based on the giant Rath Wheel of the world famous Konark Sun Temple (The Black Pagoda) situated in Orissa, India. The wheel portrays the cycle of creation, preservation and release and signifies the movement in life across time and space, The symbol thus stands for continuity as well as change and implies the continuous striving of NSS for social change.

**Badge:**

The NSS Symbol is embossed on the badge. The eight bars in the wheel represent the 24 hours of a day. The red colour indicates that the volunteer is full of young blood that is lively, active, energetic and full of high spirit. The navy blue colour indicates the cosmos of which the NSS is tiny part, ready to contribute its share for the welfare of the mankind.

**Financial Arrangements**

The scheme is funded by both Central and State Governments in the ratio of 7:5 to organise Regular Activities (RA) and special Camping Programmes (SCP). An amount of Rs.160/-per volunteer per annum is released towards Regular Activities (RA) and Rs.300/- per volunteer per Special Camping Programme (SCP) is sanctioned which is of 10-days duration to be organised in the adopted villages/communities. In addition, the Government of India provides 100% financial assistance to run NSS Regional Centres, State Liaison Cells and TOCs/TORCs, The Central Government also provides -100% financial assistance for implementation of NSS Programmes in Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territories without Legislatures.

### **Conclusion**

Now we come to the conclusion of this episode. In India, the idea of involving students in the task of national service dates back to the times of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation. The central theme which he tried to impress upon his student audience time and again, was that they should always keep before them, their social responsibility. The first duty of the students should be, not to treat their period of study as one of the opportunities for indulgence in intellectual luxury, but for preparing themselves for final dedication in the service of those who provided the sinews of the nation with the national goods & services so essential to the society. Advising them to form a living contact with the community in whose midst their institution is located, he suggested that instead of undertaking academic research about economic and social disability, the students should do "something positive so that the life of the villagers might be raised to a higher material and moral level".

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Now we have discussed the various aspects of NSS and we have seen that how it was created with the intention of self-service and giving a direction to the youth of the country and inspiring them to do something for social welfare. I hope this episode was of some use to all of you, thank you so much for watching.