

CONCEPT PAPER ON NSS & EDUCATION

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Education not only moulds the new generation, but reflects a society's fundamental assumptions about itself and the individuals which compose it. –
Mahatma Gandhi

Prelude:

NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME

NSS was launched in 1969 on the eve of birth centenary year of the father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi in 37 Universities involving 40,000 students with primary focus on the Personality Development of the student volunteers through service to the community. Presently, NSS has more than 3.4 million volunteers on its roll spread over more than 300 Universities and 42 (+2) Senior Secondary Councils and Directorate of Technical Education all over the country. Since its inception more than 3.75 crore students from various institutions of higher learning have been experienced this scheme. The “Regular Activities” and Special Camping Programmes” are the two main components of NSS programmes. During the two year volunteer-ship, the volunteers devote 240 hours (yearly 120 hours) under Regular activities. This includes 20 hours of general orientation regarding NSS and the mode of work they have to do in their volunteer-ship. Out of the remaining 220 hours, 30 hours are given for the campus

development and rest 190 hours for the services in the community in various areas as per the need and priority.

Each unit consisting of 100 volunteers has to adopt a village /slum area to serve in the locality. Every volunteer has to attend one special camping programme to become eligible for getting the NSS Certificate issued by the Universities and +2 councils. This residential camp is of 7 days duration and is organized in the community by the NSS units based on specific themes which keep on changing from time to time. NSS, over the years has made outstanding contributions in the field of thrust areas such as Mass Literacy, Environment Preservation, Waste Land development, Watershed Management, Health Education, Community Development, Disaster Management, Adolescent Health Development, HIV/AIDs Awareness, Drive against Social evils, Homes for the homeless, Mass forestation drives, Communal and Social Harmony etc. NSS Volunteers have always come to the forefront to extend voluntary service in natural calamities like drought, flood, Tsunami, cyclone and earthquakes etc.

Pursuit of integral knowledge and liberation, which has been a constant endeavor of Indian culture, is also the central objective of education. Education is also visualized as an evolutionary force so that each individual is enabled to evolve from purely material consciousness towards superior planes of intellectual and spiritual consciousness. Education is also perceived as a bridge between the past, present, and the future and as a means by which the best of the heritage is transmitted to the new generations for its further progression.

NSS can play an active role in creating awareness to promote Education, imparting of basic education can be initiated by NSS volunteers. Educators must

examine whether other values might be more basic to society and must consider how they can be inculcated. Students must get a good grounding in the socioeconomic-political realities of India and outside (not merely of industry) if they are to relate to the Indian reality that oppresses the majority of Indians. That does not appear to be happening today. The ideology that underlies education appears to hail market orientation and private enterprise over all alternatives. India has too many poor for us to put areas like health, education, water, etc., largely if not wholly in the private sector or in the market. An understanding of the realities that drive such decisions needs to be inculcated.

NSS Volunteers may be involved in the activities related to literacy programmes in both regular and special camp programmes. In their adopted villages they may adopt few illiterate people of the village and can make them literates. **(Each one teach ten)** At each and every step, NSS Volunteers during their participation in social service educate themselves and others. Being education is one of the important pre-requisite for the nation development; NSS can play a great role in educating the people. NSS volunteers educate the society and help to overcome some basic problems faced by the society in day to day life.

Education

“No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable”, as Adam Smith so eloquently put it. When we refer to development we essentially refer to the development of the under-developed. Even in the least developed and developing countries, the disparity between development status of urban areas and rural areas is extremely high. Rural areas in the developing world are home to the most under-developed people and gruesome poverty.

These rural societies are often found trapped in vicious cycle of poverty that is characterized by poor infrastructure, lack of access to water & sanitation, health, education, capital, and communication facilities etc... Therefore, the development of these rural societies is the key to the development of the world.

The famous philosopher Einstein while discussing the need for education has projected the following fundamentals:

- a. To educate the individual as a free individual; to understand and use critical thinking skills.
- b. To educate the individual as a part of society – virtually all our knowledge, our clothes, our food is produced by others in our society, thus, we owe society and have responsibility to contribute back to society.
- c. Through education, knowledge must continually be renewed by ceaseless effort, if it is not to be lost. It resembles a statute of marble which stands in the desert and is continually threatened with burial by the shifting sand. The hands of service must ever be at work, in order that the marble continue to lastingly shine in the sun.

Higher educational institutions have become the most important means of transforming wealth of knowledge and skills from one generation to another. However, the role of institutions becomes more challenging in the modern world with innovations and technological developments. Investment in education and educational institutions should be viewed as an investment for economic prosperity.

Ancient records of the Indian tradition testify to the search of the Rishis and sages for higher knowledge (*para vidya*), and their discoveries have been continuously transmitted to posterity and kept alive through its long history, marked by periods of expansion, specialization, decline and renewal. This theme of higher knowledge informs and inspires even the latest developments in the Indian educational system. It has been a significant component of the country's struggle for freedom, attainment of independence and an awakening from the slumber in which people were cast during the British rule. Despite serious handicaps of means and resources, the country has built up during the last 50 years a very large system of education and has created a vast body of men and women equipped with a high order of scientific and technological capabilities, robust humanist and philosophical thought, and creativity.

Though riddled with explosion in the growth of population, a large illiterate population and problems of economic poverty affecting one-third of the people, modern India is still set to forge a bright future and to contribute significantly to the higher goals of world peace, human unity and universal welfare. Much credit for this goes to the ancient but ever-young spirit of the nation and to what higher education has striven to fashion in terms of determining great objectives and implementing them under very difficult conditions.

Legal Literacy

Knowledge on basic legal matters is must for the present day citizens of country. NSS volunteers should learn the legal points related to various issues. Particularly, Ragging and its consequences, basic business and commercial laws etc. Legal awareness is essential to the NSS volunteers and the same will helps them to spread

the knowledge in the rural areas/slums while doing the special camping. To implement this, NSS can collaborate with Legal Services Authorities at National level, State level or District level.

Human Rights Education

The government is introducing variety of schemes to uplift the poor people of the society. Human Rights are the basic rights which are required for smooth living in the society. NSS volunteers should learn various human rights to make use of them to improve their living standards. NSS volunteers also need to create awareness among the public about human rights. They should also explain various human rights which are extended by the government.

Child Rights

NSS volunteers should possess the knowledge related to child rights. NSS volunteers should try to identify the school dropouts, identifying the child labour, explaining the child rights to their parents, counseling parents about importance of education are said to be prominent. Child rights are the most important area where NSS can play pivotal role.

Women Rights

NSS Units have to create awareness among the public about the women rights. Women empowerment is possible when they are well educated about their rights. It is quite obvious that family development depends more on women empowerment. There is no doubt that if a woman is educated, it means that the entire family is educated.

Keeping this in mind it can be understood that women is the key in the development of the family at root level which leads to nations development at later stages. Women should be educated about their rights. NSS volunteers have to organized workshops, interactive sessions with Self Help Groups (SHGs), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) women to create awareness about women rights.

Minority Rights

NSS volunteers have to make an attempt to know the rights of minorities. Special privileges offered by the government to minorities should be explained to them. Various acts pertaining to minorities should be explained. Support to pursue education, financial assistance to start business and other facilities extended by the government should be covered.

Civic Rights and Responsibilities

NSS volunteers have to learn about the civic rights and also their responsibilities. The NSS volunteers have to act as social soldiers. They have to motivate people to discharge their respective responsibilities. There is a great deal of educating the citizens about civic rights. Rights and responsibilities are just like two sides of a coin where one cannot be imagined in the absence of the other. NSS volunteers can act as the changing agents to create awareness regarding responsibilities of civilians. Various rights available to common man should be informed to make use for their well being. To build the strong nation it is essential to sensitize the people about their respective roles in the process.

Constitutional Rights

Constitutional rights play important role in utilizing the liberty to improve the living standards of common public. There is a great need of creating awareness about the constitutional rights. NSS units have to conduct seminars/workshops and interactive programmes in the adopted villages/slums to make the people aware of various constitutional rights. Constitutional knowledge is also essential to the present day citizen to avail and enjoy the constitutional rights.

Conclusion

Special crash course/fast track courses may be conducted to educate the rural uneducated youth. Night schools, youth and adolescent education programmes can be initiated by the NSS volunteers. Motivational programmes/orientation programmes play vital role in mobilizing the uneducated youth towards literacy activities. Sensitization of illiterates by organizing processions and rallies would also results in success. In the present situation, there is a great deal of learning and educating the about moral values. Education without moral values is considered as incomplete education. In addition to the regular syllabi, NSS volunteers should learn the ethical/moral values.