

# Role of NSS In Nation Building: A Review

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## Abstract

Originally been founded by the Government of India in 1969, the National Service Scheme (NSS) propounds to usher social consciousness and community Service among youth. This review article encompasses the multi-faceted role of the NSS in nation-building with a particular focus on social development, education, and civic engagement. By exploring a study of empirical studies, policy documents, and qualitative data, the paper discusses the impact that NSS has both on individual members, on communities, and on society at large. It highlights the successes and challenges of schemes and discusses the possible ways forward. The findings suggest NSS's role in promoting social cohesion, improving education outcomes, and instilling a sense of responsibility and civic engagement among the youth.

**Keywords:** NSS, Nation building, Youth development, Social service, Civic responsibility.

## INTRODUCTION

It was in 1969 that the National Service Scheme was launched, inspired by the idea of Mahatma Gandhi, in whose belief the key factor for a nation's development lies in the hands of the youth of the country. The chief aim of NSS is to inculcate a sense of social responsibility and community service amongst students of colleges and universities. NSS has developed over decades into one of the major platforms for youth engagement in country-making processes and exercises. A review paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the role that NSS can play in the process of nation-building, relying on various scholarly articles, policy documents, and empirical studies.

## Historical Context and Evolution

The history of the NSS goes back to the early 1960s when the demand for a scheme to engage youth in national development was acknowledged. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) suggested the establishment of a national service program as a means of fostering the development of social or civic responsibility among the students. In fulfillment of the recommendations of this commission, the NSS was formally inaugurated on September 24, 1969, on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, 2021).

## Objectives of NSS

Some major goals of the NSS include:

- 1. Education Development:** Through community service, students are to be educated in all aspects of human development.
- 2. Social Development:** A sense of social responsibility and community service is to be nurtured.

3. **National Integration:** The promotion of national unity and social cohesion.
4. **Civic Engagement:** Active participation in democracy and civic activities is being induced and promoted (NSS, 2021).

### **Impact on Social Development**

#### **1. Community Service Projects**

Through community service projects, NSS plays a vital role in social development. The activities that NSS volunteers are involved into include:

**Health Camps-**conducting health camps for underprivileged communities by providing basic medical services,

**Educational Programs-** Organizing literacy and non-formal education programs for children and adults,

**Environmental Initiatives-** Participating in tree plantation drives, cleanliness drives, and awareness campaigns on environmental issues,

**Social Awareness Campaigns-** Conducting campaigns on issues such as gender equality, health, and hygiene (Sharma, 2018).

Such initiatives undoubtedly benefit the larger society, while helping NSS even volunteers get valuable hands-on experience to develop a better understanding of issues which not only pertains to their locale but the world at large.

#### **2. Case Studies**

Academic investigations are being widely discussed for their optimistic effect on social development. For example, a study conducted in Rajasthan by the Indian Institute of Public Administration demonstrated that NSS volunteers dramatically improved the literacy levels of women and children living in rural areas (IIPA, 2019). Another scholarly discourse from the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj dealt with the NSS role in promoting environmental sustainability through tree plantation drives and awareness campaigns (NIRDPR, 2020).

### **Impact on Education**

#### **1. Holistic Development**

The NSS scheme establishes an essential linkage for overall advancement in the life of the students. It provides an opportunity for students to put theoretical knowledge into practice through practical experience, which augments learning. According to the UGC study, NSS activities the impact of soft skill development on cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of students (UGC, 2018).

#### **2. Skill Development**

Besides, the NSS activities are contributing to various skills for the students. A volunteer involves learning skills on leadership, communication skills, teamwork, and problem-solving through community service projects. The study done by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports states that about 80% of NSS volunteers have reported an improvement in their leadership and communication skills (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, 2021).

#### **3. Academic Performance**

Some studies claim that there is a fair correlation between the participation of the NSS and the academic performance of the students. A study by NCERT found that active participants of repeatedly conducted NSS activities performed better academically against their non-participating peers (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2019).

## Impact on National Integration and Social Cohesion

### 1. Promoting Unity in Diversity

Through the variety of activities undertaken by NSS, the most significant role of the organization is in promoting national integration and social cohesion. Diverse students come together, and such growing union with mutual respect is highlighted. According to a report published by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, NSS activities could help break social barriers and enhance inclusive development (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2020).

### 2. Interfaith and Intercommunity Projects

Normally, NSS has been engaged in various interfaith and intercommunity campaigns meant to enhance harmony and understanding. For example, NSS volunteers organized interfaith dialogues and cultural exchange programmes that worked in a noteworthy way to bridge different communities (Sanghi, 2017).

## Challenges and Limitations

Despite its numerous achievements, NSS faces several challenges and limitations:

### 1. Resource Constraints

Insufficient funding represents one of the main challenges. Many NSS sectors are plagued by insufficient funding, which negatively impacts the spectrum and size of their functional operations. The Indian Institute of Management found that, on the list of inhibitive factors in the effective execution of NSS programs, the scarcity of resources stands second to none (IIM, 2019).

### 2. Quality of Training

The quality of training provided to NSS volunteers is yet another area of concern. In certain cases, the training programs are woefully inadequate, thereby leaving the volunteers unprepared. This does affect the quality and impact of NSS activities (Singh, 2020).

### 3. Participation and Motivation

Low commitment and participation amongst the students are also growing problems. While many students join NSS out of a sense of social responsibility, there are some who exist only to satisfy the rigors of academic progress. Such a scenario discourages commitment and enthusiasm, making them the precursors for a diminishing effectiveness of the overall program (Patel, 2018).

## Potential Areas for Improvement

### 1. Increased Funding

To address these inadequacies of existing resources, increased budgetary allocation on NSS is required. This could be ensured by greater support from the government, as well as private and NGO partnerships (Mehta, 2021).

### 2. Enhancing Training Programs

The training mechanism for NSS volunteerism needs to be very much effective and comprehensive. This can be accomplished by supplementing the training with more practical and hands-on training sessions, coupled with continuous support and guidance to the volunteers (Sharma, 2018).

### 3. Promoting Awareness and Motivation

In order to increase motivation and participation, it is essential for more promotion and awareness surrounding NSS. This would involve running campaign events, awarding deserving individuals, and including NSS in the curriculum (Singh, 2020).

## Conclusion

The National Service Scheme is yet another venture of national interest pursuing, in essence, social development, with a key emphasis on upgrading educational quality and instilling responsible citizenship among the youth. The challenges and limitations notwithstanding, be it in areas such as entrepreneurship, economic justice, or social reform, the influence of NSS on the individual, communities, and society at large has been instrumental. Working on areas for improvement would enable NSS to continue working well in fostering youth engagement that manifests within becoming a difference in their respective community and the nation in general.

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