



## THE NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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**Abstract:** Since many years environmental degradation that, has occurred is marked by a large extraction of natural sources, Loss of forests, extinction of animal and plant species, depletion of the ozone layer, air, water and soil pollution, loss of marine life, and bio-diversity and so on. Protecting the natural environment for the benefit of humans is the need of the hour. In this direction the Government and NGO'S in India have initiated many programmes to protect the environment. One of the significant initiatives in this direction is the National Service Scheme implemented by the Government of India, under the "Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports" popularly known as NSS (National Service Scheme) launched in the Year 1969.

The role of NSS in protection and conservation of environment is examined in this article on the basis of available statistics and conducting an empirical study in a small city of Karnataka state. The information from 200 respondents were collected using questionnaire. Under the NSS various activities such as plantation, Construction of sanitary latrines, Cleaning of village ponds and wells, construction of Gobar Gas Plants, use of non-conventional energy, Environmental sanitation, garbage disposal & composting, Watershed management and wasteland development are organized to protect environment. The study concludes that, NSS in India has provided a platform for the students to support the best environmental practices. Involvement of student volunteers in environmental activities through NSS can contribute to the overall development of young people and develops among them social responsibility and civic sense.

**Keywords:** National Service Scheme, Environment Protection, Regular activities, Special camps, Programme Officers.

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## INTRODUCTION

Since many years, the degradation of environment is marked by a large extraction of natural sources, Loss of forests, extinction of animal and plant species, depletion of the ozone layer, air, water and soil pollution, loss of marine life, and bio-diversity and so on. These have posed serious threat to the very survival of life on earth. Protecting the natural environment for the benefit of humans is the need of the hour. Scholars and scientists emphasized the significant of community empowerment as prerequisite - for sustaining and managing the natural resources to make the people aware of the issue. They have stressed on multidisciplinary program of action to create a healthy environment.

In this direction, India has developed a wide spread network of environmental protective services, many organizations like National services scheme/Neharu Yuva Kendra scheme/National cadet corps are involved in many initiatives like rural development, environment protection and conservation. These have the potential to foster social values among youth by developing a sense of responsibility towards their society.

Among various programmes, the “National Service Scheme” (NSS) is a public service program sponsored by Indian Government working under the Department of “Youth Affairs and Sports”. “National Service Scheme”, popularly known as NSS was launched in 1969, sept 24 (Gandhiji’s Birth Centenary). the primary focus of this scheme is developing personality of the student volunteers through service to the community. Today, NSS has over 7.4 crore volunteers spread over Universities Colleges and Directorate of Technical Education in the country. In the state of Karnataka till 2023, 322200 volunteers are enrolled.

The “National Service Scheme” is the largest youth organization of our country and its contribution to nation building deserves highest reputation. It helps channelize the energy of our youth into a creative force to usher in social change through a wide spectrum of activities that are a powerful instrument for spreading awareness in society at the grass root level for rural development. National Service Scheme is a student – centered programme and is complementary to the formal education in colleges and Universities. It is an experiment in academic field as the extension education, brings the academic institutions closer to the society. It inculcates the spirit of voluntary work among

students and teachers through interaction with the community. The aim of NSS is the Personality Development of students through community service. It gives an extension dimension to Higher Education system and orients the student youth to community service. The motto of NSS is 'NOT Me But You'. This reflects the essence of democratic living and upholds the need for selfless service and appreciation of the other person's point of view with human touch.

There are many works of NSS units focused on the programmes on "youth for environmental protection: 'Youth Against Dirt & Disease, 'Youth for Eco-Development' and "Youth for Rural Reconstruction' 'Youth for National Development and Youth for Literacy". The theme for Special Camping is "Youth for Sustainable Development" which emphasized on "Watershed Management and Water land Development" Involvement in environmental activities can contribute to the overall development of Positive qualities in young people. They have both the right and responsibility to participate in decisions affecting their environment and are capable of making valuable contributions to their communities and society. Young people are the best future citizens of healthy practices for protecting and sustaining Natural environment.

One of the main themes of NSS is the ecological development. Afforestation, popularizing, low cost smokeless choolas, regulating pollution (air, water, & soil), installation of biogas plants, building and repairing roads, digging soak pits, plantation, digging wells, cleaning of slums, awareness programmes, etc. are few important areas of the ecological development activities.

## **OBJECTIVES OF NSS ACTIVITIES**

The aim of NSS is to integrate three basic components of the programme, the learning experiences, Sense of participation and rendering Service. The "Regular Activities" and "Special Camping Programmes" are the two types of NSS programmes. In regular NSS programmes students undertake various activities in the college campuses, adopted villages, cities and slums during weekends. In Special Camping Programme of seven days in villages it provides many opportunities to the students for experiencing, sharing responsibilities, addressing various developmental issues of regional and national importance and constant interaction with the community. 50 percentage NSS volunteers from each units have to participate in these camps. During two years of volunteer-ship, the volunteers devote 240 hours under Regular activities.

## **ROLE OF PROGRAM OFFICER**

The Programme Officer of NSS unit of the education institute appointed by the authority motivate the student youth to understand the values and ideology of NSS. The overall functions of Programme Officer is to help the students to plan, implement, and evaluate the proposed activities of NSS and give proper guidance and directions to the student volunteers. They play the role of an organizer, an educator, a coordinator, a supervisor, an administrator, and public relation officer to improve the quality and magnitude of NSS programme.

NSS, over the years has made many contributions in the field of 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, Mass forestation drives, Communal and Social Harmony etc. As part of environment conservation and enrichment project, more than 37, 06,075 saplings were planted throughout the nation by the NSS volunteers under regular activities. NSS volunteers have undertaken some innovative projects like avenue plantation, plant identification “VAN MAHOTSAV” (sapling). Some broad areas of activities undertaken by the N.S.S. are Environment Enrichment and Conservation.

During 2014-15 all over India, 25, 29,494 saplings were planted in various places; under the campaign Swachh Bharat Mission (cleaning India) a big rally was arranged. A large youth force that is around 1, 66,635 NSS volunteers participated in the rallies, 22 colleges of Karnataka involved in cleaning drainages & removing parthenium plants. With this background the present study is intended to focus on the role of NSS in protection and conservation of environment.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The role of NSS in protection and conservation of environment is examined by conducting an empirical study in one of the district in Karnataka India. The study was carried out with the following specific Objectives and examined with the help of collected data.

- To examine the role of NSS in community development and environmental protection.

- To understand the type of programmes adopted by NSS in natural resource conservation awareness programmes.
- To understand at what extent NSS is motivating the volunteers to involve in the environment protection programmes.

## METHODOLOGY

This empirical study is based on the primary data employing simple random method conducted in the state public University called Rani Channamma University, in Belgaum district a Northern region of Karnataka State. The data from 200 respondents are collected by questionnaire method. The study sample consists of 200 NSS Programme Officers basically teachers in the affiliated Colleges of the University including self-financed NSS Units. Information was collected through questionnaire and it was supported by field observations, collected data has been systematically presented with analysis before arriving at conclusions.

Many programmes and projects were implemented through NSS Units in the affiliated colleges of Rani Channamma University. i.e more than 17,400 NSS Student volunteers involved in various activities. about 3000 saplings were planted on the eve of Vanamahotsva & plantation programmes, 59,141.5 mile road repair was done in 113 days, watershed conservation & drinking water facility programmes were conducted in 40 camps, 129- Health & 68-immunisation programmes were organized, 35 women empowerment programs conducted and 2048 got benefitted in the AIDS Awareness programmes in 98 schools & colleges,

## RESULT ANALYSIS

<b>No 1: Sex of the Respondents</b>		
<i>Sex</i>	<i>No of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Male	180	90
Female	20	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	100

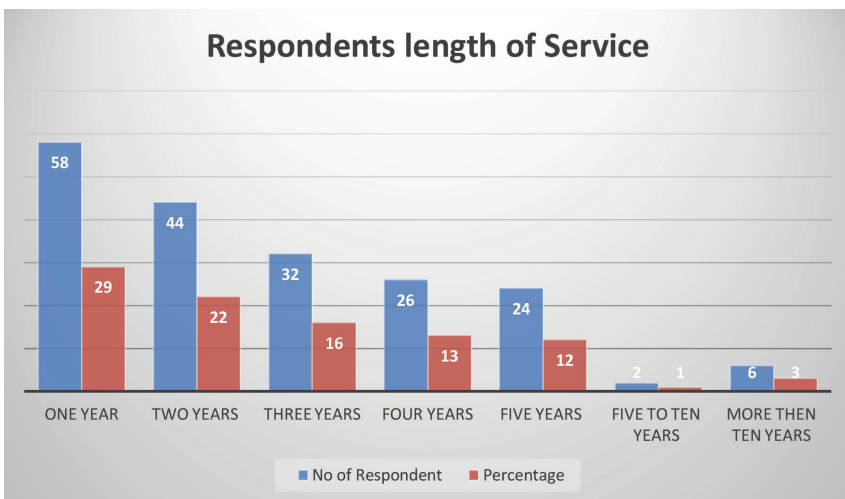
Male dominance in the appointment of the programme officers in the NSS Units is witnessed by the study. It is clear by the data that 90% of the officers are males, only 10% are females.

### No 2 : Course background of the respondents

course background of the respondents		
Course	No of Respondents	%
Arts	130	65
Commerce	12	6.00
Science	28	14
BBA/BCA	30	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above table it is clear that, out of 200 respondents 65% of the NSS officers are from Arts faculty, 6% from Commerce, 14 % from science field and 15% of the officers are from the Business Administration and Computer application fields. Teaching faculty of Arts are involved more in the NSS units. It is believed in the educational sector that, persons having Arts or social science background are more suitable to work with the students in community-based services and they have the skill to deal with the objectives of NSS more efficiently.

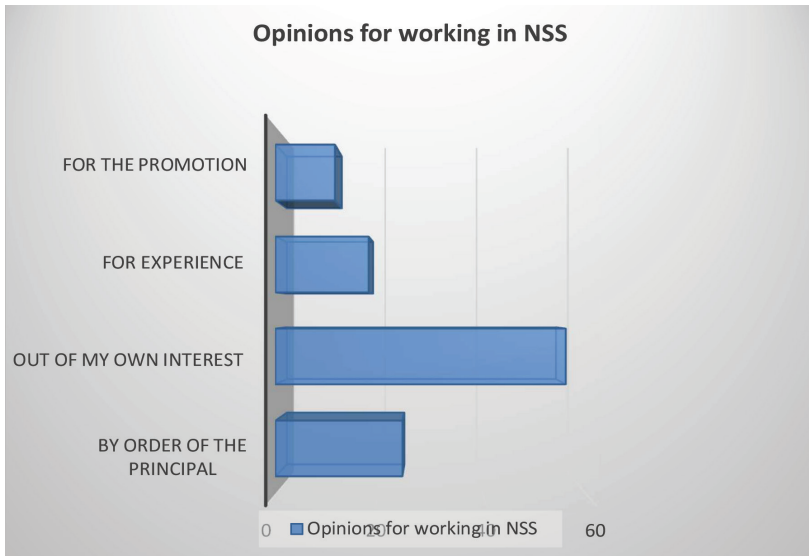
### No. 3: Lenth of Service of the Respondents



The above diagram reflects the length of service rendered by the respondents as NSS programme officers. As per NSS rule, after having an Orientation or Training programme organized by the NSS training centers they are appointed as the Programme Officers. If not after the appointment

they have to go through training and it is approved by the University NSS Cell. The programme officer has to serve minimum of 3 years in the college NSS unit. The above data indicates that 29% of the officers has one year, that is they are newly taken the charge as the NSS Programme Officers. 22% have 2 years, 16 % - 3 years, 13% - 4 years, 12% - 5 years, only 2 % have- 5 to 10 years of experience. whereas 6 % served more than 10 years.

**No 4 : Reasons for working in NSS**

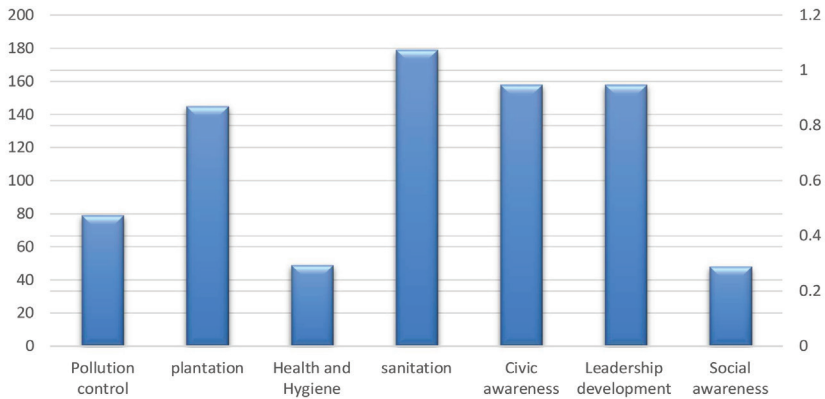


NSS as the youth organization, playing a significant role in the development of student’s personality and providing social service to the community. In this process the role of NSS programme officer is significant. The officer acts as a motivator, educator, guide, supervisor, planner, public relation officer, and administrator in the implementation of NSS programmes in her / his institution. The above diagram reveals the reasons and motivational factors behind accepting the responsibility to work in the NSS units as programme officers. In this regard 24% of the NSS programme officer said that, they are working as per the order given by the principal/ management of the institution. 56% are working on their own interest with the intention to work in the NSS Units to serve the society.

After having experience, they realized and opined that, it is an opportunity to the faculty to realize their ability. They learnt to manage the issued in

difficult situations and to accommodate themselves in any conditions without infrastructure facilities like proper food, water facility, bath rooms / toilets... etc, they made efforts to create awareness among the students and community on the whole about the protection of environment, Sanitation, developing the leadership qualities among youth and the civic responsibilities.

**No 5: Focused Theme of the NSS Programmes**

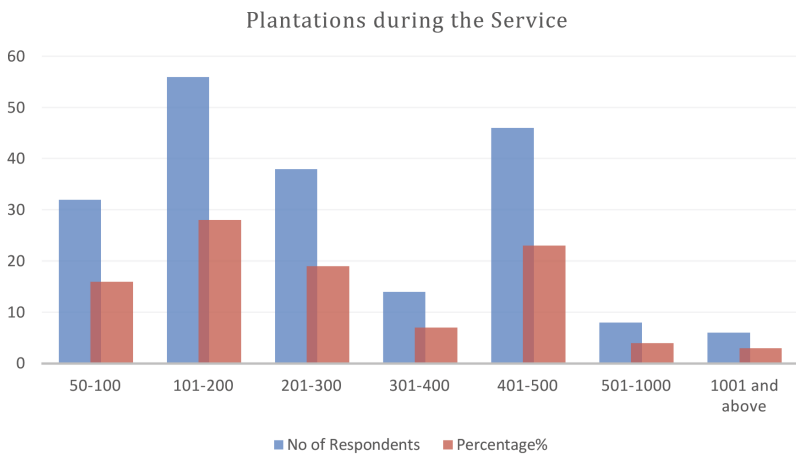


This above data help us to understand the role of NSS programme officers in NSS units and the work they had focused. 39 % programs conducted by the units are focused on various pollution control programmes like water conservation, utilization and managing the water resources and to avoid air pollution. In this connection most of the programmes were oriented towards plantation (72.5%). The other programmes like Health and Hygiene Sanitation programmes developing the leaderships among the youth are also significant. The data indicates that, NSS has been making efforts to implement major programs & projects related to environmental protection

NSS organization has been working with the intention of student's personality development through community service. With the slogan "Today's children are the citizens of tomorrow", it is necessary to understand the condition and problems of the community. It has intended to have many projects and programmes like environmental protection programs, programmes related to develop leadership qualities and skills among the NSS volunteers and the youth. It is a platform for both teachers as NSS programme officers and students as the NSS volunteer to render their service to the community.

Especially NSS volunteers get practical knowledge; do the works which were not done at their homes. In NSS, irrespective of caste, creed, sex, religion, riches, poor, interest, work will be distributed equally. It is compulsory to involve in the cleaning of public places, slums, roads, monuments, schools, public roads and other above-mentioned programmes. They also participate in awareness programmes like organizing lectures on different issues, rallies, Street dramas, interviews, surveys and so on. The current study has proved that NSS environmental protection programmes were given much priority.

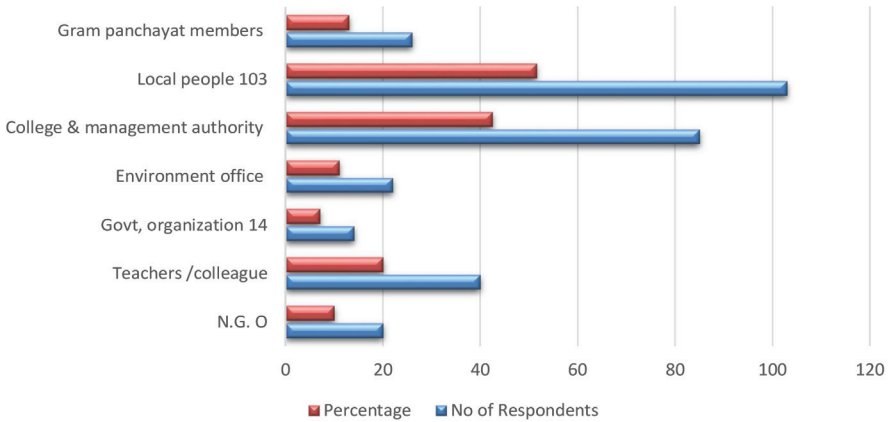
**No 6: Information Regarding Plantation**



The study made it clear that, plantation is one of the popular programme in NSS. The inquiry is made to know the level of plantation work done during their career as the NSS programme officer. 16 % of the NSS programme officers in their duration planted 50-100 trees, 28% planted 101 to 200 trees, 19% planted 201-300, 7% planted 301-400, 23% planted 401-500, 4% planted 501-1000, and only 3% planted more than 1000 plants. In their service as NSS programme officers (in 6 years) more than 3000 plants planted in different places & all trees are in good condition and serving the society even today.

It is not an easy task to implement any project any programme successfully in general and in NSS programmes in particular. During the study an enquiry is made to understand how they had struggled in getting success in implementing the programmes / projects in NSS. The study made it clear that, there is a need of more help, cooperation and co-ordination between the different agencies and groups of the community. 51% of the respondents

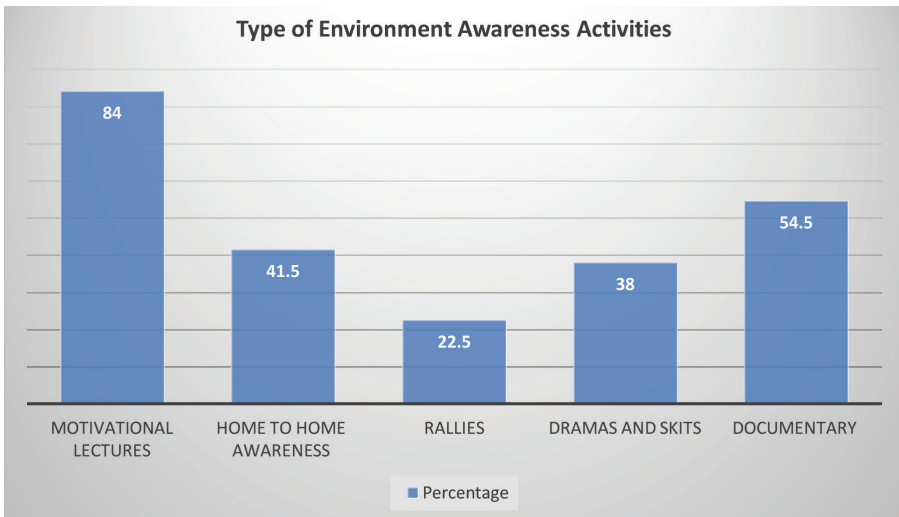
### Information regarding Support from other agencies



#### No 7 : Supporting Agencies

were supported by the -local people, 20%-from their colleagues, 42% form their College and Management authorities, 7%- government authorities, 10%- from NGOs, 13 % -from Gram Panchayati. Co-ordination and cooperation is more essential factor in getting success.

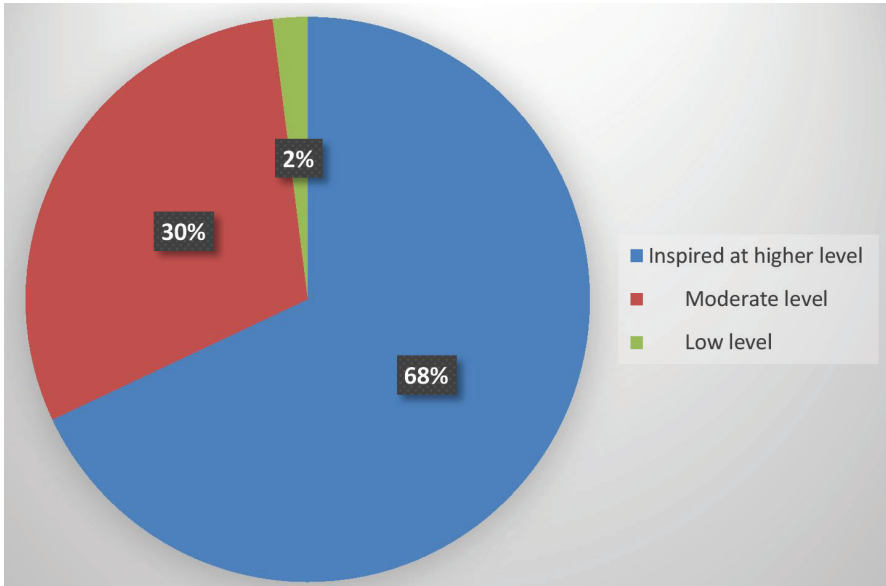
#### No 8 : Type of Activities



Many activities have been implemented by the NSS to motivate the students and community to involve them in environment protection programme. In this regard 25% of the programme officers said that it is the

motivational lectures/talks which is an effective way to create awareness in the community. 41% opined that, creating awareness personally by visiting each and every home is the best method to spread and create awareness. 22.5% by organizing rallies, 28% through street dramas /skits, 54% by showing documentaries. The programs like motivational talks, and and exhibiting visual documentaries in public and the institutions are more important and effective activities in reaching people, it is clearly evidenced in this study.

**No 9 : Opinion of the Respondents towards the NSS Programmes**



If the student volunteers are educated, highly motivated, disciplined and are given specific training they can deliver good result at the expected level. In this study the enquiry is made to get information from the NSS volunteers towards the NSS programs in general and environmental protection programs in particular. The study reveals that 68% NSS programme Officeres were inspired by the NSS at higher level, 30% at the moderate level and only 2% at the lower level. No doubt the NSS has motivated the young to involve in the programmes / projects related to development of human society. It also develops positive qualities in developing the sense of social and civic responsibilities. The energy and strength of the youth may be utilized for building a strong & healthy nation through this platform.

The current study helps us to understand the role of NSS programme and its significance in the community services. This shows that, people are motivated by the NSS to involve in the environmental protection activities. 98% of the respondents opined that there is no doubt NSS programmes/projects will help and motivate the young and community people to involve in the environmental activities.

## **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

- Male NSS Programme officers are more in Number and majority of them are from Arts background
- Majority NSS programme officers taken up the responsibility of NSS with the intention of rendering Social Service.
- Majority programmes / projects implemented related to environment protection.
- Majority NSS volunteers as well as people were motivated by the programmes / Projects related to environment protection.

The study concludes that, NSS as the extended educational activity in India the National Service Scheme provided a platform for the young students to practice a best environmental practice. Involvement of student volunteers in environmental activities through NSS can contribute to the overall development and positive qualities in young people and develops among them a sense of social and civic responsibility. The range of performance and achievements carried out by NSS proved beyond its potentialities in social /community service in general, environment protection programmes in particular. The role NSS becomes very important in this context of constitution of India, which envisages that it is fundamental duty of every citizen to protect, conserve and sustain the natural resources.

There is need for enablers to stimulate the human resource development (Nanavathy, 1993). More and more students should be motivated to take up N.S.S. as it can mold the students into conscientious enablers to expedite the development process and energize the functioning of society. The chief concern of the N.S.S. should be to identify the youth as a social construct in order to redefine and relocate their position in the society. Young people have both the right and responsibility to participate in decisions and are capable of making

valuable contributions to their communities and society. They are the best seen not as future citizens but as co-creators of a thriving society and of healthy practices by the environments in which they live.

India has largest youth force in the world. The services of youth force can be utilized very meaningfully to mitigate the sorrow and loss to the country. NSS has got very vital and vibrant and easily approachable force which can reach to the spot in a most organized manner to take up the challenges, as this group is educated, highly motivated and disciplined, dedicated for the cause of service. If NSS volunteers are given a specific training, they can deliver good results at the expected level. It is being increasingly realized that Youths can make a positive contribution to community projects, in colleges and other institutions to which they may be affiliated.

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