



---

## NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME IN INDIA: A STUDY

**Dr. MALABIKA TALUKDAR**, [B.A(H), LL.M, Ph.D]  
Assistant Professor, University Law College, Gauhati University,  
Guwahati, Assam, India

*“A Country could not progress in a desired direction until the student youth were motivated to work for the upliftment of the villages/communities”*

----- *M. K. Gandhi*

### 1. Introduction & the Concept

The National Service Scheme (NSS) is an Indian government-sponsored public service program conducted by the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports of the Government of India. Popularly known as NSS, the scheme was launched in Gandhiji's Centenary year, 1969. Aimed at developing student's personality through community service, NSS is a voluntary association of young people in Colleges, Universities and at +2 level working for a campus-community linkage. The cardinal principle of the NSS programme is that it is organised by the students themselves, and both students and teachers through their combined participation in community service, get a sense of involvement in the tasks of nation building.

National Service Scheme (NSS) is an ideal value based programme for student youth. This programme was envisaged to accomplish our father of nation Mahatma Gandhiji's long cherished desire of involving the youth in National building process. A main objective of this scheme is personality development of the students through community service. Through NSS, the sensitization about social responsibility and national integration among the students community have been achieved to a large extent. This scheme has also proved in reducing the distance between academic institutions and communities.

### Objectives of NSS

The objectives of NSS are sought to be achieved by enabling the students to:

- Understand the community in which they work.
- Understand themselves in relation to their community.
- Identify the needs and problems in the community in the solution of which they can be involved.



- Develop among themselves a sense of social and civic responsibility.
- Apply their education in finding practical solutions to individual and community problems.
- Utilizing their knowledge in finding practical solution to individual and community problems.
- Develop competence required for group living and sharing responsibilities.
- Gain skills in mobilizing community participation.
- Acquire leadership qualities and democratic attitude.
- Develop capacity to meet emergencies and natural disasters and
- Practice National Integration.

## **2. Historical Background of National Service Scheme (NSS)**

After independence the University Grants Commission, headed by S. Radhakrishnan, recommended the introduction of voluntary national service in academic institutions. This idea was again considered by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) at its meeting in January, 1950; after examining the idea and the experiences of other countries in this field, the board recommended that students and teachers should devote time to voluntary manual work. In the draft first Five-Year Plan adopted by the government in 1952, the need for social and labour service by Indian students for one year was stressed. In 1958 Jawaharlal Nehru, in a letter to the chief ministers, considered the idea of social service as a prerequisite for graduation. He directed the Ministry of Education to formulate a suitable scheme for the introduction of national service into academic institutions.

In 1959, a draft outline of this scheme was placed before a conference of state education ministers. The conference agreed on the urgent need for a workable scheme for national service, and suggested the appointment of a committee to work out details of the proposed pilot project. The National Service Committee was appointed under the chairmanship of C.D. Deshmukh on 28 August 1959 to make concrete suggestions in this direction. The committee recommended the introduction of national service for a period of nine months to a year; however, the recommendation was not accepted because of its financial implications and difficulties in implementation. In 1960, the government appointed K.G. Saiyidain to study how national service by students was implemented in other countries. He



submitted his report, "National Service for the Youth", to the government with recommendations to develop a feasible scheme of social service by Indian students.

Later, the Education Commission (headed by D.S. Kothari from 1964–1966) recommended that students at every stage of education should be associated with some form of social service. This was taken into account by the state education ministers during their April 1967 conference; they recommended that university students could join the National Cadet Corps (NCC) (which was already in existence on a voluntary basis) or the new National Service Scheme. Promising athletes, however, should be exempted from both and allowed to join another scheme: the National Sports Organisation (NSO). The September 1969 Vice Chancellors' Conference welcomed this recommendation, and suggested that a special committee of vice chancellors could examine the question in detail. In a government statement of national policy on education, it was stated that work experience and national service should be an integral part of education.

### **Launch of NSS**

In May 1969, a conference of student representatives (of universities and institutions of higher education) convened by the Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission also unanimously agreed that a national-service scheme could be an instrument for national integration. The details were soon worked out and the Planning Commission sanctioned an outlay of Rs. five crores for the NSS during the Fourth Five-Year Plan, stipulating that the NSS be a pilot project in select institutions and universities. On 24 September 1969, then-Union Education Minister V.K.R.V. Rao launched the NSS at 37 universities in all states. The scheme has been extended to all states and universities in the country, and also +2-level institutes in many states.

### **Motto of NSS**

*"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 and also to show consideration for fellow human beings. It underlines that the welfare of an individual is ultimately dependent on the welfare of society on the whole. Therefore, it should be the aim of the NSS to demonstrate this motto in its day-to-day programme



---

## **Symbol of NSS**

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. 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.

## **Aim of NSS**

The programme aims to inculcate social welfare in students, and to provide service to society without bias. NSS volunteers work to ensure that everyone who is needy gets help to enhance their standard of living and lead a life of dignity. In doing so, volunteers learn from people in villages how to lead a good life despite a scarcity of resources. It also provides help in natural and man-made disasters by providing food, clothing and first aid to the disaster victims.

## **Organisation of NSS**

Most government and government-aided institutions (schools and colleges) have volunteer NSS units, and private institutions are encouraged to have NSS volunteers. A unit typically comprises 20–40 students. They are managed internally by a responsible party from the school (or college), who reports to the regional NSS coordinator. Most institutions do not have a separate uniform for NSS volunteers.

## **Annual NSS Camps**

Camps are held annually, funded by the government of India, and are usually located in a rural village or a city suburb. Volunteers may be involved in such activities like:

1. Cleaning
2. Afforestation
3. Stage shows or a procession creating awareness of such issues as social problems, education and cleanliness
4. Awareness Rallies
5. Inviting doctors for health camps



There are no predefined or pre assigned tasks; it is left up to the volunteers to provide service in any way that is feasible. Camps typically last between a week and 10 days, although camps for shorter periods are also conducted.

### **Typical projects**

1. Adoption of villages
2. Construction and repair of roads
3. Afforestation
4. Literacy classes
5. Water conservation
6. Plastics eradication
7. Eye donation
8. Sapling plantation
9. Blood donation
10. Peer group learning

### **Other programmes of NSS**

In some institutions volunteers are involved in regular blood donation and traffic control (regulating queues in temples and preventing stampedes at functions). National conferences are held regularly to conduct white-paper and project presentations. NSS resembles the Bharat Scouts and Guides, National Cadet Corps (NCC) and other programmes developed for national welfare.

### **3. Types of Activities under National Service Scheme (NSS)**

Generally, two types of activities are performed under National Service Scheme (NSS); those are regular activities and special camping. Special Camping<sup>15</sup> forms an integral part of National Service Scheme. It has special appeal to the youth as it provides unique opportunities to the students for group living, collective experience sharing and constant interaction with community. Special campings are organised generally on various developmental issues of national importance. In the past the themes of the Special Camping Programmes have been 'Youth Against Famine', 'Youth Against Dirt and Disease', 'Youth for Rural Reconstruction', 'Youth for Eco-Development' and 'Youth for Mass Literacy', 'Youth for National Integration



& Social Harmony'. The current theme of Special Camp is 'Youth for Sustainable Development with special focus on Watershed Management and Wasteland Development. Every year 50 percent of the volunteers of each NSS unit are expected to participate in special camps which is of ten days duration.

**The primary objectives of the special camping programmes are:**

- Making education more relevant to the present situation to meet the felt needs of the communities and supplement the education of university/college/school students by bringing them face to face with the community situation.
- To provide opportunities to students to play their due roles in the implementation of various development "programmes by planning and executing development projects, which not only help in creating durable community assets in rural areas and slums but also result in improvement of the condition of weaker sections of the communities.
- Encouraging the students and non-students youth to work along with the adults in rural areas, thereby developing their character, social consciousness and commitment, discipline, healthy and helpful attitudes towards the community:
- Building up potential youth leaders by exploring the latent potential among the campers, both students as well as local youth (rural and urban), with a view to involve them more intimately in development projects for longer periods. The local leadership generated during the camps would also be useful in ensuring proper maintenance of the assets created as a result of the camps.
- Emphasizing the dignity of labour and self-help and the need for combining physical work with intellectual pursuits, and
- Encouraging youth to participate enthusiastically in the process of national development, and promote national integration through democratic living and cooperative action.

**Suggestive list of activities during Regular as well as Special Camping**

The aim of the Regular and special Camping Programme is to bring youth face to face with the community and make efforts to improve their life. The NSS volunteers are to devote about 80 hours in Regular Activities for the development of the adopted village. Special Camping has been conceived as an opportunity to live with that community for 10 days, and experience



the conditions and problems of the people. The NSS volunteers need to be inspired to take initiatives for the improvement of their condition. Although the focus of the Special Camps change periodically and regular programmes are organized in response to the community needs at the micro-level, some broad areas of activities are enumerated below:

**a) Environment Enrichment and Conservation:** Whereas the main theme for the special camping programme would be "Youth for Sustainable Development", activities aimed at environment - enrichment would be organized under the subtheme of " Youth for Better Environment". The activities under this sub-theme would inter-alia, include:

- i. Plantation of trees, their preservation and upkeep (each NSS unit should plant and protect at least 1000 saplings);
- ii. Creation of NSS parks/gardens, Tarun Treveni Vanas.
- iii. Construction & maintenance of village streets, drains, etc. so as to keep the environment clean;
- iv. Construction of sanitary latrines etc.
- v. Cleaning of village ponds and wells;
- vi. Popularization and construction of Gobar Gas Plants, use of non-conventional energy;
- vii. Environmental sanitation and disposal of garbage & composting;
- viii. Prevention of soil erosion, and work for soil conservation,
- ix. Watershed management and wasteland development
- x. Preservation and upkeep of monuments, and creation of consciousness about the preservation of cultural heritage among the community.

**b) Health, Family Welfare and Nutrition Programme:**

- i. Programme of mass immunization;
- ii. Working with people in nutrition programmes with the help of Home Science and medical college students;
- iii. Provision of safe and clean drinking water;
- iv. Integrated child development programmes;
- v. Health education, AIDS Awareness and preliminary health care.
- vi. Population education and family welfare programme;



vii. Life style education centres and counseling centres.

**c) Programmes aimed at creating an awareness for improvement of the status of women:**

They may, inter-alia, include:

- i. programmes of educating people and making them aware of women's rights both constitutional and legal;
- ii. creating consciousness among women that they too contributed to economic and social well-being of the community;
- iii. creating awareness among women that there is no occupation or vocation which is not open to them provided they acquire the requisite skills; and
- iv. imparting training to women in sewing, embroidery, knitting and other skills wherever possible.

**d) Social Service Programmes:**

Depending on the local needs and priorities, the following activities/programmes may be undertaken:-

- i. work in hospitals, for example, serving as ward visitors to cheer the patients, help the patients, arranging occupational or hobby activities for long term patients, guidance service for out-door-patients including guiding visitors about hospital's procedures, letter writing and reading for the patients admitted in the hospital; follow up of patients discharged from the hospital by making home visits and places of work, assistance in running dispensaries etc.
- ii. work with the organisations of child welfare;
- iii. work in institutions meant for physically and mentally handicapped;
- iv. organising blood donation, eye pledge programmes;
- v. work in Cheshire homes, orphanages, homes for the aged etc.;
- vi. work in welfare organisations of women;
- vii. prevention of slums through social education and community action;



---

**e) Production Oriented Programmes:**

- i. working with people and explaining and teaching improved agricultural practices;
- ii. rodent control and pest control practices;
- iii. weed control;
- iv. soil-testing, soil health care and soil conservation;
- v. assistance in repair of agriculture machinery;
- vi. work for the promotion and strengthening of cooperative societies in villages;
- vii. assistance and guidance in poultry farming, animal husbandry, care of animal health etc.;
- viii. popularization of small savings and
- ix. assistance in procuring bank loans

**f) Relief & Rehabilitation work during Natural Calamities:**

These programmes would enable the students to understand and share the agonies of the people affected in the wake of natural calamities like cyclone, flood, earthquakes, etc. The main emphasis should be on their participation in programmes, and working with the people to overcome their handicaps, and assisting the local authorities in relief and rehabilitation work in the wake of natural calamities. The NSS students can be involved in:-

- i. assisting the authorities in distribution of rations, medicine, clothes etc.;
- ii. assisting the health authorities in inoculation and immunization, supply of medicine etc.;
- iii. working with the local people in reconstruction of their huts, cleaning of wells, building roads etc.;
- iv. assisting and working with local authorities in relief and rescue operation;
- v. collection of clothes and other materials, and sending the same to the affected areas;

**(g) Education and Recreations:**

**Activities in this field could include:**

- i. adult education (short-duration programmes);
- ii. pre-school education programmes;



- iii. programmes of continuing education of school drop outs, remedial coaching of students from weaker sections;
- iv. work in creches ;
- v. participatory cultural and recreation programmes for the community including the use of mass media for instruction and recreation, programmes of community singing, dancing etc.;
- vi. organisation of youth clubs, rural land indigenous sports in collaboration with Nehru Yuva Kendras;
- vii. programmes including discussions on eradications of social evils like communalism, castism, regionalism, untouchability, drug abuse etc.;
- viii. non-formal education for rural youth and
- ix. legal literacy, consumer awareness.

#### **4. Advantages of NSS towards the Students**

The Sports, Co-curricular activities, NCC, NSS are very essential for the overall development of students. By taking part in these activities, our students get admission in higher studies, as most of the institutions are giving weightage for having participated in games Co-curricular activities, NCC and NSS. While perusing these activities, our students have also procured various certificates by passing examination conducted by the National Cadets Corps which have helped them in getting employment in different organizations; particularly armed forces. While working under National Service Scheme, students are also to develop in themselves the quality of service to community and help the poor and needy. Thus, sports, games NCC and NSS inculcate the qualities of both head and heart, which is one of the essential parts of holistic development of students' personality.

#### **Benefits of Joining NSS**

1. The NSS offers a wonderful opportunity to use a part of spare time to empathise and help the poor and the under privileged fellow countrymen living in slums and villages.
2. It provides the volunteers with an opportunity to train themselves as the future leaders and decision makers of the country.
3. It provides training to equip the volunteers with the minimum necessary skills to carryout programmes.



4. It provides with opportunities to take part in inter-collegiate / inter-university / inter-state camps and exchange ideas with students from other colleges / universities / states.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

In NSS the volunteers remained busy in different activities. They served the locality with projects like cleaning dharamashalas, cremation ground, stadium, panchayat homes as well as planting saplings in the locality. As it was a national-level camp, volunteers from other States had also come to participate in the camp. There were lectures by specialists in various fields on health awareness, national integration, communal harmony, environmental science and awareness. Some lecturers also highlighted various problems being faced by our country such as terrorism, unemployment, poverty, AIDS, cancer, etc.

NSS is a very noble concept and it helps the students to become mentally and physically more active and make themselves prepare so that they can become a responsible citizen in the country and society and ultimately our nation will be benefitted. Therefore, it is the prime duty of all the teachers to encourage their students to take part in the NSS programmes and acquire the desired knowledge which will definitely help them in their future life and career.

## References

1. National Service Scheme, Wikipedia, available on [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Service\\_Scheme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Service_Scheme), last visited on dated 15.10.2014 at about 8.16 P.M
2. Gulbarga University, National Service Scheme, available on <http://www.gulbargauniversity.kar.nic.in/NationalServiceScheme.html>, last visited on dated 15.10.2014 at about 8.20 P.M
3. Special Camping Programme, available on <http://nss.nic.in/speccamp.asp>, last visited on dated 15.10.2014 at about 8.10 P.M
4. Available on <http://www.hillagric.ac.in/edu/swo-org/swo/advantage.htm>, last visited on dated 03.03.2015 at about 11. P.M
5. Available on <http://www.gcek.ac.in/cms/index.php/community/national-service-scheme.html>, last visited on dated 03.03.2015 at about 11. P.M
6. Available on <http://www.shareyouressays.com/2990/170-words-short-essay-on-national-service-scheme-camp>, last visited on dated 03.03.2015 at about 11. P.M



---

## MAMONI RAISOM: THE CROSSROADS FROM JNANPITH TO PEACE BUILDING

**NILOTPAL CHAKRAVARTY**

M.Phil Scholar, Dept of Women's Studies, Gauhati University.

### ABSTRACT

Mamoni Raisom Goswami is a legendary writer in Assam. Her works are a treasure to world of Assamese literature. This versatile writer has written many novels that contain appeal of humanity. Apart from her wonderful writings, as a human being she was an amicable person with dignity and fame. Her writings have such power that they encourage people to live life and go forward. She has written her tremendous novels on the basis of her experiences in life. In her social life she had contributed a lot to the upbringing of our Assamese society to peaceful situation. The soil of Assam has witnessed lost of thousands of lives of innocent people, revolutionaries and soldiers in the dreadful conflict between the ULFA and the Government of Assam as well as Government of India. As a part of our civil society Mamoni Raisom Goswami has patronised the initiative of peace process after the 25years of bloodshed in. She experienced and tried to go insight the deep realities of the conflicting armed group and acted as a bridge between two warring sides.

The paper will be an endeavour to light on the life and unique role of this magnificent woman as a facilitator of peace process which will be written with golden ink in the history of Assam.

### **A brief introduction of Mamoni Raisom Goswami and her works:**

The soil of Assam has witnessed many legends and great persons in centuries. Dr. Mamoni Raisom Goswami is one of the greatest persons. Though she was famous as 'Mamoni Baideo' her real name is Indira Goswami. She was born on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 1942 in Guwahati in a Brahmin family. The name of her father is Umakanta Goswami and name of her mother is Ambika Devi Goswami. Unlike other girls, her school life started at Latasil Primary school, Guwahati, then Pine Mount School in Shillong and finally passed her matriculation from Tarini Charan Choudhury Girls School, Guwahati. She did her graduation from prestigious Cotton College. Her life was unique and exceptional. It was full of misery and agony, from her childhood she remained in depression. Her tragic life continued till the death of her beloved husband Madhavan Roysom Iyenger but she triumph over her all miseries through her writings. She started her writings with short stories and that collection of stories was published in her age of thirteen only. Since then her pen never stopped until her death. Several novels and short stories