ROLE OF NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME (NSS) IN CREATING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AT HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract:

The concept of National Service Scheme is started in the year 1969 to build sense of social responsibility through teacher and students involvement in constructive service with the motto of "Not Me But You". NSS volunteers work in rural areas, adopted villages and school to the serving the cause of society through survey, education and health awareness programme. This study involves in identifying the importance, aims and objectives of NSS in higher education which in turn create social responsibility among the students. This paper also highlights the constraints faced by the NSS, and students in the system and also suggests measure to overcome in order to utilise future generation in positive direction.

Index Terms: Social Responsibility, Awareness, Objectives, Constraints & Generation

Introduction:

The overall aim of National Service Scheme as envisaged earlier, is to give an extension dimension to the higher education system and orient the student youth to community service while they are studying in educational institutions. The reason for the formulation of this objective is the general realization that the students in the +2 level and above have a tendency to get alienated from the village/slum masses that constitute the majority of the population of the country. The educated youth who are expected to take the reins of administration in future are found to be unaware of the problems of the community and in certain cases are indifferent towards their needs and problems. Therefore it is necessary to arouse the social conscience of the students, and to provide them an opportunity to work with the people in the villages and slums. It is felt that their interaction with the common villagers and slum- dwellers will expose them to the realities of life, and bring about a change in their social perception.

Development of National Service Scheme:

The concept of making national service a part of university education took about 20 years to evolve from the state of an idea into that of a scheme. The early seeds of it were sown by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in his Report (1948). The Central Advisory Board of Education discussed the idea and made some recommendations in 1950. In the first Five Year Plan document (1951) the need for social service camps found a mention. During the next few years some institutions already started organizing such camps. Then in 1958, Pandit Nehru, Prime Minister, wrote to Chief Ministers suggesting social service as prerequisite for graduation. In 1959 an outline proposal came up for discussion in the meeting of education ministers from all over India. The concept was accepted, and Deshmukh Committee was formed to propose concrete suggestions (1959). In 1960 further suggestions came from Prof. KG. Saiyidain and these are responsible, more or less, for the scheme as we have it now. But implementation was further delayed. Then came Dr. Kothari's strong recommendations in the year 1966. During the next year Vice Chancellors' Meeting took place and in 1969 a conference of student leaders welcomed the scheme. By that time the Fourth Five Year Plan was ready to be launched. It carried an outlay of five Crores rupees for NSS. 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

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started during the Gandhi Centenary Year as it was Gandhi who inspired the Indian youth to participate in the movement for Indian independence and the social uplift of the downtrodden masses of our nation.

Aims of NSS Activities:

✓ **Awareness on Environmental Protection:** In present scenario environmental damages is causing loss to the national economy in billions in the form of deforestation and soil erosion only. On the other hand water air and noise pollution are causing havoc to the health of the nationals. In spite of govt. policies and number of laws, nothing concrete has been done at the individual level to fight the environmental pollution. The role of N.S.S. becomes very important in this context as constitution of India also envisages that it is fundamental duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment [Art. 51A (g)]. NSS activities will create awareness on protection of environment.

✓ **Health Awareness Programme:** Progress and development of a nation depends upon the health of its nationals. Every year thousands of mothers and infants die due to lack of post natal care facilities. Even during pregnancy women are not provided with healthy and nutritious food. Overall general health of Indian nationals is very-very poor as they cannot afford even the minimum calorie intake required. The aim of NSS is to provide necessary basic information and awareness on health related concepts.

✓ **Literacy Programme:** The constitutions of India provides for the right to education (Article 21), the right to free and compulsory education to all children upto 14 years is also now guaranteed as a fundamental right under Art. 21 A of the constitution (constitution 86th Amendment Act, 2001). But without making right to education a reality the fundamental rights guaranteed under the constitution shall remain beyond the reach of large majority which is illiterate. N.S.S. volunteers are required to take up number of activities for the eradication of illiteracy such as adult education, non formal education, and women literacy programmes etc.

✓ **Community Development:** Other intervention areas for the N.S.S. activities are sustainable development, rural reconstruction, watershed management and wasteland development. N.S.S. volunteers are required to take steps to develop community assets infrastructure and preserve natural resources of the country.

✓ **Student Development:** The motto of NSS is to develop the community by educating the society along with that student personal development. One of the objectives of NSS is uphold personal growth of students through involvement in community development.

Objectives:

The broad objectives of NSS are to:

✓ Understand the community in which the volunteers work
✓ Understand themselves in relation to their community
✓ Identify the needs and problems of the community and involve them in problem solving processes
✓ Develop in them a sense of social and civic responsibility
✓ Utilize their knowledge in finding practical solution to individual and community problems
✓ Develop competence required for group-living and sharing of responsibilities
✓ Gain skills in mobilizing community participation
✓ Acquire leadership qualities and democratic attitude

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✓ Develop capacity to meet emergencies and natural disasters and

✓ Practice national integration and social harmony.

The Motto:

The motto or watchword of the National Service Scheme 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, and also to show consideration for fellow human beings. It underlines the fact that the welfare of an individual is ultimately dependent on the welfare of society as the whole. Therefore, it should be the aim of the NSS to demonstrate this motto in its day-to-day activities.

Constraints Faced in NSS:

✓ Since N.S.S. is a government sponsored scheme, it suffers from bureaucratization and financial crunch. Low participation due to poor incentives for the students and teachers impedes its successful implementation. Besides inadequate qualitative documentation of the work done have affected the scheme's standing (Hans, 1995).

✓ Discontinuation of the work done by the volunteers and functionaries on account of constantly changing Programme Officers and placements of work defeats the objective of the creation of durable community assets. This converts the social experience of the volunteers into an ad hoc affair and leaves no scope for conceptualization.

✓ In the highly competitive educational environment students can hardly spend time in social work, or even think of transforming social reality (Damle, 1989; Hans, 1995; Saraswati, 1999). In India 80 percent of jobs are generated by small business and among the occupations, social work is chosen by the least numbers of youth (Papa, 1998). The situation has become graver because career consciousness is overtaking idealism and service orientation.

✓ Indian youth is confronted with a dearth of normative role models (Sinha, 1997). Absence of inspiring role models may not encourage youth to enroll in a programme like the N.S.S. that shuns fun and excitement and painstakingly addresses community issues.

Suggestions:

Today Indian student community is without direction and ideology (Altbach, 1971; Choudhury, 1989) and requires credible youth movement. The N.S.S. is a useful exercise which provides student youth with a social apprenticeship. It also fulfils the criteria of Kulkarni (1988) that education and training are key to youth development. The scheme of N.S.S. has been reduced to a mere inventory of in and off campus activities. The philosophical base of NSS has degenerated due to lack of intelligent leadership. The scheme should be given in the hands of able and committed persons to train the students as sensitizers. For the better conceptualisation of the scheme permanent and dedicated programme officers (POs) should be appointed. Since POs have to perform complex task of human engineering and adolescent psychology, (Saiyidain, 1961), the government of India should establish training and orientation centres to plan, supervise and evaluate N.S.S. activities and to train and orient the POs in the philosophy of the scheme.

It has been observed that social work educators and teachers are preferred as programme coordinators at the university level and as POs at the college level. This conventional association between the scheme and the subject should be broken and the scheme should be coordinated with other disciplines also. Their experience in teaching, training the students in community work and action research should be taken into

account during their appointments as programme coordinators, training co-ordinators, lecturer cum community organizers and POs. The inter disciplinary approach will help in realizing the goal advocated by Frumkin and Lloyd (1995) that the relationship among practice social work and community should be rekindled to promote social change.

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 mould 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. The authorities concerned should work together for popularizing N.S.S. programmes so that the energy and vigor of the youth may be utilized for building a strong and healthy nation.

Conclusion:

A survey of the evolution of educational thought in India clearly indicates its bias towards social commitment. And a review of the planning process which preceded the formulation of National Service Scheme reveals that NSS has been designed to promote the social goals of higher education. NSS has its own identity; it can be used for betterment of the society by proper implementation at higher education to create social responsibility of the students.

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