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Understanding the Reasons for joining in NSS Programme and the Competencies of NSS Volunteers in North Andhra Pradesh : A Study

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This study presents information about the reasons for joining in National Service Scheme (NSS) as volunteers and also provides the competency levels of NSS volunteers on its objectives and activities of the NSS programme. The NSS is an Central Government-funded public service scheme sponsored by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India aimed at developing student youth personalities through community service. There are nearly 4 million students are involved in the NSS programme. The present study was conducted in eight colleges of two districts of North Andhra Pradesh i.e. Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram Districts. The study adopted the convenience sampling method and collected the data from 842 NSS volunteers pursuing their graduation and post-graduation in social sciences, engineering, pharmacy, sciences and technologies. The data were collected through a structured, pre-tested interview schedule. The study found that the majority 62.8 per cent of the respondents have joined in NSS programme with an interest

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towards social service, while 13.4 per cent of the respondents have joined the NSS programme with a sense of civic and social responsibility. The remaining respondents have joined NSS with an interest towards community development, improving public relations and to get a certificate. The study suggested that the NSS volunteers' selection should be done with a strict procedure and the POs and Principals should have transference in selections.

1. Introduction

The National Service Scheme (NSS) is a Central Government funded public service scheme sponsored by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India aimed at developing student youth personalities through community service (Arvind Mathur et al, 2021). This scheme was launched during the Fourth Five-Year Plan by sanctioning a budget of 5 cores. It was started on 24th September 1969 by Union Education Minister V.K.R.V. Rao in a few universities of India. Now it has spread an almost all the states and universities in India. The motto of NSS is "Not Me But You" (Sajjan Kumar Lal & Satish Singh, 2014). This scheme works with the youth and for the all-round development of the youth in India. Youth are the strength to every nation. The united nations, for statistical purposes, define 'youth', as those people between the ages of 15years to 24years (United Nations, 2021).

Since the inception of the NSS in the year 1969, the number of students' strength increased from 40,000 to over 4 million up to the end of March 2018. The students in various universities, colleges and institutions of higher education have volunteered to take part in various community service programmes (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2021). NSS volunteers work in adopted villages, colleges, school campuses and urban slums for serving the cause of society such as environmental protection, health, literacy etc. (Jala Bharati et al., 2021).

NSS Student Volunteer: The NSS volunteer, who is a college/+2 level student is the main beneficiary of the programme by way of development of his/her perception about the community, his/her skill to perform certain tasks, and develop the qualities of a leader, organizer, and an administrator and development of his/her personality as a whole. Through NSS, he/she gets opportunities to see the community closely and thus gets an experience of human nature in relation to his/her environment. This is how the NSS

programme aims to make NSS student youth better citizens through "Development of their personality through Community Service (Dr. P. Ramachandra Rao, 2019). NSS attempts to establish meaningful linkages between 'Campus and Community', 'College and Village' and 'Knowledge and Action' (Swain, 2020).

The other major programmes participated by the student volunteers in NSS are National Integration Camp (NIC), Adventure Program, NSS Republic Day Parade Camp, National Youth Festivals and participation and observation of various important days in India. The Covid-19 has created a lot of importance and more activities for NSS volunteers. They were involved in many Covid-19 relief services during this pandemic. The major **objectives of the NSS programme** are as follows :

1. To understand the community in which the NSS volunteers work and to understand themselves in relation to their community;
2. To identify the needs and problems of the community and involve themselves in problem-solving exercise;
3. To develop among themselves a sense of social and civic responsibility;
4. To utilize their knowledge in finding practical solutions to individual and community problems;
5. To gain skills in mobilizing community participation;
6. To acquire leadership qualities and democratic values;
7. To develop the capacity to meet emergencies and natural disasters; and
8. To practice national integration and social harmony (Swain, 2020).

The two major components of this scheme are youth and society. Youth are the future citizen and administrator of India. So, the main goal of this programme is to student youth's overall development by engaging themselves in social and nation building work. It is purely a selfless service by the students. The student who has joined in this programme with lots of interest and enthusiasm to serve society.

2.   Review of Literature

Jala Bharati (2021) conducted a study on the personality traits and characteristics influences among NSS and Non-NSS students of

Kanpur. The study adopted the purposive sampling method and the sample size is 70 respondents. The study collected data through a questionnaire using the simple random sampling method. The result shows that there is a significant difference between NSS and Non-NSS college students and their overall personality development (Anand & Choudhary, 2021).

S. S. Roy (2021) study identified the importance of NSS in the motivation of students in higher education. NSS plays a catalyst role for better understanding and making peaceful ambience in campuses to curb out students agitation, problems, social barriers, harassment and channel all the negative activities into positivity and learn them to be a better citizen of India. NSS has successfully crossed half-century years in the field of youth development. During this period, thousands of volunteers shaped their life by NSS in higher education institutions.

Rajesh and Parmar (2019) conducted a study on "Critical Analysis of NSS Programmes in The Universities of Gujarat. The study found that 65 responses were received from NSS Units wherein 20 per cent of the responses stated that Blood donation is a major activity, and 21.5 per cent of the responses stated that cleanliness is a major activity and 13.8 per cent of the responses stated that Tree Plantation is a major activity and 29.2 per cent of the responses stated organize other activities such as rally, educational activities etc… under their NSS unit. It is found that that a maximum 85.7 per cent of the respondents replied that they engage volunteers in rural areas to carry their developmental activities.

Hasan (2018) conducted a study on "Spiritual Fitness and Strengths in Relation to Mental Health Problems among National Cadet Corps and National Service Scheme Volunteers in Aligarh. The study found that the NCC cadets and NSS volunteers have high spiritual fitness and low mental health problems. Spiritual fitness and strengths involve multiple life situations and practices which promote fitness and a healthy mind-set to do work and motivate for seeking good behaviour and actions. Spiritual exercises and meaningful activities were found as significant predictors of socio-cultural determinants among National Cadet Corps and National Service Scheme volunteers.

Mohanty (2014) conducted with 50 programme officers to know the reasons of students' non-participation. The study found that Poor

service condition of NSS programme officers, Phenomenal expansion of the NSS network system, Lowering the standard of orientation, skill training and special orientation on the project to the youth, Negligence of self-duties, Degradation of values due to the paradigm shift of social system are the major causes for non-participation of the student volunteers in NSS programme. The student youth are hesitant to join NSS in course of time and do not show any interest for social service.

3.   Scope of the Study

The NSS is one of the important schemes in India to promote the personality development of the youth through community services. Now-a-days many students are joining in NSS programme as volunteers and providing services to the communities. They also participate in many activities in a year. A few studies were conducted on the types of services extended by NSS Units, personality development of NSS volunteers, the difference between NSS students and general students etc. Based on the review of literature it was found that no study was conducted on the reasons of the students to join in NSS programme as volunteers. In this connection, the present study focus on the major reasons to join as NSS volunteers, the insistence on students to join as volunteers and the knowledge levels of the students on NSS objectives and activities.

4.   Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio-economic and demographic profile of the NSS volunteers pursuing their education in various colleges.
2. To understand the major reasons to join in NSS programme as volunteers.
3. To study the competency of NSS volunteers on NSS objectives and activities.
4. To provide appropriate suggestions to promote effective implementation of NSS in North Andhra Pradesh.

5.   Research Methodology

The present study is conducted in two districts of North Andhra Pradesh i.e. Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram districts. The study adopted a quantitative research approach and descriptive research design. The study purposively selected eight colleges from Visakha-

patnam and Vizianagaram districts i.e. A.U. College of Engineering, A.U. College of Pharmacy, St. Ann's College for Woman, St. Joseph's College for Women, Gayatri Vidya Parishat, Dr. Lankapalli Bullaiah College of Engineering, Dr. Krishna College and M.R. College. The study adopted the convenience sampling method and selected 842 students from these eight colleges. The sampling respondents are pursuing graduation and post-graduation in different disciplines i.e. Arts, Science, Engineering, Pharmacy and Social Sciences. The data were collected through the structured, pre-tested questionnaire which was shared via Google form. The data was collected in September 2021. The data were analyzed through Ms-Excel 2010 version and SPSS 20th version.

6.   Results and Discussion

The data were collected from 842 NSS volunteers from different colleges of Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram districts and presented in the following tables.

Age is a length of time in the years lived by human beings on the earth. In this study, the age of the respondents is calculated in the years. The following table presents the age of the respondents.

Table-1 : Distribution of the respondents by their Age

Age	Frequency	Per cent
17 years	4	.5
18 years	215	25.5
19 years	304	36.1
20 years	166	19.7
21 years	77	9.1
22 years	38	4.5
23 years	27	3.2
24 years	11	1.3
Total	**842**	**100.0**
Mean : 19.4; Median : 19.0; Mode : 19.0		

The data in the above table revealed that 36.1 per cent of the respondents belong to 19 years, 25.5 per cent of the respondents belong to 18 years, and 19.7 per cent of the respondents belong to 20 years. The mean age of the respondents is 19.4 years, median age is 19 years and mode is 19 years. The following table presents the information about the gender of the respondents.

Table-2 : Distribution of the respondents by their Gender

Gender	Frequency	Per cent
Male	240	28.5
Female	602	71.5
Total	**842**	**100.0**

The data in the above table revealed that the majority 71.5 per cent of the respondents are female respondents, while 28.5 per cent are male respondents.The female respondents are more in the present study because the more responses received from female respondents through Google form. The following table presents the information about the education of the respondents.

Table-3 : Distribution of the respondents by their Education

Education	Frequency	Per cent
Graduation	415	49.3
Post Graduation	23	2.7
Engineering	324	38.5
Pharmacy	80	9.5
Total	**842**	**100.0**

The data in the above table revealed that half of the respondents pursuing their graduation, while 38.5 per cent of the respondents are pursuing their engineering graduation. The remaining respondents are belonged to pharmacy (9.5%), and 2.7 per cent of the respondents pursuing their post-graduation. The graduate students are high in the present study it may be a reason that all colleges are offering graduation. Table-3 presents the information about the college of the respondents.

The data in table-3 revealed that 31.8 per cent of the respondents belong to Andhra University Engineering College. Followed by St. Joseph's college and St. Ann's college contributed 15.6 per cent of respondents from each. And 10.2 per cent of the respondents are from Gayatri Vidya Parishat and 9.4 per cent of the respondents are from A.U. College of Pharmacy. Dr. L.B. College contributed 8.3 per cent of respondents and M.R. College contributed 7.0 per cent of respondents.

Table-4 : Distribution of the respondents by their College

College Name	Frequency	Per cent
AU College of Engineering	268	31.8
AU College of Pharmacy	79	9.4
Dr. L. B. College of Engineering	70	8.3
Gayatri Vidya Parishat	86	10.2
St. Joseph's College for Women	131	15.6
St. Ann's College for Women	131	15.6
M.R.College	59	7.0
Dr.V.S.Krishna College	18	2.1
Total	**842**	**100.0**

The graduation is three-year course and post-graduation is a two years course. Some students join in NSS programme in 1st year and some students join in 2nd year. Every year the new NSS volunteers join in this programme.The following table presents the information about the year of joining in NSS Programme.

Table-5 : Distribution of the respondents by their Year of Joining

Year of Joining in NSS	Frequency	Per cent
2017	15	1.8
2018	52	6.2
2019	184	21.9
2020	591	70.2
Total	**842**	**100.0**

The data in the above table revealed that the majority 70.2 per cent of the respondents have joined in NSS Programme in 2020 and followed by 21.9 per cent of the respondents who joined in NSS programme in 2019.

There are many reasons behind to join in NSS by students. Some students may join NSS with their interest in community service or social service, or to improve their public relations. Some students may join in NSS for a certificate which helps them in recruitment. Table-6 presents the information about the reasons for joining in NSS programme on next page.

Table-6 : Distribution of the respondents by Reasons for Joining in NSS Programme

Reasons for Joining in NSS Programme	Frequency	Per cent
Certificate	40	4.8
Improve Public Relations	51	6.1
Interest towards Social Service	529	62.8
Interest towards community development	109	12.9
Sense of Civic and Social Responsibility	113	13.4
Total	**842**	**100.0**

The data in the above table revealed that the majority 62.8 per cent of the respondents have joined in NSS programme with an interest towards social service, while 13.4 per cent of the respondents joined in NSS programme with a sense of civic and social responsibility. The remaining respondents have joined in NSS with interest towards community development and improve public relations. Interestingly only 4.8 per cent of the respondents joined NSS for a certificate. The following cross table presents the relationship between the college and reasons for joining in NSS programme as a volunteer.

Table-7 : Distribution of the respondents by their College and Reasons for Joining in NSS Programme as a Volunteer

College	Reasons for Joining					Total
	Certificate	Improve Public Relations	Interest towards Social Service	Interest towards community development	Sense of Civic and Social Responsibility	
AU College of Engineering	22	31	140	34	41	268
AU College of Pharmacy	3	2	39	17	18	79
Dr. L. B. college	1	3	49	4	13	70
Gayatri Vidya Parishat	5	5	50	11	15	86
St. Joseph's College for Women	4	2	97	15	13	131

St. Ann's College for Women	5	5	95	20	6	131
M.R.College	0	3	43	7	6	59
Dr.V.S.Krishna College	0	0	16	1	1	18
Total	**40**	**51**	**529**	**109**	**113**	**842**
Pearson Chi-Square: 78.283(a); Df: 28; Significance: 000						

Analysis of the data on the college and reasons for joining in NSS programme as a volunteer are cross-tabulated and the result shows that there is an association between two variables as it is evident that most of the students are interested towards social service and community development than the certificate. The following table presents the information about the insistence on respondents to join in NSS Programme.

Table-8 : Distribution of the respondents by their response on any One Insist You

Insist to join in NSS	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	413	49.0
No	429	51.0
Total	**842**	**100.0**

The data in the above table revealed that 51.0 per cent of the respondents stated that there is no insistence on them to join in NSS programme and they joined voluntarily, while 49.0 per cent of the respondents stated that there is an insistence by other persons to join in NSS programme. The following table presents the information on who insisted them to join in the NSS Programme

Table-9 : Distribution of the respondents by their response on by whom they were insisted to join in NSS Programme

Who insisted	Frequency	Per cent
Friends	198	47.9
Parents	50	12.1
Senior NSS Volunteers	7	1.8
Teachers	101	24.4
Programme Officer	57	13.8
Total	**413**	**100.0**

The data in the above table revealed that 47.9 per cent of the respondents stated that there is an insistence from their friends to

join in NSS programme, followed by 24.4 per cent of the respondents stated that there is an insistence from their teachers to join in NSS, 13.8 per cent of the respondents stated that programme officers insisted them and 12.1 per cent of the respondents stated that their parents insisted them to join in NSS programme.

NSS promoted the participation of youth in social service activities. This scheme capacitated many student youth in India. The primary objective of NSS is developing the personality and character of the student youth through voluntary community service. 'Education through Service' is the purpose of the NSS. Most of the time, the senior students have more understanding about the objectives and activities of NSS than junior students. The following table presents the information about understanding the objectives of NSS programme.

Table-10 : Distribution of the respondents by their understanding of objectives of NSS Programme

Understanding the objectives of NSS	Frequency	Per cent
Fully Understand	462	54.9
Partially Understand	365	43.3
Not Understand	15	1.8
Total	**842**	**100.0**

The data in the above table revealed that 54.9 per cent of the respondents fully understand the objectives of the NSS programme, followed by 43.3 per cent of the respondents stated that they partially understand the objectives of the NSS programme. Only 1.8 per cent of the respondents stated that they did not understand the objectives of the NSS programme. The cross-table-11 presents the relationship between the year of joining and understanding the objectives of NSS programme.

Analysis of the data on year of joining and understanding the objectivities are cross-tabulated and the result shows that there is an association between two variables as it is evident that the students who have more experience joined three years back or two years back in NSS programmes have more clarity on NSS objectives than less experienced or recently joined NSS volunteers. Table-12 presents the opinion of the respondents on what is the major objective of NSS programme.

Table-11 : Distribution of the respondents by the year of joining and understanding the objectives of NSS programme

Year of Joining	Did you understand the objectives of NSS Programme			Total
	Fully Understand	Particularly Understand	Not Understand	
2017	13	1	1	15
2018	43	9	0	52
2019	133	48	3	184
2020	273	307	11	591
Total	**462**	**365**	**15**	**842**
Pearson Chi-Square : 66.873(a); Df: 6; Significance: .000				

Table-12 : Distribution of the respondents by their opinion on main objective of NSS Programme

What is the main objective of NSS	Frequency	Per cent
Community Development	125	14.8
National Development	145	17.2
Personality Development of Student Youth	572	67.9
Total	842	100.0

The data in the table revealed that majority 67.9 per cent of the respondents stated that the major objective of NSS programme is personality development of student youth, while 17.2 per cent of the respondents stated that the major objective of the NSS programme is national development and 14.8 per cent of the respondents stated that the major objective of the NSS programme is community development.

7.   Suggestions

1. The Programme Officers and the Principals of NSS College units should select the responsible, interested students who have enthusiasm towards social service and community development. There should be a strict selection procedure to the NSS volunteers and it should be transparent.

2. The POs and Principals should develop the peer leaders among NSS Volunteers. The NSS volunteers who joined recently

should capacitate themselves on the objectives and various activities of the NSS programme

3. The NSS college unit should prepare an action plan for entire year and conduct a periodical review of NSS activities regularly

4. The counselling sessions should be conducted to the parents of NSS volunteers to understand the activities

5. The NSS volunteers who joined in NSS programme for a certificate should change their mind-set and should increase their interest towards community social service.

6. Provision of incentives to the student volunteers should be increased and the funds should be released on-time.

7. Sufficient funds should be allocated by higher authority for successful conduction of the activities and the authorities should visit the camp location during 7 days of camp for social auditing. Also, universities should give feedback on the survey report submitted by the colleges.

8. The joining in the NSS programme should be voluntarily, no pressure and insistence on the students

9. All NSS activities should focus on the all-round development of student youth

8.   Social Work Profession and NSS

Social Work is a dynamic profession towards promoting social development and human development. It promotes social change and development among human beings. It protects human rights. It works with individuals, groups and communities and promotes social cohesion (Abraham, 2018). The NSS is one of the important schemes in India to promote the personality development of the student youth through community social services. The NSS promotes community engagement which is a part of social work education. The social work students learn the social service through their fieldwork i.e. concurrent fieldwork, consecutive fieldwork and block fieldwork. The social work students have a rural camp/social audit for 10 days is similar to special camps of NSS volunteers. Both the themes are interrelated and work for social service and social change. The social work professionals should understand the concept of NSS and involve the students in the NSS programmes or special camps thereby the social work students educate and motive the NSS volunteers towards social service.

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