



ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME ACTIVITIES: A STUDY IN VISAKHAPATNAM AND VIZIANAGARAM DISTRICTS OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the participation levels of the NSS volunteers' in National Service Scheme (NSS) activities in two districts of North Andhra Pradesh. NSS is a central government scheme initiated to promote the student youth to work for the community development which leads to building a better nation. This is a quantitative study, adopted the convenience sampling method and collected the data from 842 students from these eight colleges through a structured questionnaire. The study found that 82.8 per cent of the respondents actively participated in the regular activities of the NSS programme, 72.9 per cent of the respondents participated in the rallies of awareness programmes. The study found that 78.3 per cent of the respondents participated in Environmental day, 70.9 per cent of the respondents participated in International Yoga day, and 68.3 per cent of the respondents participated in Indian Republic day celebrations. The Covid-19 pandemic is one of the reasons for the reduction of the participation of the NSS volunteers. The functioning of the programme officers (POs) and NSS units in the colleges are satisfactory. The students need more guidance from the POs and concerned authorities to increase more participation from NSS volunteers.

KEYWORDS : National Service Scheme, Student Youth, Social Service

INTRODUCTION

The National Service Scheme (NSS) is a Central Sector Scheme of the Government of India, under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. NSS provides an opportunity to the students of intermediate, technical education, graduates and postgraduate at colleges and universities of India to involve in the community development activities. This scheme was launched during the Fourth Five-Year Plan on 24th September 1969 by then Union Education Minister Sri. V.K.R.V. Rao in a few universities of India. Since the inception of the NSS in the year 1969, the number of students' strength increased from 40,000 to over 3.8 million up to the end of March 2018 (Government of India, 2022). 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). 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 (S. S. Roy, 2021).

Youth

This scheme promotes the student youth to become NSS volunteers. Youth is the embodiment strength and courage of every Nation. Youth is an age between childhood and adulthood. According to National Youth Policy (2014), Youth are defined as those aged 15 to 29. This age-group constitutes 27.5% of India's population. Presently, India has the largest share of the youth population in the world and will continue to hold so for the next 20 years (Abraham M, 2020). 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). This scheme promotes the youth to work for the community and its development which leads to building a better nation.

Participation

Participation means people being involved in activities and decision making that affects their lives. Through participation, people can identify opportunities and strategies for action, and build solidarity to effect change (Alan Stanley, 2020). This scheme is promoting youth participation in service activities. The two major components of this scheme are youth and society. Youth are the future citizens and administrators 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 (NSS, 2022). It is purely a selfless service by the students. Every student has joined this programme with lots of interest and enthusiasm to serve society. This article presents the participation of the NSS volunteers in community service through NSS activities.

Review Of Literature

The researcher reviewed a few studies related to the NSS youth and their participation were reviewed and presented.

B. Suresh Lal (2015) study focused social and civic responsibility of the NSS volunteers in Kakatiya University. This study has been done on 200 volunteers on various socio-economic, health, environmental, literacy, peace and developmental issues and their responses have been analysed using different statistical tools to make a strong relationship with cause and effect. The energy of youth may be utilized in the positive direction for building a strong and healthy nation. The study found that 98 per cent of the volunteers got awareness on societal issues, 98 per cent of colleges adopted villages for their regular and special campaign programmes, 99 per cent of volunteers have participated in immunization services against the 6 diseases and 68 per cent of volunteers participated in plantation programs.

Vijayapushpam et al. (2016) study focussed on the nutritional status of the degree college students of Hyderabad city after NSS campaign. NSS volunteers take part in the special camps, which are usually conducted in the adopted villages for over 10 days and engage themselves in community service and awareness creation activities. During such special winter camps in 2014 & 2015, two different sets of NSS volunteers (N-140) were recruited for this study. Informed consent was obtained from the participants and the NSS programme officers of the college. As per WHO classification, 19.3% were underweight (with BMI <18.5), 60.7% were normal weight and about 20% were measured, the knowledge scores for 2014 improved from 32.8 to 39.82, and for 2015 they improved from 36 to 47.8 respectively. The study found that the nutrition awareness campaigns can be effective and the knowledge levels of the youth were increased.

Minati Saha (2019) study found that the NSS volunteers were involved in the participation of community activities like laying roads, plantation conservation of the environment, construction of water harvesting structures etc. They actively organised to collect donations for the victims of natural calamities. NSS volunteers may help to reduce crime against girls, women and all weaker sections in the society by increasing awareness levels about the social and economical issues of the society.

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 channelling all the negative activities into positive and make 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.

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 participate in different activities in a year i.e. observation of national and international days, involved in social service activities and special campaign programmes etc. All these activities will increase their capacities and leadership qualities. A few studies related to NSS programme were conducted i.e. reasons behind to join in NSS as volunteers; the types of services extended by NSS Units; personality development of NSS volunteers; the difference between NSS volunteers and general students etc. Based on the review of literature, the researcher understood that no study was conducted on participation levels of the student youth in NSS activities in a year. In this connection, the present study proposed to study the participation levels of NSS volunteers in different regular activities, service activities and special campaigns of NSS programmes in Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram districts of Andhra Pradesh.

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 assess the participation levels of the NSS Volunteers in national and international importance days
3. To identify the participation levels of NSS volunteers in NSS regular activities
4. To know the perceptions of the NSS volunteers on programme officer and NSS unit of their college
5. To provide appropriate suggestions to promote effective implementation of NSS activities in Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram districts of Andhra Pradesh

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 Visakhapatnam 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 analysed through Ms-Excel 2010 version and SPSS 18th version.

Data Analysis And Findings

In this study, the data was collected from 842 NSS volunteers to know their participation in NSS services and activities. The data were analysed and presented. The below table presents the information on the age of the respondents;

Table No: 1 Distribution Of The Respondents By Their Age

Age	Frequency	Per cent
17.00	4	.5
18.00	215	25.5
19.00	304	36.1
20.00	166	19.7
21.00	77	9.1
22.00	38	4.5
23.00	27	3.2
24.00	11	1.3
Total	842	100.0

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 No: 2 Distribution Of The Respondents By Their Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
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, while 28.5 per cent are male. The following table presents the information about the education of the respondents.

Table No: 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 belonged to pharmacy (9.5%), and 2.7 per cent of the respondents pursuing their post-graduation. The following table presents the information about the college where the respondents are studying.

Table No: 4 Distribution Of The Respondents By Their College

College Name	Frequency	Percent
AU College of Engineering	268	31.8
AU College of Pharmacy	79	9.4
Dr. L. B. college	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 data in the above table 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.

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 based on their interest. Every year the new NSS volunteers join in this programme. Every year the final year students leave the programme. It is a cycle of programme. The following table presents the information about the year of joining in NSS Programme.

Table No: 5 Distribution Of The Respondents By Their Year Of Joining

Year of Joining in NSS	Frequency	Percent
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 NSS Programme in 2020 and followed by 21.9 per cent of the respondents joined in NSS programme in 2019.

Regular Activities In NSS Programme

Under the NSS Regular Activity, students undertake various service and developmental programmes in the adopted villages, college/school campuses, and urban slums during weekends or after college hours to complete 120 hours in an academic year. Out of 120 hours, 20 hours is meant for orientation to newly joined NSS volunteers through lectures, discussions, field visit and audio-visuals, 30 hours is meant for campus work project for the benefit of institution and college students and remaining 70 hours for community service in adopted village/urban slums (Rajalakshmi Das and Sarat Chandra Sahoo, 2014). The following table presents the information about the participation of the respondents in the regular activities of the NSS.

Table No: 6 Distribution Of The Respondents By Their Participation In Regular Activities

Participation	Yes	No	Total
Participation in Regular Activities	697 (82.8%)	145 (17.2%)	842 (100%)

The data in the above table revealed that 82.8 per cent of the respondents stated that they actively participated in the regular activities of NSS programme, while 17.2 per cent of the respondents stated that they did not participate in the regular activities due to Covid-19 and other personal problems. The following table presents the information on respondents' participation in the rallies as part of the regular activities.

Table No:7 Distribution Of The Respondents By Their Participation In Rallies

Participation	Yes	No	Total
Participation in Rallies	614 (72.9)	228 (27.1)	842 (100%)

The data in the above table revealed that 72.9 per cent of the respondents stated that they participated in the rallies of awareness programmes, while 27.1 per cent of the respondents stated that they did not participate in the rallies of NSS programme in this year.

Generally, NSS volunteers celebrate a few important and national days to create awareness among general population to observe the importance of the day. The major important days observed by the volunteers through NSS are World Environment Day, International Women's Day, Elderly Day, International Yoga Day, International Human Rights Day, Indian Constitution Day, Literacy Day, Unity Day, World AIDS Day, Youth Day, Independence Day, and Republic Day. Based on the fund and other sources the colleges and universities organise different activities on these days. The following table presents the participation of the respondents in the importance days.

Table No: 8 Distribution Of The Respondents By Their Participation In National And International Important Days

Volunteers participation in important days	Yes	No	Not answered	Total
World Environment Day	659 (78.3)	183 (21.7)	0	842 (100%)
International Women's Day	529 (62.8)	182 (21.6)	131 (15.6)	842 (100%)
International Elderly Day	317 (37.6)	311 (36.9)	214 (25.4)	842 (100%)
International Yoga Day	597 (70.9)	140 (16.6)	105 (12.5)	842 (100%)
International Human Rights Day	451 (53.6)	215 (25.5)	176 (20.9)	842 (100%)
Indian Constitution Day	387 (46.0)	260 (30.9)	195 (23.2)	842 (100%)
International Literacy Day	387 (46.0)	254 (30.2)	201 (23.9)	842 (100%)
National Unity Day	370 (43.9)	257 (30.5)	215 (25.5)	842 (100%)
World AIDS Day	401 (47.6)	254 (30.2)	187 (22.2)	842 (100%)
National Youth Day	479 (56.9)	198 (23.5)	165 (19.6)	842 (100%)
Indian Independence Day	634 (75.3)	120 (14.3)	88 (10.5)	842 (100%)
Indian Republic Day	580 (68.9)	141 (16.7)	121 (14.4)	842 (100%)

The data in the above table revealed that the volunteers highly participated in a few activities i.e. 78.3 per cent of the respondents participated in World Environment day, 70.9 per cent of the respondents participated in International Yoga day, and 68.3 per cent of the respondents participated in Indian Republic day. And the data in the above table revealed that the volunteers participation is very less in a few activities i.e. there are 37.6 per cent of the respondents are participated in the International Elderly day, 30.9 per cent of the respondents did not participate in the Indian Constitution day, 43.9 per cent of the respondents participated in the National Unity day. The participation of the respondents based on their interest, availability of conducting the programme in their college or university. The Covid-19 is one of the major reasons to decrease the participation of NSS volunteers in the national important days.

Special Camps

Special campaign is one of the important activities in NSS. The NSS units organise special camps 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 and Social Harmony'. 'Youth for Sustainable Development with special focus on Watershed Management and Wasteland Development. Every year 50 per cent of the volunteers of each NSS unit participate in special camps which are of seven days duration (NSS, 2022). The following table presents the information on the participation of the NSS volunteers in the special camps.

Table No: 9 Distribution Of The Respondents By Their Participation In Special Camp For 7Days

Participation	Yes	No	Not Answered	Total
Participation in Special Camp	190 (22.6)	636 (75.5)	16 (1.9)	842 (100%)

The data in the above table revealed that 75.5 per cent of the respondents have not participated in the special camp in the year of 2021 and only 22.6 per cent of the respondents have participated in the special camp. The following table presents the information about the major reasons in not to participate in the special camp.

Table No: 10 Distribution Of The Respondents By Their Reasons To Not Participation

Reasons to not participation	Frequency	Percent
Not Organised due to prevailing Covid-19 pandemic situation	295	35.0
Permission not given by Government of India due to COVID-19	135	16.0
Personal Problems	38	4.5
I Don't Know	184	21.9
Participated	190	22.6
Total	842	100.0

The data in the above table revealed that 35 per cent of the respondents stated that the camps were not organised by the NSS unit, 21.9 per cent of the respondents stated that they do not aware on the event and 16.0 per cent of the respondents stated that the permission is not given by the Government of India to organise the special camp due to Covid-19. The following table presents the information on respondents' participation in NSS activities and services.

Table No: 11 Distribution Of The Respondents By Their Participation In Other NSS Related Activities And Services

Volunteers Participation in other NSS activities and services	Yes	No	Not answered	Total
Youth Festivals	399 (47.4)	334 (39.7)	109 (12.9)	842 (100%)
Webinars	526 (62.5)	251 (29.8)	65 (7.7)	842 (100%)
Workshops	406 (48.2)	318 (37.8)	118 (14.0)	842 (100%)
Youth Leadership Camp	313 (37.2)	375 (44.5)	154 (18.3)	842 (100%)
National Youth Exchange Programme	325 (38.6)	367 (43.6)	150 (17.8)	842 (100%)
Poshan Abhiyan Programme	290 (34.4)	388 (46.1)	164 (19.5)	842 (100%)
Fit India Programme	391 (46.4)	320 (38.0)	131 (15.6)	842 (100%)
Adolescent Issues Programme	307 (36.5)	356 (42.3)	179 (21.3)	842 (100%)
Life Skills Education Programme	424 (50.4)	293 (34.8)	125 (14.8)	842 (100%)
Swatch Bharat Activities	576 (68.4)	209 (24.8)	57 (6.8)	842 (100%)
Massive Cleaning Programme	446 (53.0)	272 (32.3)	124 (14.7)	842 (100%)
Blood Donation Programme	397 (47.1)	329 (39.1)	116 (13.8)	842 (100%)
Intellectual Sessions	306 (36.3)	357 (42.4)	179 (21.3)	842 (100%)
Jala Shakthi Abhiyan	288 (34.2)	383 (45.5)	171 (20.3)	842 (100%)
National Integration Camps	287 (34.1)	393 (46.7)	162 (19.2)	842 (100%)

National Adventure Camps	268 (31.8)	398 (47.3)	176 (20.9)	842 (100%)
Pre R D Camps	243 (28.9)	420 (49.9)	179 (21.3)	842 (100%)

The data in the above table revealed that the volunteers highly participated in a few other NSS related activities and services i.e. 68.4 per cent of the respondents stated that they participated in Swatch Bharat activities, 62.5 per cent of the respondents stated that they participated in the webinars, 53.0 per cent of the respondents stated that they participated in Massive cleaning programme, and 50.4 per cent of the respondents participated in life skills education programme. The data in the above table revealed that the volunteers participation in a few NSS activities and services is very low i.e. 28.9 per cent of the respondents participated in Pre R D Camps, 31.8 per cent of the respondents participated in National Adventure Camps, 34.1 per cent of the respondents participated in National Integration Camps and 34.2 per cent of the respondents participated in Jala Shakthi Abhiyan programme. The following table presents the respondents' participation in Covid-19 relief activities.

Table No: 12 Distribution Of The Respondents By Their Participation In Covid-19 Relief Activities

Participation	Yes	No	Not answered	Total
Participation in Covid Relief Activities	374 (44.4%)	430 (51.1%)	38 (4.5%)	842 (100%)

The data in the above table revealed that 51.1 per cent of the respondents not participated in covid-19 relief activities, while 44.4 per cent of the respondents participated in the Covid-19 relief activities. It may be a reason that the parents of the volunteers had not allowed them to participate in Covid-19 relief activities due to fear. The following table presents how NSS programme is useful to NSS volunteers.

Table No: 13 Distribution Of The Respondents By Their Answer To How NSS Helped Them

NSS helped them to	Yes	No	Not Answered	Total
Acquire Knowledge through NSS Programme participation	711 (84.4)	20 (2.4)	111 (13.2)	842 (100%)
Increase Positive Attitude	693 (82.3)	21 (2.5)	128 (15.2)	842 (100%)
Maturity in Thinking	662 (78.6)	30 (3.6)	150 (17.8)	842 (100%)
Increase more interest towards community services	682 (81.0)	26 (3.1)	134 (15.9)	842 (100%)
Increase more interest towards education	619 (73.5)	43 (5.1)	180 (21.4)	842 (100%)
Gain more clarity on my career goal	569 (67.6)	69 (8.2)	204 (24.2)	842 (100%)
Get Certificate	635 (75.4)	38 (4.5)	169 (20.1)	842 (100%)
Get Recognition	538 (63.9)	85 (10.1)	219 (26.0)	842 (100%)
Visit Various Service Organisations	591 (70.2)	64 (7.6)	187 (22.2)	842 (100%)
Serve the community while studying	657 (78.0)	34 (4.0)	151 (17.9)	842 (100%)

The data in the above table revealed that 84.4 per cent of the respondents acquired knowledge through NSS programme participation, 82.3 per cent respondents improved their positive attitude, 81.0 per cent of the respondents' interest increased towards community services, and 78.0 per cent of the respondents feeling that it is an opportunity to serve the community while studying. The following table presents the respondents' opinion on functioning of Programme Officers (PO).

Table No: 14 Distribution Of The Respondents By Their Opinion On Functioning Of PO

Functioning of PO	Frequency	Per cent
Very Good	483	57.4
Good	285	33.8
Average	35	4.2

Not Satisfactory	8	1.0
Not Answered	31	3.7
Total	842	100.0

The data in the above table revealed that 57.4 per cent of the respondents opined that the functioning of NSS POs is very good, followed by 33.8 per cent of the respondents stated that the functioning of NSS POs is good. Only 1.0 per cent of the respondents stated that the functioning of the POs units is not satisfactory. The data in the above table revealed the opinion of the respondents on NSS Unit in their college.

Table No: 15 Distribution Of The Respondents By Their Opinion On Functioning Of NSS Unit In Their College

Functioning of NSS Unit in Your College	Frequency	Percent
Very Good	469	55.7
Good	291	34.6
Average	41	4.9
Not Satisfactory	10	1.2
Not Answered	31	3.7
Total	842	100.0

The data in the above table revealed that 55.7 per cent of the respondents opined that the functioning of NSS units is very good, followed by 34.6 per cent of the respondents opined that the functioning of NSS units is good. Only 1.2 per cent of the respondents opined that the functioning of the NSS units in their college is not satisfactory.

Suggestions And Recommendations

1. The programme officers of NSS should identify the activities where the volunteers participation is low and counsel NSS volunteers to promote more participation in all the activities
2. NSS volunteers should feel social responsibility and actively participate in all the activities related to NSS programme
3. The Programme Officers and the Principals of NSS College units should select and encourage responsible, interested students who have enthusiasm towards social service and community development. There should be a strict selection procedure to enrol as NSS volunteers and it should be transparent. Proper orientation to newly enrolled NSS volunteers on various NSS activities.
4. Monitoring and Evaluation should be done properly by the programme officers and the colleges, universities for effective implementation of NSS activities and active participation of the NSS volunteers
5. The NSS college unit should prepare an action plan for entire year and conduct a periodical review of NSS activities regularly
6. The counselling sessions should be conducted to the parents of NSS volunteers to understand the activities and to support NSS volunteers.
7. Regular capacity building activities should be conducted for newly recruited NSS volunteers
8. 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.
9. Provision of incentives to the student volunteers should be increased and the funds should be released on-time.
10. Sufficient funds should be allocated by the ministry of youth affairs, Government of India 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 NSS units of the colleges.
11. All NSS activities should focus on the all-round development of student youth

Social Work Profession And NSS

Social Work is a practice-based profession. It promotes social change and development and social cohesion among human beings. It protects human rights. It works with individuals, groups and communities and promotes social well-being (Abraham M, 2017). 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 motivate the NSS volunteers towards social service. The Social Work methods such as group work, community organisation, shall be imparted to NSS volunteers as part of capacity building.

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