A Study of the Impact of National Service Scheme on Empowering Youth & Progression

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***Abstract*—India has an abundance of young people. The terms youth involvement, leadership, civic engagement, and self-efficacy are interchangeable with "empowerment" in the context of youth development initiatives. Youth empowerment is one of the main issues of the day. Youth empowerment is crucial because it inspires self-reliance in them. In addition to fostering economic prosperity, youth empowerment promotes personal development and societal change. The NSS program, which the central government launched in 1969, is the main subject of this study. The information about how their involvement with the NSS unit empowered them was gathered through focus group interviews. The purpose of this research report is to determine how well the program empowers and develops young people. Data was gathered using both primary and secondary sources. Ninety students were selected as the sample size for analysis and interpretation. Based on the replies gathered, this report also attempts to offer recommendations for increased efficacy.**

***Index Terms*—Youth, Empowerment, NSS & Development**

I. INTRODUCTION

The National Service Scheme (NSS) in India, launched in 1969, is a government-sponsored program under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. It aims to develop the personality and character of students through community service. The NSS provides opportunities for students in schools and colleges to engage in various community service activities and programs.

Objectives of NSS:

- To understand the community and their relationship within it.
- To identify community needs and problems and engage in problem-solving.
- To develop a sense of social and civic responsibility.
- To utilize their knowledge to find practical solutions for individual and community issues.
- To gain skills in mobilizing community participation.
- To acquire leadership qualities and democratic values.
- To develop the capacity to handle emergencies and natural disasters.
- To promote national integration and social harmony.

Youth empowerment

Youth empowerment is the process of enabling young people to gain power and control over their lives and futures. It involves fostering their skills, confidence, and opportunities to participate fully in society and make positive changes in their communities. Here's a breakdown of key aspects of youth empowerment:

Core Principles:

- Participation: Providing young people with a voice and involving them in decision-making processes that affect their lives.
- Opportunity: Creating avenues for skill development, leadership training, and meaningful experiences.
- Agency: Empowering young people to make their own choices, solve problems, and take action.

The "3 C's" of Youth Empowerment:

- Competence: Developing skills and knowledge to handle challenges effectively.
- Confidence: Building self-belief and a positive self-image.
- Connection: Fostering strong, supportive relationships with family, friends, mentors, and the community.

Why is Youth Empowerment Important?

- Develops Future Leaders: Equips young people with the skills and confidence to take on leadership roles.
- Fosters Innovation: Encourages creativity, fresh perspectives, and the drive to challenge the status quo.
- Promotes Social Responsibility: Instills a sense of civic duty and encourages active participation in community development.
- Improves Academic Performance: Empowered youth are often more motivated and engaged in their education.
- Enhances Employability: Develops critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills sought after by employers.
- Builds Resilience: Helps young people cope with challenges, setbacks, and uncertainties.
- Reduces Risky Behaviors: Provides positive outlets and a sense of purpose, making them less likely to engage in harmful activities.
- Contributes to Economic Growth: A skilled and engaged youth population drives innovation and productivity.
- Strengthens Communities: Empowered youth become active and responsible citizens who contribute to the well-being of their communities.

Strategies for Youth Empowerment:

- Education and Skill Development: Providing access to quality education, vocational training, and life skills programs.
- Mentorship: Connecting young people with experienced adults who can offer guidance and support.
- Leadership Training: Developing leadership skills through clubs, youth councils, and other opportunities.
- Community Involvement: Engaging youth in volunteer work, community projects, and civic activities.
- Providing Platforms for Voice: Creating spaces for young people to share their opinions and ideas.
- Promoting Entrepreneurship: Offering training and support for young people to start their own businesses.
- Enhancing Mental Health Awareness and Support: Providing access to counseling and resources to address emotional and psychological challenges.
- Fostering Inclusivity: Creating environments where all youth feel valued and respected, regardless of their background.
- Building Self-Confidence: Providing opportunities for achievement and recognizing their accomplishments.

Examples of Youth Empowerment Programs:

- Mentoring Programs: Pairing youth with adult mentors for guidance and support.
- Leadership Development Programs: Training youth in communication, problem-solving, and decision-making.
- Skill-Building Workshops: Providing training in areas like technology, entrepreneurship, arts, and vocational trades.
- Youth Councils and Forums: Creating platforms for youth to voice their opinions and participate in decision-making.
- Community Service Initiatives: Engaging youth in volunteer projects that address community needs.
- Entrepreneurship Programs: Providing resources and training for young people to start their own businesses.
- Arts and Cultural Programs: Offering creative outlets for self-expression and cultural awareness.
- Sports and Recreation Programs: Promoting physical health, teamwork, and discipline.
- Peer Support Groups: Creating safe spaces for young people to share experiences and support each other.

Youth empowerment is not just about helping young people individually; it's about creating a society where their potential is recognized, nurtured, and utilized for the collective good. By investing in youth empowerment, we invest in a brighter future for all.

NSS and Youth Empowerment:

The NSS plays a significant role in youth empowerment by providing a platform for students to:

- Develop Leadership Skills: By organizing and participating in various activities, students learn to take initiative, manage teams, and make decisions.
- Enhance Social Responsibility: Engaging with the community and understanding their problems instills a sense of responsibility towards society.
- Gain Practical Experience: NSS activities provide hands-on experience in various fields, which can be valuable for their future careers.
- Improve Personality and Character: Involvement in community service helps students develop empathy, compassion, and a positive attitude.
- Promote National Integration: Through events like National Integration Camps, students from different parts of the country come together, fostering unity and understanding.
- Increase Awareness: NSS volunteers become more aware of social issues and contribute to finding solutions.
- Boost Self-Confidence: Successfully completing NSS activities and contributing to the community enhances students' self-esteem.

The motto of NSS, "Not Me But You," emphasizes selfless service and encourages youth to prioritize community needs. By participating in NSS, young individuals become active contributors to society, thus empowering themselves and the community around them.

Significance of the Study

It's indeed insightful to highlight the pivotal role of youth in India's aspirations to become a superpower. With a significant demographic dividend, the energy and potential of young people are undeniably a powerful asset. Your observation that focusing on and empowering this youth is crucial for achieving this goal is spot on.

The National Service Scheme (NSS) emerges as a valuable instrument in this context. Your perspective on how the NSS serves as a medium for youth empowerment and contributes to their holistic (360-degree) personality development is well-placed and aligns with the program's objectives.

A research study focusing on the impact of NSS on youth empowerment and development is highly relevant in the current scenario for several compelling reasons:

Relevance of Studying NSS Impact on Youth Empowerment in the Current Scenario:

- Harnessing the Demographic Dividend: India has a large youth population, which can be a significant advantage. However, this demographic dividend needs to be nurtured and empowered to translate into tangible progress. Studying the effectiveness of programs like NSS in this empowerment process is crucial for maximizing this potential.
- Addressing Skill Gaps and Employability: The current job market demands more than just academic qualifications. It requires a well-rounded personality with skills like leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, and social responsibility – areas that NSS aims to cultivate. Research can assess how effectively NSS bridges these skill gaps and enhances youth employability.
- Fostering Social Cohesion and Responsible Citizenship: In a diverse and evolving society like India, instilling values of social harmony, empathy, and responsible citizenship among the youth is paramount. Research can explore the extent to which NSS activities contribute to these crucial aspects.
- Promoting Holistic Development: Education should not be limited to academics. Character development, community engagement, and exposure to real-world issues are equally important. Studying the impact of NSS on the overall personality development of students can provide valuable insights into fostering holistic growth.
- Evidence-Based Policy Making: Research findings on the impact of NSS can provide valuable data for policymakers to strengthen and refine youth development programs. It can help identify best practices, areas for improvement, and the need for scaling up successful initiatives.
- Understanding the Role of Extracurricular Activities: In an increasingly competitive world, the role of extracurricular activities

like NSS in shaping well-rounded individuals is significant. Research can shed light on the specific contributions of NSS compared to other such activities.

- ❖ Measuring the Return on Investment in Youth Programs: Investing in youth empowerment requires resources. Research can help quantify the social and economic returns on investment in programs like NSS by demonstrating their impact on individual and societal development.
- ❖ Addressing Contemporary Challenges: Today's youth face unique challenges such as mental health issues, environmental concerns, and social inequalities. Research can explore how NSS platforms can be leveraged to create awareness, promote solutions, and empower youth to become agents of change in addressing these challenges.
- ❖ Aligning with National Goals: India's aspiration to become a superpower is intertwined with the capabilities and character of its youth. Research on NSS can provide insights into how this program contributes to building a generation of empowered and responsible citizens who can drive national progress.

In conclusion, the proposed research on the impact of NSS on youth empowerment and development is not only relevant but also crucial in the current Indian context. The findings of such a study can provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and youth organizations in their efforts to harness the potential of India's youth and pave the way for the nation's ascent as a global superpower.

Objectives

1) To study the various Government schemes for youth empowerment.
2) To study the impact of NSS scheme on youth empowerment
3) To study the change in behaviour of youth due to NSS.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- ❖ Research Design: Explanatory & Descriptive Research: The current research is explanatory in nature as it tries to find cause and effect relationship between NSS & youth empowerment.
- ❖ Data Collection: Survey method & Interview method is used to collect data from the respondents through questionnaire.
- ❖ Sample: Convenient sampling technique was to be adopted to collect the sample size of 90 respondents.

III. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Table 1: Age Group

S. No.	Age Group	Percentage
1.	Above 25	20
2.	21-25	69
3.	1-20	11

Figure 1: Age Group

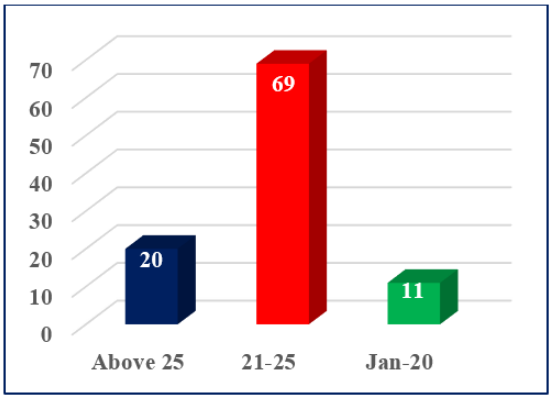


Table 2: Family Background

S. No.	Family background	Percentage
1.	Lower Income Group	21
2.	Middle Income Group	68
3.	Higher Income group	11

Figure 2: Family Background

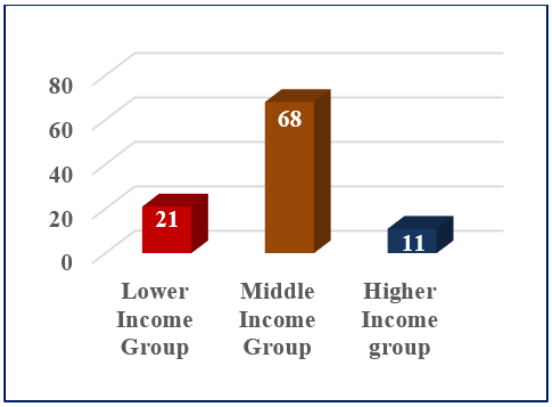


Table 3: School Background

S. No.	School background	Percentage
1.	English Medium	64
2.	Hindi Medium	36

Figure 3: School Background

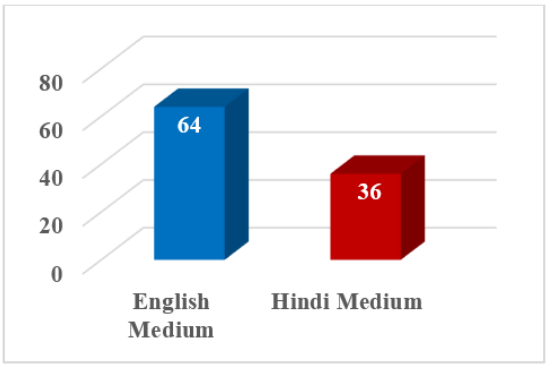


Table 4: Awareness about NSS

S. No.	Awareness about NSS	Percentage
1.	Yes	98
2.	No	2

Figure 4: Awareness about NSS

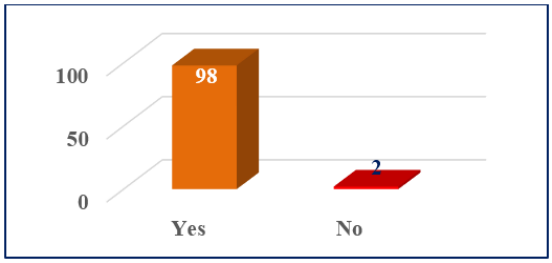


Table 5: Impact of NSS on Youth

S. No.	Impact of NSS	Percentage
1.	Leadership	19
2.	Confidence	63
3.	Teamwork	21
4.	Cooperation	7

Figure 5: Impact of NSS on Youth

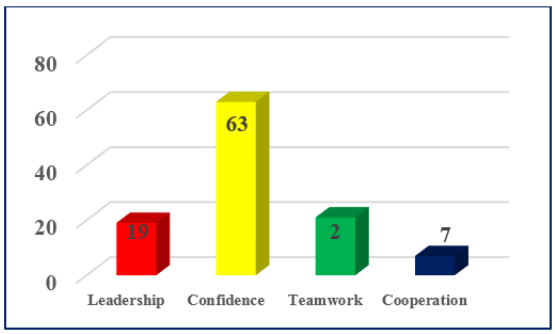


Table 6: Satisfaction about Contribution in NSS

S. No.	Awareness about NSS	Percentage
1.	Yes	91
2.	No	8
3.	May be	1

Figure 6: Satisfaction about Contribution in NSS

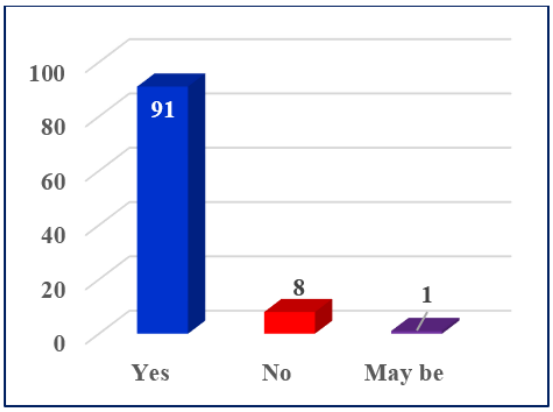


Table 7: NSS will help in employment

S. No.	NSS will help in employment	Percentage
1.	Yes	54
2.	No	35
3.	May be	11

Figure 7: NSS will help in employment

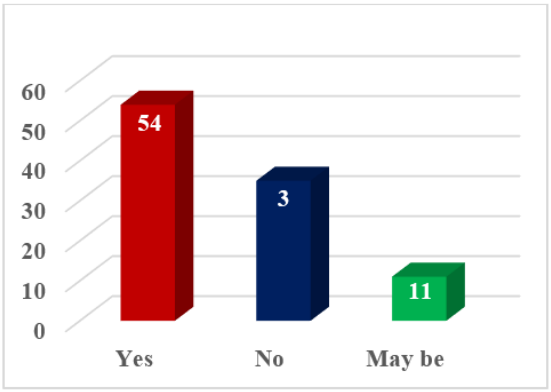
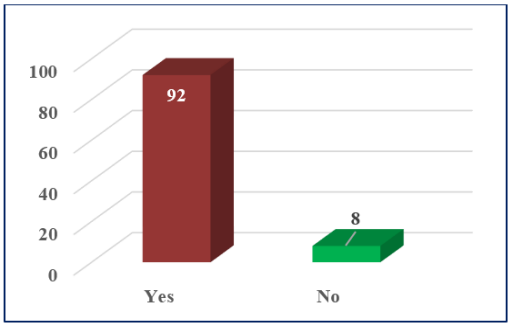


Table: 8 Behavioral Changes as NSS Member

S. No.	Behavioural Changes	Percentage
1.	Yes	92
2.	No	8

Figure: 8 Behavioral Changes as NSS Member



IV. DISCUSSION

From the above data we can interpret that;

68% of the surveyed students joining NSS are from the middle-income group and falls in an age group of 21-25. Majority of them are having English as their medium of education.
98% of the surveyed students are aware about the NSS and different governmental schemes for youth development.
63% of surveyed students feel that NSS had impacted them in positive manner – helped them in developing leadership qualities, boost confidence & encourage them in teamwork.
About 91% of surveyed students are satisfied with their contribution in NSS and towards society.
Approx. 54% of the surveyed students feels that NSS will help them in getting employment.
92% of the surveyed students feels that NSS has brought about major behavioural changes in their behaviour such as time management, become extrovert, be proactive, helped them to become team player, serve community first then self, and ability to survive under any situation.

V. CONCLUSION

The National Service Scheme (NSS) holds significant value in several key areas:

1. Youth Empowerment and Personality Development:
- ❖ Holistic Growth: NSS plays a crucial role in the 360-degree personality development of students by fostering essential skills and values beyond academics.
- ❖ Leadership and Teamwork: Participation in NSS activities provides opportunities to develop leadership qualities, organizational skills, and the ability to work effectively in teams.
- ❖ Social Responsibility: It instills a sense of social and civic responsibility, encouraging youth to become active and engaged citizens.
- ❖ Self-Confidence and Competence: By engaging in community service and addressing real-world issues, volunteers gain practical experience, boost their self-confidence, and develop essential competencies.
- ❖ Empathy and Compassion: Interacting with diverse communities and understanding their challenges cultivates empathy and a caring attitude towards others.

2. Community Engagement and Social Impact:
- ❖ Bridging the Gap: NSS helps connect students with the realities of community life, particularly in rural and underprivileged areas, reducing the disconnect between academic institutions and society.
- ❖ Addressing Community Needs: Volunteers actively participate in identifying and addressing the needs and problems of the community, contributing to problem-solving and development.
- ❖ Promoting Social Welfare: NSS activities often focus on improving health, education, sanitation, environmental awareness, and disaster relief, directly contributing to the well-being of communities.
- ❖ National Integration: By bringing together students from different backgrounds and regions through events like National Integration Camps, NSS fosters unity, understanding, and a sense of national pride.

3. Educational Value:
- ❖ Learning Through Service: The core principle of NSS is "Education through Service," emphasizing experiential learning and applying knowledge to real-world situations.
- ❖ Practical Skills: Volunteers gain hands-on experience in various fields, enhancing their practical skills and making them more employable.
- ❖ Value Education: NSS promotes values such as selfless service, discipline, dignity of labor, sincerity, and patriotism.

4. National Development:
- ❖ Harnessing Youth Potential: NSS provides a platform to channel the energy and capabilities of youth towards constructive nation-building activities.
- ❖ Creating Responsible Citizens: By grooming young individuals into active and responsible citizens, NSS contributes to the overall progress and development of the nation.
- ❖ Addressing Social Issues: NSS volunteers often participate in campaigns against social evils, promoting national objectives like democracy, secularism, and social harmony.
- ❖ In essence, the significance of NSS lies in its ability to empower youth, contribute to community development, provide valuable educational experiences, and foster

responsible citizenship, all of which are crucial for India's progress and its aspirations for the future. The motto "Not Me But You" encapsulates the essence of NSS, emphasizing selfless service and the importance of the community.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. Sagar Sahu: Planning, Execution, Guidance and final draft correction.
Mr. Khilesh Sahu: Data Collection
Ms. Devshree Sharma: Data Collection
Mr. Piyush Verma: Data Collection.
Mr. Tushar Tripathi: Data Collection.
Mr. Rahul Chandrakar: Data Collection.
Dr. D. S. Raghuwanshi: Planning, Execution.
Mr. Gunjan Kalyani: Draft writing.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

ETHICS

No ethical issues.

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