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## NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME: WOMEN EMPOWERMENT\_ EFFOERTS OF NSS

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### ABSTRACT :

The National Service Scheme promotes women's empowerment in India through several community-based activities and programs. This paper studies the activities done by NSS to raise social awareness, develop skills for women, improve their personal hygiene, and eradicate the taboo associated with it. It draws on government reports, local surveys, and examples. NSS volunteers take initiatives and plan and conduct health camps for women, literacy drives, skits, and street plays to deliver a message to society, surveys on important topics like digital literacy, women's safety in the area, etc. It works on different aspects and requirements of the society, like health and hygiene seminars, gender equality awareness seminars, skill-building workshops, and surveys on addiction and women's digital literacy. The National Service Scheme aims to establish a sense of social awareness together with students in some of the social service schemes coordinated and operated by colleges and universities with minimal financial support mandated by the government. Empowerment is considered to be a mechanism of transformation, self-development, and autonomous decision-making.[1] The NSS recognizes women's empowerment as a mechanism and promotes the war and negotiation of groups for their privileges. Recommendations are offered to strengthen planning partnership and monitoring to increase the reach and impact of these initiatives.

**Keywords:** Women Empowerment, National Service Scheme, Youth Volunteering, Literacy Programs, Community, Gender Equality.

### INTRODUCTION

Women's rights and equal participation are essential for any country's growth. Empowering women is necessary for sustainable development and social justice. In India, women suffer through lack of equal opportunities, social restrictions, poor health services and lack of higher studies. Even after legal and constitutional safeguards, women still face physical and mental harassment and gender inequality. Women have the capability to accelerate the economic growth of the country if their participation in the workforce is increased.[2] The NSS program aims to support those in need, increase the quality of living, and have good access to basic services in their lives with integrity. NSS volunteers are working based on a census, health care, and education literacy initiative in remote regions welcomed by villagers and schools to serve the community. Both students and the community benefit from the NSS, which is in several different ways. NSS helps a student in personal and societal advancement. It let students to developing leadership skills and understanding of people from various walks of life. Students can also learn other skills that will allow them to survive better in multiple circumstances. It helps them to be diligent and structured to achieve your objectives. [1] It is an activity to study people and life through active participation in addition it is helpful in the vivid and clear study of various fields of sciences [6].

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Empowerment at its true self is when the powerless gain control over various resources and ideologies. Empowering them and making them well educated and making them aware of their individuality. NSS always worked towards promoting volunteerism among young students and community development. Government reports and research show NSS has effectively improved the local education system and health awareness [4][5]. Ali Amjad's paper explains how NSS camps bring students of different disciplines and societal levels together and work towards developing rural areas; this bridges the social gap between the urban and rural students. During these camps, many events are organised to make young girls and women to participate, this builds bonds and trust amongst the villagers and students. NSS is an activity through which the university makes a welcome effort to reach the society. We believe that the university should not restrict its work to education and research only, but should also make continual efforts for the progress of the common masses. With this thought the university is implementing numerous activities and NSS is one such important activity.[6]

When we studied Sanjoy Mudi and Tuhin Kumar Samanta's research, we understood how NSS has an impact on social norms and values of higher education and promoting equality amongst the students. "NSS fosters a sense of unity and integrity among the diverse cultures and communities in India." (slrtdc.in) (<https://slrtdc.in/about-us/nss-committee/>) One of the most significant contributions of NSS is its commitment to promoting equality and inclusivity. By engaging volunteers in activities that serve marginalized communities, such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and women, 'NSS' challenges the traditional social hierarchies that often perpetuate discrimination and exclusion. Another critical way NSS promotes inclusivity and social

justice is through awareness and advocacy campaigns. NSS volunteers conduct awareness drives on critical social issues such as caste discrimination, child labor, gender-based violence, and environmental degradation. These campaigns often engage not just the marginalized communities but also the broader public, including students, local leaders, and policy-makers. [7].

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## STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

The women of India might be safe on paper but not on the streets. Even in this modernised times most Indian women still couldn't complete higher studies, get paid less for the same work, face discrimination, and be forced to follow mythical rituals. All these factors pull women back from their true potentials, dreams, and innovations. Lack of proper guidance and education leads to such problems. thus causing women being unempowered. While NSS units have taken up women's issues, the impact is sometimes limited by short-term planning, low resources, and lack of follow-up. There is a need for clear, structured programs that address these barriers with community support and careful monitoring.

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## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the role of efforts of NSS in empowering women.
- To present the main activities carried out by NSS for women's education, health, skills and rights.
- To understand the changes faced by NSS units running various programs and conducting activities.
- To evaluate the impact of these activities on local communities.
- To document specific volunteer-led interventions like personal hygiene sessions for young girls, legal aid awareness, and digital literacy initiatives.
- To assess the impact of these activities on attitudes, knowledge, and behaviours in targeted communities.
- To identify systematic and operational challenges in conducting sessions for women in rural areas.
- To recommend practical, sustainable strategies for strengthening NSS efforts and ensuring meaningful, long-term changes.

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## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This paper tries to through some light on the important role students can play in helping women gain better health, education, and skills. By studying NSS efforts, it offers practical ideas for policymakers, educators, and volunteers to improve community programs. It also adds to the research on youth-led community service and social change, showing how simple, local efforts can help reduce inequality. Taking such initiatives such a teaching personal hygiene, promoting nutrition, conducting addiction surveys, explaining good and bad touch and educating women about some important government scheme which benefits them and enhancing their skills so that they can run micro enterprise sand showcase their potential. NSS not only benefit the women of local community but also the female volunteers of the unit. The difference NSS activities help the volunteers to build their self-concept and emotional maturity [8]. It contributes to youth-led development, empowering volunteers with their self-learnt skills that makes lasting impact in the society and their life as well.

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## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Primary Data Collection:

Observations made during NSS activities such as special camps, unit camps, health camps, literacy classes, and training workshops.

Personal involvement in planning and conducting webinars on women empowerment and legal awareness.

Surveys conducted to assess levels of addiction and digital literacy needs in the community. Informal interviews with local women, girls, community leaders, and fellow volunteers.

### Target Area and Population:

Rural communities served by NSS unit specially women and adolescent girls with limited formal education, poor health access and restricted economic opportunities.

### Evaluation Criteria:

The effectiveness of the campaign was asses based on:

- Types of activities offered
- Changes in knowledge, skills, or behaviour noticed by participants.

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## FINDINGS

NSS teams hold camp on mental health, nutrition, and menstrual hygiene. Volunteers distribute sanitary products and explain their use. Volunteers teach adult women to lead and write, encourage girls to stay in school, and offer basic financial literacy. NSS unit run workshop on tailoring, handicraft, and simple computer skills. Connections from local self-groups helps the women of rural areas by conducting sessions and providing required rescotes. Nutrition education session emphasized the importance of balance diets, hygiene practices, and maternal health, especially for adolescent girls and their mothers. Interactive discussions on topics such as good and bad touch and personal safety, empowering girls to recognize abuse and seek help.

Legal awareness seminar and conducted for provided women with proper knowledge about their right, legals aid services, and avenues for redress. Digital literacy session introduction basic smartphones use, online safety, and access to government scheme, helping bridge the technological gap. Fostering

micro-enterprises that generate supplementary income and promote self-reliance. Volunteers themselves reported growth in empathy, leadership, and communication skills, while community feedback the relevance and positive impact of these activities. Volunteers use street plays, rallies, and discussions to talk about women's rights and gender equality. Local leaders often support these activities, but there are also challenges such as social resistance and limited funds.

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## RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

The NSS efforts studied showed real benefits for women's health, education, and economic skills. Women who took part reported better knowledge about health, more confidence, and new ways to earn an income. Volunteers also said they felt more aware of gender issues and better prepared to help. However, many activities were short-term and could not always follow up with participants. Social traditions in some places made it hard to get women to join. Funding was also a challenge. This shows that while NSS can do good work, success depends on strong planning, community support, and steady resources.

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## LIMITATIONS

- The observations made were for short term, thus the long-term effects weren't taken note of.
- Major focus was on small rural village and thus it may not represent all of India
- Data was mainly quantitative as it was done in a small scale
- Social restrictions sometimes limited open discussions with the villagers.
- Data collection was primary and reliant on villagers' self-reports.
- Cultural sensitivities constrain some programs and activities.
- Resource and time limitations.

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## CONCLUSION

The National Service Scheme has been an important link between the community and youth-led development. Through personalized engagement and ground-level programs, NSS volunteers have helped empower women with awareness, skills, and self-worth. NSS led transformative initiatives that aimed to educate, uplift, and empower women, especially in rural areas. Many NSS volunteers team up to conduct helpful events like legal aid seminars for college students and women, team up with NGOs to conduct seminars, educate children of villages by taking evening tuition during unit camps, create a safe space for girls and women of the village, and take door-to-door surveys. These efforts not only created a big difference in the community but also helped the volunteers to shape their personalities into those of responsible citizens and as youth who aren't afraid of taking leadership roles.

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