

A BRIEF NOTE ON NSS IN MEGHALAYA

National Service Scheme (NSS) is a scheme under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India. Launched in the birth centenary year of Mahatma Gandhi (1969), NSS is now the biggest volunteer force in the country with 3.26 million student volunteers spread over 251 Universities and 41 (+2) Councils and implemented in 22, 800 academic higher institutions.

In Meghalaya, NSS was firstly set up in NEHU, and amongst the colleges: Shillong College, Lady Keane College, St Edmund's College and St Anthony's college had set up NSS in the early 1970s. At present NSS is established in almost all Colleges in Meghalaya and many Higher Secondary Schools. NEIGRIHMS has recently and formally offered setting up of NSS

Enrolment Strength: The Government of India at present has allotted sanction for 18, 634 volunteers in Meghalaya. Each volunteer performs Regular Activities and Special Camping activities for which the Central and State Governments sanctioned at considerable rate.

Aims and Objectives: *The aim of NSS is the development of the personality of students through community service. The main objective of NSS is to make them understand their important relationship with the community, to arouse social consciousness, to develop competence and apply their education for the solution of individual and community problems, to work creatively and constructively with the community around and to promote National integration etc.* The motto of NSS is "NOT ME BUT YOU"

Programme: The two programmes of NSS are Regular Activities of 120 hours per year for two consecutive years and Special Camping of 7 days each year. The special camping theme is spread over five core areas viz.,

- (a) Environment including preservation of natural resources and conservation of cultural / historical heritage,
- (b) Health, public sanitation and personal hygiene,
- (c) Rural development including project identification, program formation, implementation and evaluation,
- (d) Education and literacy including legal literacy, and
- (e) Emergency intervention including trauma care, initial counselling and data collection.

Important Activities: Many Institutions used to organise **seminars** on different themes like Legal Literacy, Value Education Programme, Healthy Lifestyle, Career Guidance, Stress Management, Positive Thinking, Women Empowerment, Energy Conservation, Water Conservation, Youth for Peace, Communal Harmony,

Global Warming. Blood Donation Programme, Disaster Management Programme, etc.

Innovative programme relating to Leadership skills, Vegetable/Medicinal Garden, Vermin Compost, Anti plastic Campaign, First aid Skills, Traffic Awareness, Disaster Management, etc

Observation of important days like International Women's Way(8th March), World Health Day (7th April), Anti Terrorism Day and World No Tobacco Day (25th and 31st May), World Environment Day, World Blood Donor Day and International Day Against Drug Abuse(5th, 14th and 26th June), Vana Mahotsav and World Population Day(1-7, 11 July), Independence Day and Sadbhavana Day (15th and 20th August), Teachers' Day, International Literacy Day, International Peace Day and NSS Day(5th, 8th, 15, and 24th September), Blood Donation Day and Gandhi Jayanti (1st, and 2nd October), National Integration Day, Welfare of Minorities Day, Weaker sections Day, Cultural Diversity Day, Women's day and Environmental Conservation Day (19th, 20th, 21-22, 23rd, 24th and 25th of November), World AIDS Day and Human Rights Awareness Programme (1st and 10th December), National Youth Day and Republic Day (12th and 26th January) are being observed.

Other National activities include National Integration Camp, Pre Republic Day and Republic Day Parade, Mega Camp, Adventure Programme, Youth Exchange Programme, etc., which are also participated very actively.

Organisational Structure: The important structure of NSS is based at the unit level. One Programme Officer is looking after a NSS unit of 50 up to 100 student volunteers. He is accountable to the Advisory committee of respective Higher Secondary Schools/College. The Programme Coordinator at the University/Higher Secondary School level is responsible for the implementation of NSS in all the units under its jurisdiction. The State Liaison Officer of each State monitors NSS programme in the State. Youth Officer is supervising for the seven States of North Eastern Region, and the Programme Adviser at the National level.

Collaboration: NSS in Meghalaya used to collaborate with some governmental and non-governmental agencies like Meghalaya AIDS Control Society, Nehru Yuvak Kendra, Bharat Scouts and Guides, State Council of Science, Technology and Environment, Forest Department, Health Department, Civil Defence and Home Guards, Financial/Insurance agencies, local organisations and leaders etc.,.

Training: The nearest Empanelled Training Institute(ETI) for NSS Programme Officers in Meghalaya is R K M Institute (Narendrapur, West Bengal), and another ETI is being proposed to be at Tezpur.

Incentives: NSS Guidelines outlined incentives for those volunteers who successfully completed NSS activities like preference in matters of admission, promotion and other privileges, NSS Awards at the University/Higher Secondary level and National level are being awarded annually.