

Extension Education—The Third Dimension Needs and Aspirations of Indian Youth

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ABSTRACT Though higher Education in India has underdone a number of changes during the past years, Educationists and parents often lodge complaints against the modern educational system for importing irrelevant, purposeless and directionless education to the blooming youth. In our society 'Youth' constitute the bulk of the population that represent abundant and potential source of creative energy but they have become disoriented and disillusioned primarily due to the fallacious examination oriented educational system. So in order to mitigate the multifarious problems connected with youth the New Education Policy has been reviewed, reconsidered and modified. Extension has been recognized as the third dimension of Higher Education. Programmes seeking to inculcate social relevance in the mind, training and up-gradation of their inherent skill are implemented all over the country. In order to involve the youth in national and social development through educational institution emphasis is laid on the need for integrating NSS as a part of the curriculum in the Higher Education System. Thanks to the decisions; NSS has been proved to be an effective students youth movement of Higher Education during the last three decades. If this present trend continues and gathers right momentum it can do wonders by mobilizing the youth forces towards the noble mission of building the nation a new.

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education in India has undergone a number of changes during the past years. It is widely accepted that one of the aims of higher education is to develop the personality of the students through Co-curricular Socio-academic activities. So long extension of education to the surrounding society is not made, such education remains ineffective and rather a burden to the community. "The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion-is it worth the name? Real education is that which enables one to stand on his own legs". – Vivekananda (VII, 147-48)

Education is the major social instrument to

foster the all-round development of the students with integrity and moral and human values. It must stem for the roots and culture of the society, its living conditions, problems, goals and aspiration. Only then can education become relevant to life and contribute to the development of the individual and his society.

Educationists and parents complain that modern educational systems are not relevant to the students, life, problems and future. The young college students are restless with the irrelevant, purposeless, and directionless education they receive. But, the nation need not be pessimistic about youth. The problems of youth, by the youth, can be solved, if youth are taken into the integral parts of the community, and involved in all its activities.

REASONING OF THE BACKGROUND

'Youth' represent the hope and future of our country. They constitute a large group of vibrant resourceful segment of our society. They have a vital role to play in fostering and strengthening social consciousness against communalism and other social evils. Youth in all ages have been in the vanguard of progress and social change. Thirst for freedom, impatience for quicker pace of progress and a passion for innovation, coupled with idealism and creative fervour saw the youth in the forefront of the freedom struggle.

Youth constitute the bulk of Indian population and represent an abundant and potential source of creative energy which is yet to be harnessed. History stands as a testimony to the facts that youth have contributed to the overall development and are second to none. Due to growing population, dwindling employment opportunities and lack of proper orientation, the youth of India, so well endowed, have become disoriented and disillusioned leading to youth unrest. The policy makers and the planners have addressed this situation as the bone of Indian educational system in

addition to its being excessively examination oriented.

The existing scenario of the country reflects multifarious problems connected with youth which manifest in many unlawful activities of misguided youth. Present day youth are full of frustration. They need proper parental guidance, love and affection which is very much lacking in present day society. The immense resources of youth, if galvanized, can work as a major force of socio-economic change.

The National Youth Policy Lays Down the Following Objectives

- i) to instill in youth a deep awareness of and respect for the principles and values enshrined in our constitution.
- ii) to promote among youth the awareness of our historical and cultural heritage and imbue them with a sense of pride and national identity.
- iii) to help develop in youth – the qualities of discipline, self-reliance, justice and fairplay.
- iv) to provide youth with maximum access to education which apart from developing their all- round personality, would equip them with professional and vocational training for employment and self employment opportunities, and
- v) to make youth aware of international issues and involve them in promoting world peace.

There are three dimensions to University education – teaching, research and extension. Extension was added in the year 1977-78 on the All India Vice-Chancellors' Conference. That has added a third dimension. Since then, some Universities have taken it seriously, some have not paid much attention. It is fact that NSS is not active in all Universities. It is also a fact that it is active in some Universities.

When a programme starts in our country, after some time it becomes a ritual. We make it a sort of symbolic thing and pay lip service.

What are the factors? Why in some places NSS is not active? One of the reasons why certain things don't get implemented in Universities is the lack of awareness of the senior faculty members. There are several faculty members in some Universities who think that extension is a waste of time. There are a good number of Vice-Chancellors who are in the same

opinion. The mortality rate of the Vice-Chancellors in the country is very high. The average is three to five years. Some of them do not know the present developments in education and the present national youth policy. Therefore, unless we expose the top policy makers and involve the senior academics, things will not move.

To channelise their youthful energy into constructive work, though Government of India, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports is implementing several programmes seeking to inculcate the values of secularism and national integration, training and upgradation of their skills to open up economic opportunities for them and to develop leadership qualities in them. The coverage; should be increased to have larger participation of youth community. For which infrastructural set-up to be developed in a meaningful manner, concerned college/school teachers should be trained and adequate facilities to be provided to them for follow up action. Government machineries should be clean and to allow knowledgeable experienced persons to involve in the process.

PURPOSE

Now the Education policy has been reviewed, reconsidered and modified to fulfill the much needed social requirements. Extension has been recognized as the third dimension of higher education in addition to teaching and research. Efforts to inculcate social relevance in the minds of students of higher education through organization like NSS has been recommended. Poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and environment have been identified as the main sources of social problems to which the students and teaching community need to be sensitized. National development may not be fully effective unless these basic issues are tackled carefully.

Extract of National Policy of Education, 1986 (With Modification Undertaken in 1992, Page 41-42)

The Role of Youth

Opportunity will be provided for the youth to involve themselves in national and social development through educational institutions

and outside them. Students will be required to participate in one or the other existing schemes, namely, the National Service Scheme, National Cadet Corps, etc. outside the Institutions, the youth will be encouraged to take up programmes of development, reform and extension.

The main objectives of the programme of action for youth under the NPE will be as follows:

- i) To help reduce and if possible, reverse the drop out rate particularly amongst girls, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- ii) To promote awareness of, and encourage involvement in, social programmes pertaining to literacy, environment, national integration, social reform, health awareness and family planning.
- iii) To promote social integration.
- iv) To help students develop an interest in adventure and other outdoor activities.

Extracts of the Report of the Task Force on code of Professional ethics for University and College Teachers and as Adopted by the UGC in its Meeting held on 27th December, 1988

- i) Teachers should participate in extension, co-curricular and extra curricular activities including community service;
- ii) Teachers should recognize that education as a public service and strive to keep the public informed of the educational programmes which are being provided;
- iii) Work to improve education in the community and strengthen the community's moral and intellectual life;
- iv) Be aware of social problems and take part in such activities as would be conducive to the progress of society and hence the country as a whole;
- v) reform the duties of citizenship participate in community activities and shoulder responsibilities of public offices;
- vi) Refrain from taking part in or subscribing to or assisting in any activities tend to promote feeling of hatred or enmity among different communities, religions or linguistic groups but actively work for National Integration.

It has also been mentioned that there is lot of weightage given to teaching and research in career development. In fact, during the 30-40 years, emphasis has shifted even from teaching.

Now the entire focus is on research. In addition to research emphasis should also be given on extension education. It has to be integrated with the system.

The national youth policy which has been accepted by the Government of India is well thought of no doubt. But to implement it for the benefit of our youth, the key functionaries along with the NSS Training Centres to be equipped properly, weightage should also be given to the faculty members in charge of these programmes at the time of promotion and their services should be recognized. If we could have handled it properly, some of the national problems could be solved.

For proper implementation of the NSS programme, students should be awarded with some marks to have some vocational programme on experimental basis. The curriculum should also be made relevant.

To implement the youth policy in better way, the active support and co-operation of the State Governments and Universities are to be needed. Together, we shall strive to enrich and strengthen this largest community service oriented student youth programme of the country.

Basically, the NSS programme is the most intelligent programme; programme, which is capable of being made intellectually and also physically satisfying. Only it needs more concrete infrastructural and better financial support from the Government of India as well as State Governments for future endeavours.

The need of the hour is education should not only equip the youth with vocational skills but also should channelise their energies and talents to meet the needs of national development and engage them in creative and constructive action.

It is necessary to emphasis the educative value of living and working together for a common cause entailing hard work and fortitude. Artificial human barriers and social status will give place to a healthy outlook and experience. It is envisaged that scheme should provide the necessary interplay between NSS students engaged in such programmes with selected out-of-school youths of the locality to work with NSS workers so that their combined work should be of greater value. A combined work will provide the necessary impact on the community they serve thereby creating in their minds the necessary helpful interest in NSS programmes

and a favourable relation with NSS workers.

To achieve these objectives various schemes like NSS, NCC, Scouts and Guides and Sports etc. have been introduced in most of the educational institutions. But some of these schemes fall short of expectation due to various reasons mentioned.

APPROACH

Realizing this, the new Education Policy and Eighth Plan document on Education have emphasized the need for integrating NSS as part of the curriculum in the higher education system.

Item Details

i) Integration With Curricula: National Service Scheme has been proved to be an effective students youth movement of higher education during the past three decades. All teaching Universities have introduced NSS to provide opportunity for selected students to work in the community. A few Universities have tried integrating NSS with curriculum and also introduced the NSS as a subject. Instances of IITs, School of Mines and few Agricultural Universities making NSS as part of curriculum. It has been observed that students stay in the farming community has been useful for the community as well for the students to know each other better.

An experiment made by Avinashilingam Institute of Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Deemed University, Coimbatore to integrate NSS with curriculum have extremely encouraging reports. In view of the policy recommendation of the NEP (New Education Policy) and Planning Commission to make participation in either NSS or NCC or other extension programmes obligatory for each and every student.

The objectives of the integration of NSS with subject syllabi should be clearly laid down. These objectives may be as suggested below:

- 1) Students should be provided field experience according to specific syllabus in subjects having service aspects.
- 2) Students should be provided opportunities for rendering social service, building community assets and making their

contribution to social and economic development plans of the country where they can use the knowledge acquired in the class room.

- 3) Experiences gained in the field should be used for class room teaching to make education more realistic and purposeful and for developing suitable Literature based on Indian conditions and experience.

ii) Recognition of Extension and Community Work at Par with Research Work: The effectiveness and success of the any social project identified by the college NSS Community to be implemented in the adopted villages, depends mainly on the leadership provided to the NSS students. Numbers of the teaching staff are assigned with the responsibility of motivating and mobilizing the student volunteers for community service. The task involves additional responsibilities and time requirements apart from the prescribed academic activities of the teachers. Teachers have to develop a suitable attitude and aptitude, not only to work with the students outside the campus, but also to work with the general public.

Career betterment of a teacher's work in the field of higher education, presently, is based on the academic achievements. The extension activities demanding a lot of physical and mental involvement is not considered for his career improvement. This state needs complete review. The work to be handled by a teacher for Community / Extension work of the students may be considered at par with Research work.

It would be justified if 3 to 5 years of meritorious extension activity under NSS is considered equivalent to a Research Work. This recognition would justify the commitment of a teacher to his students and the community and also would act as incentive to other teachers to join in the extension activities.

Summary of Recommendations Under the Item

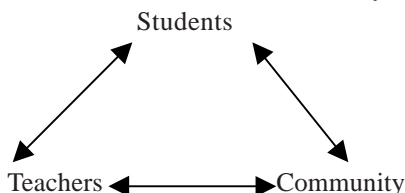
- 1) Integrating NSS with the curriculum to implement the policy direction of the (POA) programme of action
- 2) Recognising NSS work in terms of awarding academic weightage to students.
- 3) Recognising NSS work by teachers as extension and considering the quantified participation at par with research.

TASK TAKEN

In this context, a survey undertaken by TOC, IIT Kharagpur to identify the concerns of students in five colleges of Calcutta revealed that the students feel the need for guidance in matters of physical health, human relations, self development and anxiety about their future role as adults. For better guidance they feel NSS activities should be more strengthened and the participation of teachers are also expected more closely.

While giving justification of why NSS should be integrated in the curriculum, opinion of 39 programme Officers (Faculty members) of North-Eastern Hill University (Mizoram), Ranchi University, Vidyasagar University, Berhampur University and Manipur University clearly say that

- 1) Students would realize their responsibility towards the community.
- 2) Gain awareness of the situation prevailing in the community.
- 3) Become more mature through service to the community.
- 4) Express innate talents and potentialities.
- 5) Test their knowledge in field situation.
- 6) Understand subject matter with the practical setting helps.
- 7) Gain a sense of self satisfaction and self confidence.
- 8) Get recognition from the community.
- 9) Enjoy their education as it is more meaningful and interesting.
- 10) Roster cohesiveness between students and teachers and teachers and community.



- 11) Acquiring leadership quality.
- 12) Become active participants in current affairs.

Details of Participants

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| Men | - | 32 |
| Women | - | 7 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Total | - | 39 |

Year of Experience in Teaching : 3 - 14 years.
in NSS : 1 - 2 years.

Action Programme

Present day N.S.S. programme should strive after the concept that Action Programme or scheme should be planned, undertaken and implemented by the students alone, with notion of total involvement in those schemes. Only then they may feel akin to social needs. Alternative plans and programmes should be there, especially with the help of local govt./voluntary organizations. Programme offers/authority should see that students' led/formulated programmes/schemes are clear, specific and cohesive for financial cause. Only then dismal picture of NSS programmes being stereotyped would see the light of the day.

Some Suggestions / Recommendations

- 1) Participation and active involvement of student volunteers in drafting schemes or project need be ensured. This is conspicuously absent at present.
- 2) With a view to motivating students to participate in the NSS, suitable rewards in terms of academic credits should be introduced. The certificates should be given greater importance in employment matters, thus making them more utility-oriented. This will help rope in greater number of students to the fold of NSS, which will eventually become an adequately board-based organization capable of undertaking comprehensive schemes of work.
- 3) Programme Officers should be meticulously chosen from amongst teachers with real flair for and dedication to social services, commanding respect of the students and having qualities of leadership. Giving relaxation in their academic duties and throwing open promotional avenues will ensure better and dedicated service from the teachers/Programme Officers
- 4) N.S.S. Programme must be co-ordinated with the requirements of development authorities and academic authorities.
- 5) Brochures, leaflets etc. may be regularly brought out to disseminate the message of the N.S.S. and to keep the members of the public abreast of the programmes, as well

- as to garner their support in the N.S.S. activities.
- 6) Emphasis should be laid on integrated and intensive projects of work discarding merely casual and time serving issues.

CONCLUSION

The slough of conservatism which is a formidable menace in our academic world, should be cast off once for all. Academics from every corner of the country should build up a pressure-group to continuously persuade the powers that be in the universities to envision futurity and adjust and replan their curricula according to the practical requirements of the day.

Once this is done, the relevance of the National Service scheme will be established and it will be able to deliver the goods, it is expected to deliver. If the present nucleus can gain the right momentum, it can do wonders by mobilizing

the youth forces towards the noble mission of building the nation anew. In an age of widespread pessimism & decadence when mounting terrorism, political dishonesty, mistrust & misgivings eat into the vitals of the human race, mobilization of the youth forces in the proper channel is the last hope. The N.S.S. only can do this.

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