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A STUDY OF NATIONAL YOUTH CORPS (NYC) SCHEME IN PUDUKKOTTAI DISTRICT



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ABSTRACT:

India is in the midst of a youth bulge. The continued effort of the government of India is to utilize, through volunteerism, the capacity and efficiency of the Indian youth in the age group of 15 to 35 years. The youth constitutes 60% of the total population of India and form the basis for the development and building up of the nation. Youth being the most vibrant and resourceful segment of the country's population, they have a vital role to play in fostering and strengthening socio-economic development. The challenge is to unleash their innate capabilities to come out of poverty, generate development and livelihoods outcomes, which enable them to live a healthy and meaningful life. Nonetheless, there exists a huge potential to increase the contribution of this class of the nation's citizenry by increasing their labour force participation and their productivity. The present study titled 'A study of National Youth Corps (NYC) Scheme in Pudukkottai District' was undertaken to provide in-depth insights into the participation of youth volunteers in the activities of NYC and the impact of those activities on the lives of youth volunteers.

KEYWORDS: Youth development, Nehru Yuva Kendra, National Youth Corps.

INTRODUCTION

The continued effort of the government of India is to utilize, through volunteerism, the capacity and efficiency of the Indian youth in the age group of 15 to 35 years. The youth constitutes 60% of the total population of India and form the basis for the development and building up of the nation.

Alongside Russia, nations such as America and Britain are lending their support to make India a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. Not only America but even China appears to be threatened by the engineering, communication technology, internal infrastructure, military, scientific development and the development that India is witnessing in the economic sector. The foundation for these is the intelligence and efficiency of the large number of youth.

Youth being the most vibrant and resourceful segment of the country's population, they have a vital role to play in fostering and strengthening socio-economic development. The challenge is to unleash their innate capabilities to come out of poverty, generate development and livelihoods outcomes, which enable them to live a healthy and meaningful life. Nonetheless, there exists a huge potential to increase the contribution of this class of the nation's citizenry by increasing their labour force participation and their productivity. The present study titled 'A study of National Youth Corps (NYC) Scheme in Pudukkottai District' was undertaken to provide in-depth insights into the participation of youth volunteers in the activities of NYC and the impact of those activities on the

lives of youth volunteers.

BACKGROUND AND ORIGIN OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH CORP

On September 24th 1969, in order to ensure the participation of the youth in building and reconstruction of the nation, on the occasion of the silver jubilee of India's Independence, under the aegis of the then Minister for Education Dr. K. R. V. Rao, the NSS was formed and was dedicated for the welfare of the nation.

The National Youth Consultation Committee that met at the National level in 1970 recommended that a national level scheme should be formed and should function for youths who are not students.

Following the silver jubilee of India's Independence, the then Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi started the Bharath Yuva Kendra in 1972. In 1977, the NSS was started in order to ensure that the goal, the work and the benefits of the scheme reach all the youth.

National Youth Corps is a scheme of Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India. The NYC Scheme is being implemented by NYKS. The Government has launched a new Scheme "National Youth Corps" during the financial year 2010-11 to tap the potential of the youth and channeling their energy towards nation building. This is in pursuance of the President's Address to both Houses of Parliament in June 2009 and also the Prime Minister's announcement in October 2009 for Jammu & Kashmir. The new scheme, called "National Youth Corps" (NYC) has been launched, amalgamating the existing two volunteer schemes namely National Service Volunteer (NSV) and Rashtriya Sadbhawana Yojana (RSY).

The Aims of the National Youth Corp

Following the phase when a youth completes education up-to the time they prepare for normal life they are fully engaged in social work. When the youth are directly involved in social work, they get a firsthand experience about the everyday life of the people and their problems and they develop the necessary skills to handle these issues.

It helps them develop the resources and opportunities for their higher education and future wellbeing and it also helps them to prepare holistically for the future. Along with this they also develop the leadership skills to serve as a good friend, guide and philosopher for the other youths in their respective area. The National Youth Corp has following objectives,

1. Provides opportunity to serve as a full time worker for the development of the village community
2. Works jointly with the village community
3. Helps to understand the actual issues among the village community and helps to develop necessary skills to solve those issues.
4. Assists in establishing the foundation for a bright future for both oneself and also for the youth in the village.
5. A National Youth Corp volunteer should work hard to develop youths who are committed, dedicated and concerned about the society.

WHO IS A NATIONAL YOUTH CORP?

A National Youth Corp volunteer is one who acts voluntarily, without being motivated by someone else and without being asked for help by the affected person. He/she does not expect anything in return and completes the task wholeheartedly.

In order to serve as a volunteer at the village level, the age limit for individual belonging to the general category is 25 years of age and for individual who belong to the Adi Dravidar, backward community and women the age limit is 27 years of age. With regards to educational qualification, it is sufficient for the individual to have completed tenth standard.

NATIONAL YOUTH CORP – DUTIES/ACTIVITIES

1. The volunteers function as the link and the bridge between the district headquarters and youth clubs.
2. The volunteers inform the public and youth club members about the government welfare schemes and assist in availing these schemes.

3. The volunteers form new youth clubs and self help groups and help renew the existing youth clubs and self help groups
4. The volunteers help to improve the relationships and strengthen the link between the youth clubs and local organizations/bodies.
5. The volunteers assist in availing the financial assistance from NYK and other organizations and undertake the functioning of the NYC.
6. The volunteers formally/regularly submit program report, receipts, participant, resource persons' name list and photos to the district headquarters.
7. The volunteers guide the rural youth in the path of Vivekananda
8. The volunteers maintain the reports regarding the program
9. The volunteers form and monitor the youth clubs and self help groups on a daily basis
10. The volunteers stay in the village one day a week to monitor the functioning of the youth clubs and provide the advice to the youth clubs
11. The volunteers conduct zonal level meetings for youth clubs and self help groups. They observe and monitor the SUTP centers. They visit the various government departments and non – governmental organizations on a weekly basis, collect information about the government schemes and help utilize these schemes for the benefit of the youth clubs.
12. Every fortnight the NYC visits the NYK office and submits the travel plan and monthly report
13. The volunteers participate in the monitoring meeting conducted by the district coordinator. They form at least two new youth clubs on a monthly basis. Of those newly formed youth clubs they assist in registering at least one under the Associations Act. Moreover they help establish at least two women self help groups.

There are various responsibilities for the NYC volunteers who work in various unions in the country. They also include to be a leading example for the youth and assist in the establishment of the clubs and groups.

The volunteers provide advice in the mobilization and the proper utilizations of the club funds. They assist to conduct the club meetings and the programs/festivals. They help to create awareness that the NYK exists for the benefit of the youth. They help to introduce the best youth and the women clubs at the district level and they pave the way for the club members to participate in the inter – state events. They assist in the preparation of the annual reports of the youth clubs. They identify the youth who are interested in games and cultural and motivate them to participate in events. They identify the best performing youths at the village level and motivate them to apply for the district, state and national awards. They assist in the annual renewal the youth clubs and collect information about the village, they inform the district office and help to mobilize the funds for the village.

The volunteers invite government and non – government officials to participate in the programs conducted by the youth clubs. Every volunteers carries their own pre - travel plan, action plans of government and non – government organizations, applications for the youth club and the information regarding the youth clubs with them.

NATIONAL YOUTH CLUB IN PUDUKKOTTAI DISTRICT

The NYK is a self governing body functioning in 623 districts out of the total 683 districts all over India, under the central government, youth welfare and sports ministry. There are 2, 58, 000 village level women and youth clubs. Youths in the age group of 13 to 35 years serve as volunteers. Under the current youth policy of the central government only those individuals who are between the age group of 13 – 29 years can be members of the youth club.

In Pudukkottai district the National Youth Corps was started in the year 2009 at 13 panchayat union. The volunteers are appointed on a two year contract. They received Rs. 2,500 as honorarium per month. This amount is directly deposited into the individual's bank accounts by the Nehru Yuva Kendra Head Office based at Delhi.

List of successful Volunteers in Pudukkottai District

year	Total No. volunteers		Successfully completed the term of two year		Unsuccessfully completed the term of two year	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2009 – 2011	13	13	09	06	04	07
2011 – 2013	16	10	06	02	10	08
2013 – 2015	10	04	02	-	08	04

FINDINGS

The study being empirical in character, was based on survey method and information collected personally through a structured questionnaire. The findings of the study are discussed under five heads.

1. Honorarium

- The honorarium and the incentive of the volunteers that has to be paid at the end of every month, is being paid only during the last working day of the next month.
- In the field area they carry out all the duties of the district youth coordinator.
- When compared to the remuneration of the district youth coordinator there is much difference between that of the district coordinator and the volunteers.
- The honorarium of those volunteers who do not cooperate with the desire of the officer is at times withheld by the concerned official.

2. Temporary Staff

The volunteers are selected through direct personal interviews through the district employment exchange office. When they join work they are provided 15 days of job orientation training. However, since because is a temporary post they receive the trainings half heartedly.

3. Low educational level

The incentive for the volunteers is very less, so candidates with good experience and educational qualifications are reluctant to join as volunteers. Only those who have received very basic education show interest in joining the NYC.

4. Sexual harassment of women volunteers

There is vast distance between the place of work of the women volunteers and their place of residence. Their working hour is not well defined so they are subject to harassment by anti social elements. The officials promise the volunteers job security and promotions and utilize the women volunteers to carry out their own work and also expect the women to provide sexual favors in return. Those volunteers who do not agree to the terms are not allowed to continue in their jobs.

5. Emotional issues

Because of the insufficient salary and training the volunteers are not in a position to continue in their jobs and so they are emotionally disturbed. When the volunteers visit the youth clubs they are also subject to physically and emotionally harassment.

WAYS TO SOLVE THE ISSUES

- Steps should be taken to immediately solve the problems faced by the volunteers.
- The volunteers should be given job security, leave and priority in job appointment and this should become a norm.
- At present two volunteers are being appointed in each union. Since their job area is very vast, they are able to

visit each youth club only once or twice in a month. Moreover they are allotted office work on a rotation basis one day a week. The number of villages that a volunteer is made responsible for should be between 15 to 25 villages. This will enable them to monitor the clubs better and form new clubs.

- Very often the villages allotted to the volunteers overlap, so they are unable to concentrate on their work and they get discouraged. It also paves the way for the volunteers to take the wrong path. So the volunteers should be transferred on a rotation basis. Those cadets who perform well should be motivated by providing incentive or promotions on an annual basis and this should be done on a priority basis.
- As per the contract a volunteer may be dismissed without prior notice. So those volunteers who do not run errands for the officials or agree to the official's desires are dismissed without any prior notification
- District youth coordinator and officials should, without holding any bias, utilize the volunteers only for the official work.
- An information/help centre should be set up to assist the volunteers put forth their request. Similarly this centre should provide the volunteers to express their problems and get advice. It should not function for namesake like it is functioning currently. A General Director should be appointed to monitor and oversee the functioning of these centers.
- Low salary, heavy work load, affects the volunteer's livelihood. Those who are working as full time volunteers are unable to concentrate in any other work. So they remain in an economically backward state.

To what extent is the NYC useful to the volunteers?

- It motivates the volunteers to do social service, it provides an opportunity to develop a service attitude and work closely with the communities where they conduct their field work.
- The volunteers have the opportunity to represent the people's problems at the respective departments and help solve the issues at the district level.
- There is ample opportunity for a well experienced volunteer to be selected and represent the people at the local administration level.
- They receive first hand information and experience in relation to the government welfare schemes and are knowledgeable in the same. The volunteers who are involved in the field work gain experience in planning, evaluation, overcoming challenges, self confidence and perseverance

CONCLUSION

The NYC volunteer plays a very significant role. Their remuneration should be increased from Rs. 2500 to Rs. 10,000 per month. The volunteers are currently being appointed for a two year contract period, they should be appointed as permanent volunteers.

Vocational training should be provided at all the unions in the district. Steps should be taken to create awareness in relation to the NYK work and activities, through debates and programs in the public media. A centre should be set up to solve the physical, emotional, sexual harassment and other problems faced by the volunteers and this should not function for namesake. A committee should be formed, headed by the Director and it should monitor the functioning and solve the problems faced by the volunteers.

The NYC volunteers should monitor and ensure that the funds allocated by the NYK for the youth reach the youth. If this is monitored properly the youth volunteer will lead to development and there is no doubt that the NYC will function effectively.

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