

# Exploring the Benefits of NSS Participation for Undergraduates in Indian Universities: A Case Study

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**Abstract**—This study examines the benefits of NSS membership for Indian undergraduates at Anurag University. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports founded the NSS in 1969 to promote student social welfare and civic responsibility via community service. The study examines how NSS activities affect students' civic responsibility, leadership, and community engagement.

The mixed-methods study collected quantitative data through questionnaires and qualitative data through focus group discussions and student and program coordinator interviews. The quantitative research demonstrated significant increases in students' social awareness, community leadership confidence and volunteerism. Qualitative research showed that NSS activities made students more socially aware, confident and eager to help society.

The study identifies that NSS improves students' civic responsibility, leadership and community engagement, according to the study. These findings can help optimize NSS programs for comprehensive student development and social progress.

**Keywords**— National Service Scheme, Civic engagement, Student development, Leadership skills, Community service in education, Mixed-method research

## I. INTRODUCTION

The National Service Scheme (NSS) has become a powerful force in shaping the values, perspectives, and capabilities of undergraduate students in India. By fostering volunteerism and civic responsibility, NSS provides students with meaningful experiences that cultivate empathy, social awareness, and leadership skills, contributing not only to their personal growth but also to the broader society (Nikam et al., 2020). Within Indian universities, the NSS plays a pivotal role in aligning academic pursuits with values of social reform and national service, encouraging students to actively engage with real-world issues (Roy, 2021; Mandal, 2023).

Research has consistently shown that participation in NSS programs nurtures resilience, ethical values, and a strong sense of community engagement among students, preparing them for both professional and civic roles in the future (Lal, 2015; Singh, 2024). Through its mix of regular activities and immersive camping experiences, the NSS not only strengthens theoretical knowledge but also empowers students to apply it in meaningful, community-focused projects (Sekhar et al.). Comparisons with global programs, such as Botswana's Tirelo Setshaba, illustrate a shared commitment to developing responsible, socially aware youth, highlighting the transformative potential of such initiatives (Flederman, 2018).

This study focuses on the specific impact of NSS on undergraduate volunteers at Anurag University, exploring how NSS participation enhances civic responsibility, leadership, and community engagement. While the program has a long-standing legacy, there is a need to empirically assess its influence on student growth and identify areas for further enrichment. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study combines quantitative surveys with qualitative focus group discussions and interviews to delve into the multifaceted nature of student development through NSS.

Ultimately, this study seeks not only to highlight the personal and social benefits of NSS for students but also to guide the design and implementation of future NSS programs. It aspires to underscore the importance of such programs in building a generation of youth who are socially responsible, community-oriented, and equipped to contribute meaningfully to society.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies on NSS activities within the Dogra Group of Colleges in Jammu and Kashmir show that regular and special camps help foster community involvement, offering students a hands-on understanding of societal

needs and strengthening their dedication to service (Singh, 2024).

Research on national service programs in Ghana suggests that similar schemes, like the NSS, equip students with valuable employability skills, such as teamwork and adaptability, bridging the gap between academic learning and workplace demands (Segbenya, Oppong, Nyarko, & Baafi-Frimpong, 2023).

Research underscores NSS's contribution to nation-building by promoting volunteerism and instilling a sense of unity and patriotic duty among students (Mandal, 2023).

Studies on integrating NSS into specialized curricula, such as physiotherapy, demonstrate that the program's service-learning approach enhances students' practical skills and provides valuable community-based experience (Dharmayat, 2022).

Research underscores the role of NSS programs in instilling moral values and promoting ethical behavior among students, preparing them to make socially responsible contributions to society (Sonber, Patel, & Makhija, 2022).

Studies have shown that the NSS in Indian higher education plays a pivotal role in fostering youth development and civic responsibility, offering students opportunities to engage with and contribute to their communities (Roy, 2021).

Studies highlight the NSS's impact on promoting rational values in society, particularly in developing students' sense of social justice, empathy, and moral responsibility (Nikam, Kapadnis, & Borse, 2020).

Studies in the Indian context reveal that NSS volunteers show greater community-mindedness, often becoming proactive in addressing local challenges. Additionally, community members frequently recognize and appreciate the contributions of NSS volunteers, demonstrating the program's effectiveness in community engagement (Verma, 2020).

Research illustrates that the NSS plays a transformative role in fostering humane qualities like social consciousness and compassion, equipping students to contribute positively to society (Saha, 2019).

Comparative studies on national service schemes, such as Botswana's Tirelo Setshaba, indicate that structured volunteer programs globally share objectives of promoting employability, leadership, and civic responsibility, echoing the goals of India's NSS (Flederman, 2018).

In India, studies demonstrate that NSS helps students develop crucial leadership skills like communication, problem-solving, and the ability to mobilize peers for community initiatives, effectively preparing them for

leadership roles within and beyond their communities (Rani & Singh, 2018).

Evidence from studies on NSS programs in India suggests that these activities positively impact students' self-esteem, resilience, and sense of purpose. Scholars have recommended expanding NSS initiatives to further enhance the comprehensive development of students, underscoring the program's value in higher education (Chaudhary & Mehta, 2017). Studies have demonstrated that NSS programs significantly impact personality development, helping students cultivate resilience, empathy, and a strong ethical foundation through service-learning (Lal, 2015).

Studies have also examined how the NSS promotes civic duty among Indian students, finding that NSS participants tend to feel a stronger sense of responsibility toward their communities and engage more actively in development projects compared to non-participants. These findings underscore the importance of NSS in fostering socially conscious and active citizens (Sharma, 2015).

Research underscores the holistic development fostered by service-learning, which encompasses critical thinking, social awareness, and personal growth (Cress et al., 2010).

Research has shown that service-learning programs, including the NSS, play a key role in cultivating leadership skills among students. Dugan and Komives (2007) found that these programs foster abilities such as self-efficacy, teamwork, and a sense of social responsibility.

The positive effects of service-learning on community participation have been well-documented. For instance, research shows that students' understanding of community needs and their willingness to contribute meaningfully improve through participation in service activities. These programs also enhance empathy and interpersonal skills, making students more responsive to local issues (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

Research consistently shows that community service programs contribute significantly to college students' sense of civic responsibility and social justice. For example, studies indicate that students who engage in community service are more likely to remain involved in civic activities post-graduation, highlighting the long-term influence of such experiences (Astin & Sax, 1998).

Research on NSS programs reveals their success in mobilizing student youth for community welfare and social development, emphasizing civic engagement as a core component of the NSS experience (Sekhar, Sharma, Thockchom, & Thakur).

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The National Service Scheme (NSS)'s impact on Anurag University students' personal and social development was examined using mixed methodologies. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed to investigate how NSS activities affect students' civic responsibility, leadership, and community engagement.

### IV. QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTING

The survey was designed with the primary objective of quantitatively measuring the impact of NSS participation on students' civic responsibility, teamwork, leadership skills, and community engagement, and aimed to capture changes in students' attitudes and behaviors before and after their involvement. The survey was divided into sections to cover demographics, pre- and post-participation attitudes, and the perceived impact of the program. Prior to full implementation, the survey underwent a pilot test with a small group of students to refine question clarity and ensure time efficiency.

A sample of 136 students was selected using purposive sampling, focusing on those who had engaged in NSS activities for at least 12 months to ensure sufficient experience. Google forms were used for the survey and later on excel to analyse the data. The sampling aimed for a broad representation across departments, with stratified sampling used to secure proportional participation from key fields, although responses naturally varied (e.g., higher engagement from departments such as CSE, PHARM, and ECE). Students aged 18 to 25 were targeted, as this age group represents the typical undergraduate demographic participating in NSS. Recruitment was facilitated through NSS program officers and department meetings, with clear communication about the voluntary, confidential nature of participation to encourage honest and thoughtful responses. This survey design and sampling approach were structured to generate reliable quantitative data, complementing the qualitative insights gathered through focus group discussions and interviews.

**Qualitative Data Gathering:** The qualitative component of the study employed Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews to gain deeper insights into students' and program officers' experiences with the NSS program. These methods were chosen to capture nuanced perspectives, allowing participants to share personal anecdotes and reflect on

specific ways NSS impacted their development and civic engagement.

The FGDs involved 20 students selected through purposive sampling, ensuring diversity across departments and NSS engagement levels. Each focus group was conducted in a relaxed, semi-structured format, allowing participants to freely discuss their motivations, challenges, and the specific skills they felt they developed through NSS activities. Key questions explored themes of leadership, teamwork, community involvement, and the balance between NSS and academic responsibilities. The open-ended nature of the discussion encouraged participants to delve into personal stories, such as organizing community events or overcoming challenges in team settings, providing valuable insights that enriched the study's findings.

In addition, one-on-one interviews were conducted with five program officers to understand the administrative and support perspectives of the NSS program. These interviews aimed to explore the program's goals, the criteria for selecting activities, and the officers' observations on student growth. The interviews also included questions on challenges faced in supporting student involvement and suggestions for further enhancing program effectiveness. These qualitative methods, together with the structured survey, offered a comprehensive understanding of NSS's impact on students, blending objective data with the personal experiences that bring depth and authenticity to the findings.

This study's mixed-methods methodology assessed the NSS program's influence on Anurag University students. Combining quantitative and qualitative data provided a comprehensive picture of NSS participation's benefits, which could inform program design and implementation.

### V. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has several limitations that may impact the generalizability of its findings. First, self-reported data may introduce bias, as students might overstate NSS's positive effects due to social desirability. The relatively small sample size, especially in qualitative components like focus groups (20 participants) and interviews (5 participants), limits the representation of diverse NSS experiences. Additionally, as the study was conducted at a single university, the findings may not fully apply to other institutions with different program structures or student demographics.

To improve future research, a mixed-methods approach across multiple universities with a larger, diverse sample could enhance generalizability. Including objective measures of skill development and

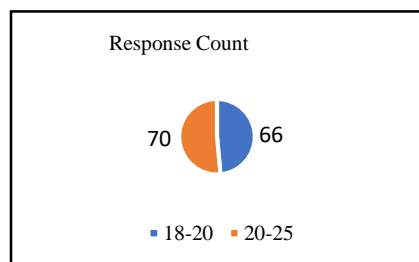
conducting longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into NSS's long-term impacts on student growth and community engagement

## VI. QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

### Demographic Profile:

#### 1. Age of the respondents

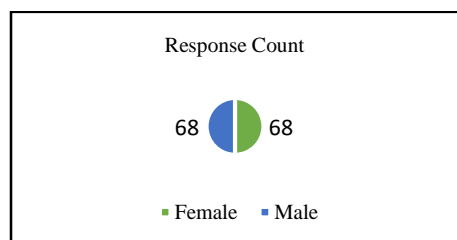
Figure: Age of respondents



There are 66 students aged between 18-20 and 70 students aged between 20-25.

#### 2. Gender

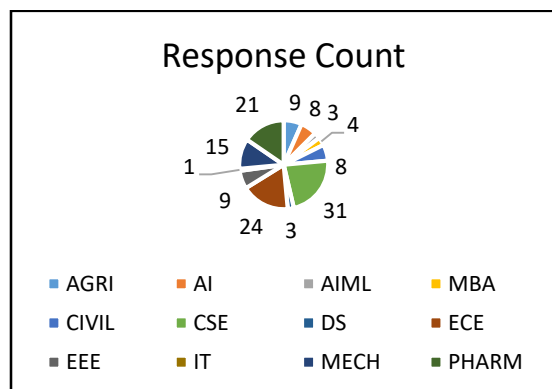
Figure 2: Gender of respondents



Equal no of female and male students are present.

#### 3. Department to which they belong?

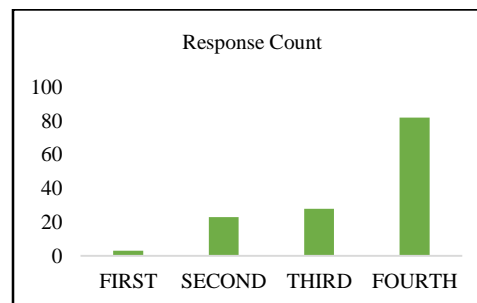
Figure 3: Department



The data shows the distribution of response counts across different departments, with CSE having the highest count at 31, followed by PHARM with 21, and

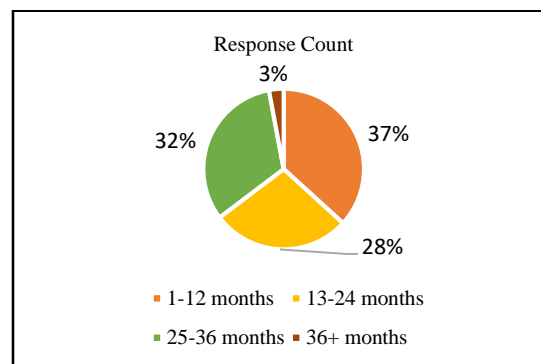
ECE with 24. IT has the lowest response count with just 1. This indicates that certain departments like CSE, PHARM, and ECE have higher engagement or presence compared to others like IT and AIML

#### 4. Which year the students are studying?



#### 5. Duration of participation

Figure 5: Duration of participation

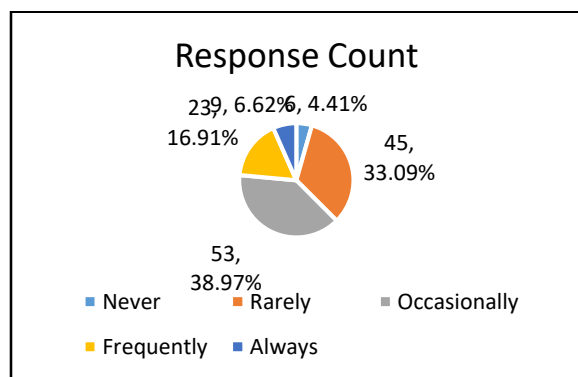


The data indicates that most students participate in NSS for 1-12 months (50 students), with participation dropping to 38 students for 13-24 months, then slightly increasing to 44 students for 25-36 months, and significantly decreasing to just 4 students for 36+ months.

### 1. Civic Responsibility

#### 1.1 Before participating in NSS, how often did you engage in community service activities?

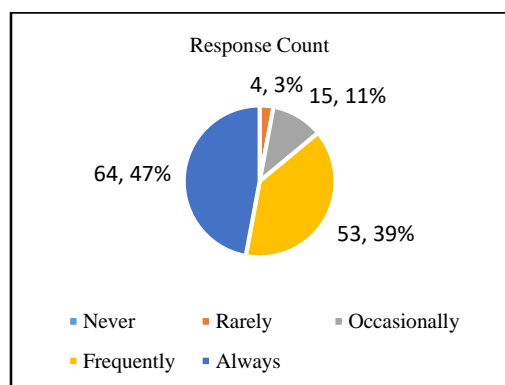
Figure 1.1: Engagement in community service activities before NSS participation



Interpretation: The survey revealed that before participating in NSS, only 4.41% of respondents never engaged in community service, while a majority, 33.09%, rarely participated. Those who occasionally participated accounted for 38.97%, frequently for 16.91% and always for 6.62%.

### 1.2. After participating in NSS, how often do you engage in community service activities?

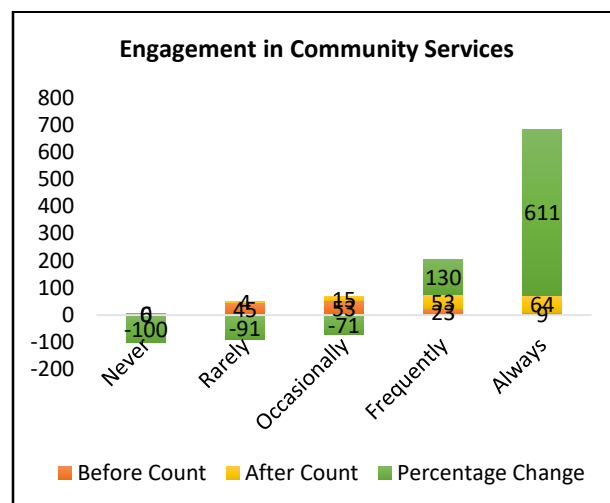
Figure 1.2: Engagement in community service activities after NSS participation



Interpretation: The involvement in community service activities increased significantly post-NSS participation. The percentage of respondents who never participated dropped to 0%. Those who rarely participated decreased to 2.94%. Meanwhile, occasional participants decreased to 11.03%, frequent participants increased to 38.97%, and those who always participated saw a dramatic rise to 47.06%.

### 1.3. Comparison of Engagement in community service activities before and after NSS participation?

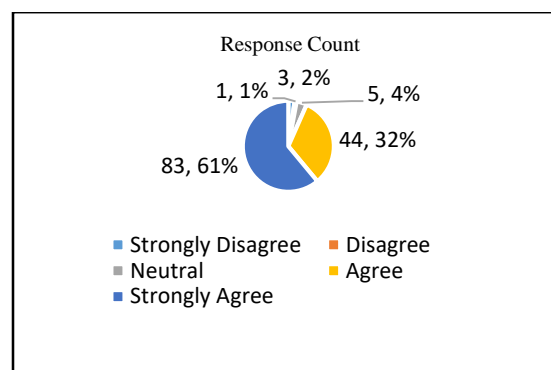
Figure 1.3: Comparison of Engagement in community service activities before and after NSS participation



Percentage Change: The trend analysis shows a complete elimination of respondents who never participated (-100%). Rare participants decreased by 91.11%, and occasional participants saw a reduction of 71.70%. Conversely, frequent participation increased by 130.43% and always participating surged by an astounding 611.11%.

### 1.1.1. I feel a sense of responsibility towards my community.

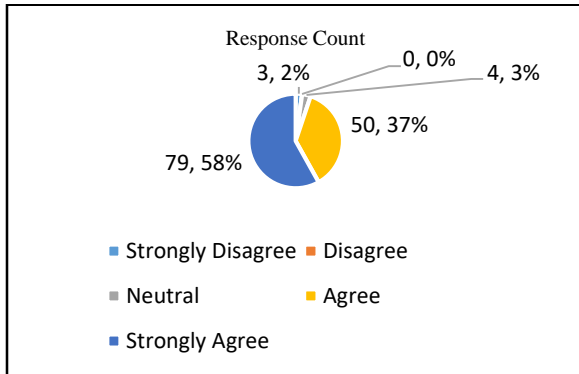
Figure 1.1.1: Responsibility towards my community.



Interpretation: The majority (93.38%) of respondents agree or strongly agree that they feel responsible for their community, demonstrating strong communal relationships. Only 2.95 percent disagree or strongly disagree, demonstrating few lack community duty.

### 1.1.2. I believe my actions can make a positive impact on society.

Figure 1.1.2: Actions can make a positive impact on society

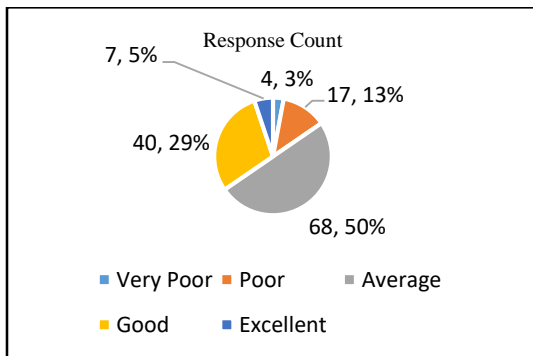


Interpretation: The data shows that a vast majority (94.85%) of respondents agree or strongly agree that actions can make a positive impact on society, indicating widespread belief in the power of individual contributions. Only a small percentage (2.94%) are neutral, and an even smaller fraction (2.21%) strongly disagree. This suggests strong optimism about the positive effects of personal actions on society.

## 2. Leadership Skills

### 2.1. Before participating in NSS, how would you rate your leadership skills?

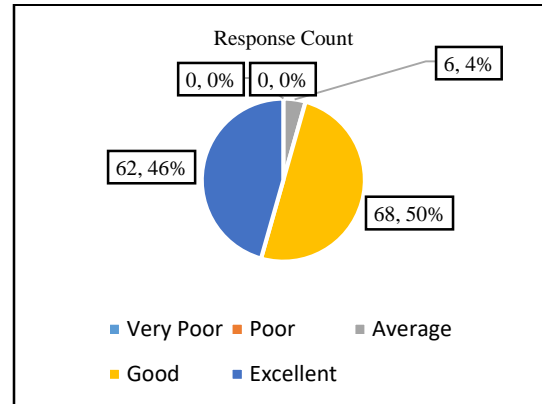
Figure 2.1: Rate your leadership skills before NSS participation



Interpretation: The survey indicated that prior to joining NSS, 2.94% of respondents rated their leadership skills as very poor, 12.50% as poor, 50.00% as average, 29.41% as good, and 5.15% as excellent.

### 2.2. After participating in NSS, how would you rate your leadership skills?

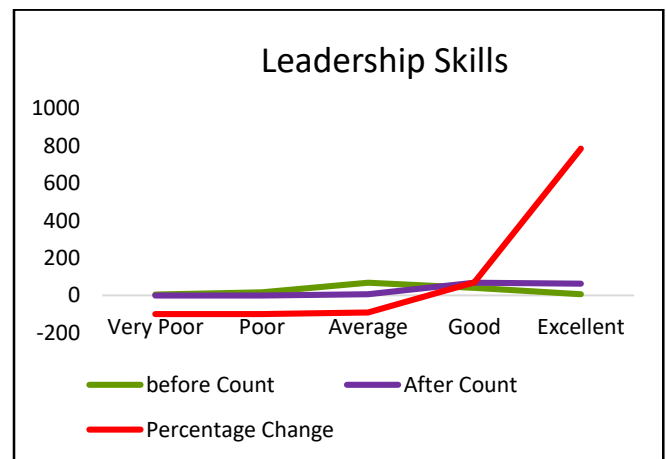
Figure 2.2: Rate your leadership skills before NSS participation



Interpretation: Post participation, none of the respondents rated their leadership skills as very poor or poor. The percentage rating their skills as average dropped to 4.41%, while those rating them as good increased to 50.00%, and those rating them as excellent rose significantly to 45.59%.

### 2.3. Rate your leadership skills before and after NSS participation

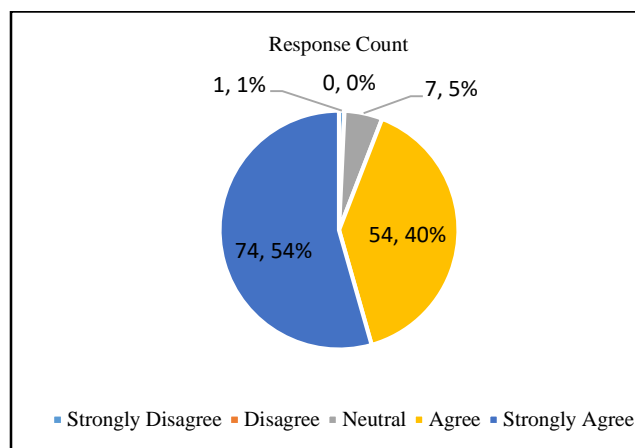
Figure 2.3: Rate your leadership skills before and after NSS participation



Percentage Change: There was a complete elimination of respondents who rated their skills as very poor (-100%) and poor (-100%). The average rating decreased by 91.18%. Good ratings saw an increase of 70%, and excellent ratings saw an extraordinary rise of 785.71%.

#### 2.1.1. I feel confident leading a team.

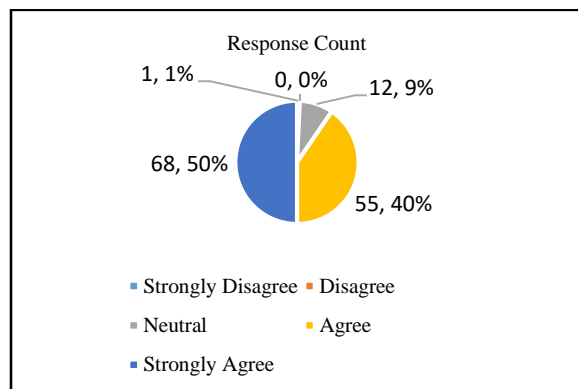
Figure 2.1.1 Confidence in leading a team



Interpretation: The data indicates that a large majority (94.12%) of respondents agree or strongly agree that they have confidence in leading a team, suggesting strong leadership self-assurance. A small percentage (5.15%) are neutral, and an even smaller fraction (0.74%) strongly disagree, indicating very few lack confidence in their leadership abilities.

### 2.1.2 I can effectively communicate my ideas to others.

Figure 2.1.2 can communicate ideas effectively

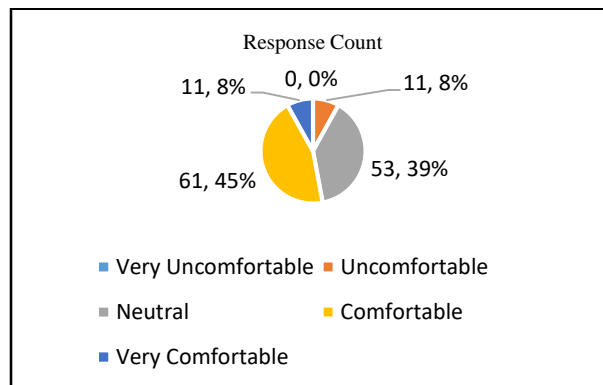


Interpretation: The data shows that a significant majority (90.44%) of respondents agree or strongly agree that they can effectively communicate their ideas to others. A small percentage (8.82%) are neutral, while a negligible fraction (0.74%) strongly disagree, indicating overall high confidence in communication skills.

## 3. Teamwork

### 3.1. Before participating in NSS, how comfortable were you working in a team?

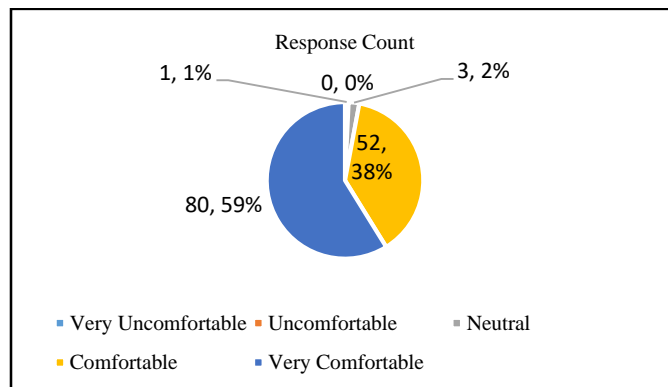
Figure 3.1 Comfortability while working in team before NSS participation



Interpretation: The data showed that before participating in NSS, no respondents felt very uncomfortable working in a team, 8.09% felt uncomfortable, 38.97% were neutral, 44.85% felt comfortable, and 8.09% felt very comfortable.

### 3.2. After participating in NSS, how comfortable are you working in a team?

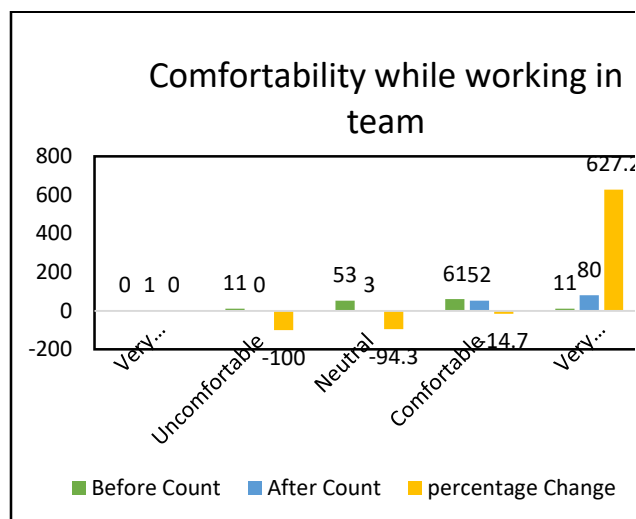
Figure 3.2 Comfortability while working in team after NSS participation



Interpretation: After participating in NSS, 0.74% of respondents felt very uncomfortable, none felt uncomfortable, 2.21% were neutral, 38.24% felt comfortable, and a significant 58.82% felt very comfortable.

### 3.3 Comfortability while working in team before and after NSS participation

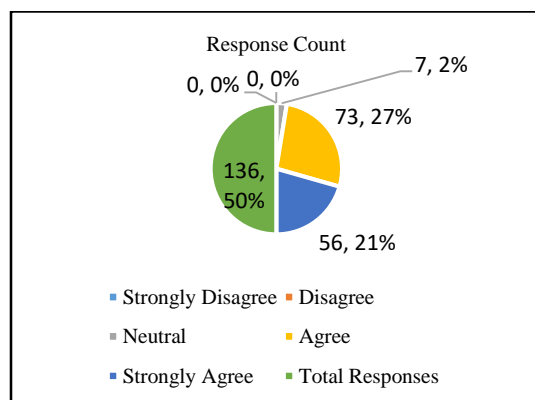
Table 3.3 Comfortability while working in team before and after NSS participation



Percentage Change: There was an introduction of a small percentage (0.74%) feeling very uncomfortable (from 0 respondents). Uncomfortable ratings dropped by 100%, neutral ratings by 94.34%, and comfortable ratings by 14.75%. Very comfortable ratings saw a substantial increase of 627.27%.

### 3.1.1 I can collaborate effectively with others to achieve common goals.

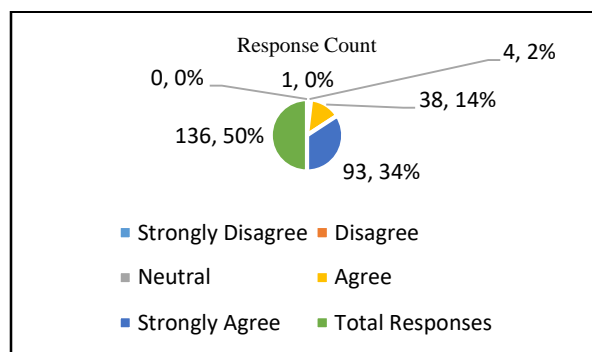
Figure 3.1.1 collaborating effectively with others to achieve goals



Interpretation: The data indicates that an overwhelming majority (94.86%) of respondents agree or strongly agree that they can collaborate effectively with others to achieve goals. A small percentage (5.15%) are neutral, and no respondents disagree, highlighting strong confidence in collaborative abilities.

### 3.1.2. I am willing to support my teammates to achieve success.

Figure 3.1.2 supporting team mates to achieve success

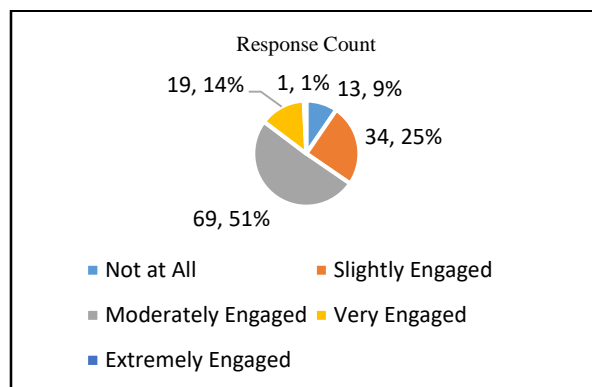


Interpretation: The data shows that a vast majority (96.32%) of respondents agree or strongly agree that they support their teammates to achieve success. A small percentage (2.94%) are neutral, and an even smaller fraction (0.74%) disagrees, indicating strong commitment to team support.

## 4. Community Engagement

### 4.1. Before participating in NSS, how engaged were you with community issues and events?

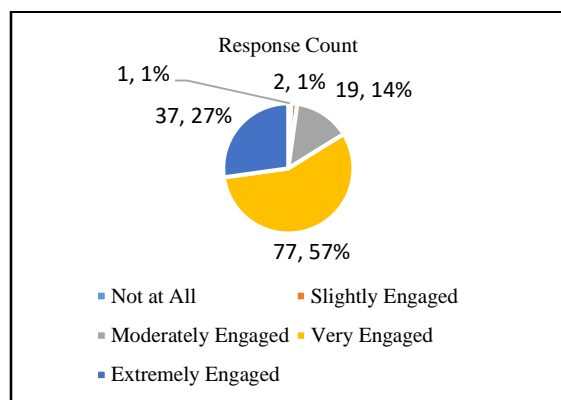
Figure 4.1 Engaging with community issues and events before NSS participation



Interpretation: Before joining NSS, 9.56% of respondents were not engaged at all with community issues and events, 25.00% were slightly engaged, 50.74% were moderately engaged, 13.97% were very engaged, and 0.74% were extremely engaged.

### 4.2. After participating in NSS, how engaged are you with community issues and events?

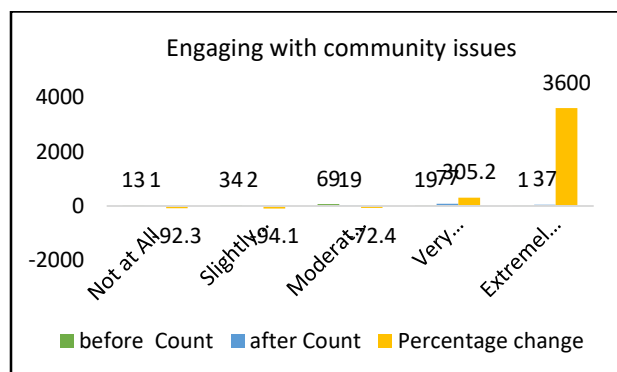
Figure 4.2 Engaging with community issues and events after NSS participation



Interpretation: After participating in NSS, the engagement levels changed dramatically with only 0.74% not engaged at all, 1.47% slightly engaged, 13.97% moderately engaged, 56.62% very engaged, and 27.21% extremely engaged.

#### 4.3 Engaging with community issues and events before and after NSS participation

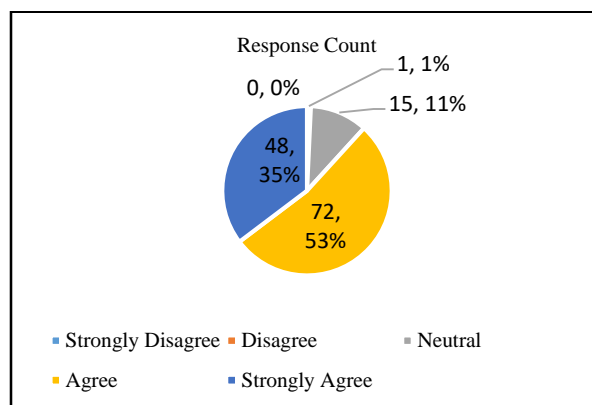
Table 4.3 Engaging with community issues and events before and after NSS participation



Percentage Change: The percentage of respondents not engaged at all dropped by 92.31%. Slight engagement decreased by 94.12%, moderate engagement by 72.46%, while very engaged respondents increased by 305.26%, and extremely engaged respondents saw a remarkable increase of 3600%.

##### 4.1.1. I actively seek opportunities to contribute to community development.

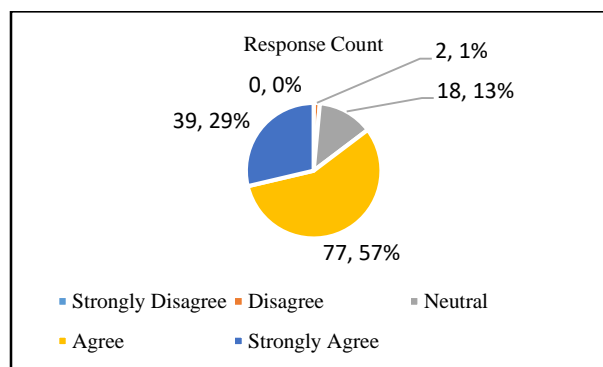
Figure 4.1.1 Seeking opportunities to contribute to community development



Interpretation: The data shows that a majority (88.23%) of respondents agree or strongly agree that they seek opportunities to contribute to community development. A smaller percentage (11.03%) are neutral, and a negligible fraction (0.74%) disagrees, indicating overall proactive engagement in community development.

##### 4.1.2 I am aware of the key issues affecting my community.

Figure 4.1.2 aware of the key issues affecting my community



Interpretation: The data shows that a significant majority (85.30%) of respondents agree or strongly agree that they are aware of the key issues affecting their community. A smaller percentage (13.24%) are neutral, and a very small fraction (1.47%) disagrees, indicating overall strong awareness of community issues.

#### Qualitative Data Process and Analysis Focus Group Discussions and Interviews

##### 1. Purpose and Design

The use of FGDs and interviews enabled researchers to capture comprehensive perspectives on how NSS participation affects students' development in areas such as civic responsibility, leadership, teamwork, and community engagement. By engaging both NSS student participants and program coordinators, the

study sought to examine the program's impact from diverse angles—students provided first-hand accounts of personal growth and challenges, while coordinators contributed insights on program implementation and observed outcomes.

## **2. Participants and Sampling Rationale**

A purposive sampling method was used to select participants for both the FGDs and interviews, ensuring a diverse and representative sample across roles and academic years. This approach enriched the data by capturing varied experiences and viewpoints within the NSS program.

**Student Participants:** The study included approximately 20 students, organized into five focus groups of four students each. These groups were intentionally mixed to include students from different years of study and varying levels of NSS involvement (e.g., team leaders, active volunteers, and newcomers). This allowed for a holistic understanding of NSS's impact across levels of experience.

**Program Coordinators:** Five program coordinators participated in individual interviews. These coordinators were selected based on their depth of involvement with NSS activities, providing insights on program administration, strategic goals, and student development.

## **3. Structure and Guide**

Each FGD and interview was conducted using a semi-structured guide tailored to the specific group. This allowed participants to freely express their experiences while ensuring consistency across sessions. For example:

**Student FGDs:** Topics covered included civic responsibility, leadership development, teamwork, and personal impact. The guide prompted students to share specific examples, enhancing the depth of responses and enabling detailed analysis.

**Coordinator Interviews:** The interviews with coordinators centered on program goals, activity selection, observed impacts on students, challenges faced, and ways to measure program effectiveness. This structure provided a strategic view of NSS's role in student development and its alignment with broader educational goals.

### **Results and discussions of quantitative data:**

The quantitative data reveals a substantial positive impact of NSS participation on students' sense of civic duty, leadership capabilities, teamwork skills, and community engagement. Initially, only a minority of students actively engaged in community service or had strong confidence in their leadership and teamwork abilities. However, post-NSS involvement, there was a notable shift in attitudes and abilities, with increased

engagement in community activities and enhanced self-assurance in leadership and collaboration. For example, before joining, only 6.62% of respondents "always" engaged in community service, but this surged to 47.06% after NSS, underscoring the program's role in fostering consistent, meaningful community participation. Leadership skills improved significantly, with "excellent" ratings rising by 785.71%, and collaboration skills strengthened, reflected by a 627.27% increase in respondents who felt "very comfortable" working in teams.

Moreover, students' perceived responsibility towards the community and their belief in the impact of their actions were overwhelmingly positive post-participation, with 94.85% expressing confidence that their actions can make a societal difference. The reduction in students who were minimally or moderately engaged, coupled with the remarkable rise in those reporting high engagement levels, suggests NSS's effectiveness in embedding a culture of proactive, socially aware individuals. This transformation was mirrored in their enhanced supportiveness and collaborative attitudes, illustrating that NSS participation not only prepares students with practical skills but also nurtures their commitment to social betterment, which they are likely to carry into future roles.

Overall, the data presents a strong, overarching theme of NSS's success in cultivating students' civic consciousness, professional skills, and collaborative spirit, making them more prepared and motivated to contribute meaningfully to society

### **Results and discussion of Qualitative Data:**

**Students:** Participating in the National Service Scheme (NSS) has been an enriching and transformative experience for us. Motivated by a desire to contribute positively to society and enhance our personal and professional development, we joined NSS and found our sense of civic responsibility significantly deepened. This involvement has positively influenced our behavior towards community service, leading to initiatives like organizing local clean-up drives. NSS has also been pivotal in developing our leadership skills, as evidenced by coordinating health camps and managing teams effectively. Our comfort and effectiveness in teamwork have improved, highlighted by collaborative efforts on projects like building playgrounds for underprivileged children. Our engagement with community issues has broadened through various projects, including educational programs and environmental conservation activities. While balancing NSS activities with academic

commitments posed challenges, it taught us valuable time management and prioritization skills. To further enhance the program, more structured training on project management and leadership could be beneficial. Overall, NSS has significantly contributed to our growth, and we highly recommend it to other students for the unique opportunity it offers to serve society and develop essential skills.

Integrating examples from focus group discussions and interviews illustrates NSS's impact on students' personal growth and civic duty. For instance, students shared how organizing health camps in underserved areas helped them develop planning, leadership, and empathy skills. One student remarked, "Organizing the health camp taught me not only how to plan and lead but also the importance of empathy in addressing community needs." Another example is the clean-up drives, where students organized waste segregation and recycling activities. As one participant noted, "Being part of the clean-up drive changed how I see my surroundings and showed me that small actions can contribute to a larger environmental impact." These hands-on experiences boosted their teamwork and leadership skills, with program coordinators noting growing confidence in students' abilities with each project. These examples highlight how NSS projects benefit both the community and the students, illustrating NSS's role in fostering both practical skills and a sense of social responsibility.

**Program officers:** The NSS program at our institution aims to cultivate a strong sense of civic responsibility among students while supporting their personal and professional growth through community service. Activities are selected based on current community needs and student interests, ensuring that they are both impactful and engaging. Through NSS, we have observed significant improvements in students' confidence, leadership abilities, and teamwork skills. Many students have shared success stories of leading initiatives, such as health camps and local clean-up drives, which demonstrate their growth in leadership and commitment to civic duties. NSS fosters leadership and teamwork by involving students in hands-on, community-focused projects that require them to coordinate efforts and collaborate effectively.

Projects such as health camps and environmental clean-ups are especially effective in developing these skills, as they require students to address real community issues actively. Commonly, NSS students undertake health, educational, and environmental conservation projects, which encourage a strong connection with community needs. However, balancing NSS commitments with academic responsibilities is a consistent challenge, so we

provide strategic support to help students manage their time and balance these responsibilities.

To measure the program's effectiveness, we track student involvement, gather feedback, and assess tangible community benefits. Our evaluation metrics include measuring skill development, levels of student engagement, and community response. To enhance the program, we are considering more structured training modules in project management and leadership to reinforce students' skills. New initiatives under consideration also include sustainable, long-term community projects that allow for deeper, ongoing impact. Overall, NSS has been transformative, offering students a valuable opportunity for growth while making meaningful contributions to the community.

To enhance the discussion, connecting the findings with recent literature on service-learning and student development would add depth. Studies show that service-learning programs like NSS positively impact students' civic responsibility and leadership skills (Eyler & Giles, 2013). Our findings align with these outcomes, as students report increased community engagement and leadership post-NSS participation, similar to findings by Prentice (2019), who highlights the role of structured service activities in fostering civic duty. For practical implications, the NSS program could benefit from more structured leadership training modules to reinforce students' skills in project management and team coordination. Long-term community projects would also sustain engagement, providing continuous opportunities for hands-on learning and allowing students to see the direct impact of their efforts over time. These enhancements align with Battistoni (2021), who suggests that sustained projects deepen the impact of service-learning on both students and communities. Implementing these recommendations could optimize NSS's role in student development and long-term community impact.

## CONCLUSION

The mixed-method approach in this study serves as a powerful tool to comprehensively evaluate the National Service Scheme (NSS) and its impact on student development. By integrating quantitative survey data with qualitative insights from focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews, the study captures both the measurable outcomes and the personal transformations experienced by students. The quantitative data reveals clear patterns of increased engagement and enhanced skills, showing a marked rise of 83.83% in active community involvement, with the rate of students who previously did not engage in

community service dropping to zero post-participation. This robust statistical evidence demonstrates NSS's significant role in fostering active citizenship. Complementing these findings, the qualitative data enriches our understanding by illuminating the personal journeys of students—stories of leading initiatives, overcoming challenges, and growing in leadership and teamwork. Program coordinators' perspectives further highlight the intentional design of NSS activities, which are crafted to address real-world community needs while instilling essential skills, thus underscoring the program's dual impact on students and society.

The mixed-method approach not only validates the quantitative outcomes but also provides context and depth, making the results more relatable and meaningful to readers. This comprehensive lens allows us to see beyond numbers, capturing the transformative experiences that make NSS an invaluable platform for holistic development. For instance, while the quantitative data reveals an increase in community involvement and leadership, the qualitative accounts bring to life the specific ways these skills are applied such as organizing health camps or coordinating environmental drives making the findings more tangible and relevant.

In conclusion, this study underscores the vital role of NSS in cultivating civic-minded, skilled, and socially responsible individuals, highlighting its potential as a model for similar programs in educational institutions. The program not only equips students with essential life skills but fosters a profound sense of social responsibility that extends beyond their academic life. The mixed-method approach effectively captures the multi-dimensional impact of NSS, offering readers a holistic view of how structured civic engagement programs can enrich students' lives and prepare them to be proactive contributors to society. This study serves as a testament to the lasting value of NSS, emphasizing that educational experiences that blend academic knowledge with real-world service can profoundly shape individuals, making them more resilient, community-focused, and prepared for future leadership.

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#### APPENDIX: A&B

##### FOR STUDENTS:

##### INTRODUCTION:

Thank you for participating in this discussion. We are interested in understanding your experiences with the National Service Scheme (NSS) and how it has impacted you. Your insights will help us improve the program.

##### Questions:

1. Can you describe your overall experience participating in NSS activities?
2. What motivated you to join the NSS program?
3. How has participating in NSS impacted your sense of civic responsibility?
4. Can you provide an example of how your involvement in NSS has influenced your behavior or actions towards community service?
5. In what ways has NSS influenced your leadership skills?
6. Can you share a specific instance where you demonstrated leadership during an NSS activity?
7. How comfortable are you working in a team after participating in NSS?

8. Can you describe a teamwork experience during an NSS activity that was particularly impactful?
8. How has your engagement with community issues changed since joining NSS?
9. What types of community projects have you been involved in through NSS?
10. What challenges have you faced during your participation in NSS?
11. What do you think could be improved in the NSS program to enhance its effectiveness?
12. How do you feel your participation in NSS has contributed to your personal and professional development?
13. Would you recommend the NSS program to other students? Why or why not?
14. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with NSS?

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##### FOR PROGRAM COORDINATORS:

##### INTRODUCTION:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us. We are gathering insights on the National Service Scheme (NSS) from coordinators to understand its effectiveness and areas for improvement.

##### Questions:

1. What are the primary goals of the NSS program at your institution?
2. How do you select and organize NSS activities for students?
3. What impacts have you observed in students participating in NSS?
4. Can you share any success stories or examples of students who have significantly benefited from the NSS program?
5. How do you think NSS activities contribute to the development of leadership and teamwork skills in students?
6. Can you provide examples of activities that are particularly effective in fostering these skills?
7. How does the NSS program encourage students to engage with community issues?
8. What types of community projects are most commonly undertaken by NSS students?
9. What challenges do you encounter in managing the NSS program?
10. How do you address these challenges?
11. How do you measure the effectiveness of NSS activities?
12. What metrics or methods do you use to evaluate the impact of the program on students and the community?
13. What suggestions do you have for enhancing the NSS program?

14. Are there any new initiatives or changes you are planning to implement in the NSS program?
15. Is there anything else you would like to share about the NSS program?