

PRACTICAL MANUAL

NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME (NSS)

Course Title: NSS-II

Course Code: NSS- 121

Credit Hours: 1(0+1)

(For Undergraduate Agriculture and Horticulture Students)



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College of Horticulture

**Banda University of Agriculture and Technology,
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**Practical manual on
National Service Scheme (NSS)**

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Syllabus – NSS- 121
National Service Scheme (NSS-II)
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Practical

National Service Scheme (NSS-II)

1 (0+1)

- Importance and role of youth leadership
- Meaning, types and traits of leadership, qualities of good leaders; importance and roles of youth leadership, Life competencies
- Definition and importance of life competencies, problem-solving and decision-making interpersonal communication.
- Youth development programs
- Development of youth programs and policy at the national level, state level and voluntary sector; youth-focused and youth-led organizations
- Health, hygiene and sanitation. Definition needs and scope of health education; role of food, nutrition, safe drinking water, water borne diseases and sanitation (Swachh Bharat Abhiyan) for health; national health programs and reproductive health.
- Youth health, lifestyle, HIV AIDS and first aid. Healthy lifestyles, HIV AIDS, drugs and substance abuse, home nursing and first aid.
- Youth and yoga. History, philosophy, concept, myths and misconceptions about yoga; yoga traditions and its impacts, yoga as a tool for healthy lifestyle, preventive and curative method.

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The National Service Scheme (NSS) is a flagship youth development programme aimed at developing social consciousness, democratic leadership and a spirit of service among students. The scheme seeks to integrate education with community service so that students become socially responsible citizens. Through structured activities, students are encouraged to work collectively, undertake constructive and creative social work and bridge the gap between educated and uneducated sections of society.

The NSS programme emphasizes personality development through community engagement, self employment orientation, awareness creation and direct participation in nation-building activities.

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Preface and Acknowledgement

The National Service Scheme (NSS-II) course NSS–121, 1(0+1) is a compulsory practical course for B.Sc. (Hons.) Horticulture students. The course aims to develop socially responsible, disciplined and service-oriented citizens by linking education with community engagement. It focuses on personality development through community service, leadership, teamwork and problem-solving skills. Students participate in regular and special NSS activities, awareness programmes and field-based work to gain practical experience and understand community issues. This E-Practical Manual provides structured guidelines, activity formats and reporting procedures to help students effectively implement NSS programmes. It promotes participatory learning, leadership development and civic responsibility while bridging the gap between academic knowledge and social realities. The manual is intended to support both students and programme officers in conducting NSS activities in an organized and meaningful manner.

The preparation of this E-Practical Manual for NSS-II Course NSS–121 has been possible due to the guidance, encouragement and support of several distinguished individuals and sources. The author gratefully acknowledges the valuable literature, reports, discussions and field experiences that have contributed significantly to the development of this manual.

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It is hoped that this manual will effectively meet the academic requirements of undergraduate students and contribute to strengthening the spirit of service and social responsibility among them.

Dated: July, 2026

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EXERCISE-1

Objective: Importance and Role of Youth Leadership

Leadership among young people is one of the quiet engines that keeps a society moving forward. The National Service Scheme places strong emphasis on developing this quality in student volunteers because a nation's progress depends less on the number of educated youth it produces and more on how many of them are willing to step forward, take responsibility and guide others toward common goals.

❖ **Meaning of Youth Leadership**

Youth leadership can be understood as the capacity of a young individual to influence, organise and motivate a group of people toward achieving a shared objective, while remaining accountable for the outcome. Unlike leadership that comes with age, position, or authority, youth leadership usually grows out of initiative, willingness to serve and the ability to inspire trust among peers. It is less about giving orders and more about setting an example that others feel compelled to follow.

❖ **Importance of Youth Leadership**

- Nation building: Young leaders form the backbone of a country's future administrative, social and political systems. The habits of responsibility formed today directly shape the quality of leadership a nation will have a decade later.
- Social transformation: Youth are often quicker to notice social problems and are less bound by rigid customs, which makes them effective agents of change in matters such as sanitation, literacy, gender equality and environmental conservation.
- Community mobilisation: A confident young leader can bring together an entire village or neighbourhood for a common cause, whether it is a blood donation camp, a tree plantation drive, or a disaster relief effort.
- Personality development: The process of leading others, even in small tasks, sharpens communication skills, decision making ability, patience and emotional maturity in the individual concerned.
- Bridging the gap between government and society: Trained youth leaders often act as a link between government schemes and the people who need them, helping information and benefits travel where they are most required.

❖ **Qualities That Make a Good Youth Leader**

- Self-confidence combined with humility
- Good listening and communication skills
- Willingness to work as part of a team rather than alone
- Honesty and consistency between words and actions
- Patience while dealing with people from different social and economic backgrounds
- A problem-solving attitude rather than a fault-finding one

❖ **How NSS Helps Build Leadership Qualities**

Participation in NSS camps places students in situations that are quite different from the classroom. Living together for several days, sharing daily chores, planning activities for the local community and resolving small disagreements within the group all provide practical training in leadership that no textbook can replace. Over time, a volunteer learns to take initiative without being told, to accept responsibility when something goes wrong and to share credit when something goes right qualities that lie at the very heart of genuine leadership.

EXERCISE-2

Objective: Meaning, types and traits of leadership, qualities of good leaders; importance and roles of youth leadership, Life competencies

Every group of people who work towards a common goal needs someone (or several people) to hold things together, keep everyone moving in the same direction and make decisions when things get difficult. That is essentially what leadership is about and it is a subject that sits at the heart of NSS training.

1. Meaning of Leadership

In simple terms, leadership is the ability to guide, influence and motivate a group of individuals towards achieving a shared objective. It is not a title or a position that someone is handed; it is a process one person (or a rotating set of people) taking responsibility for direction, decision making and the wellbeing of the group. A leader does not necessarily have the most authority in a room, but they are the one others look to when a decision needs to be made or when morale needs lifting.

2. Types of Leadership

Leadership does not come in one single style. Depending on the situation, the group and the leader's own temperament, different approaches tend to emerge. The most commonly discussed types are:

- Autocratic leadership: the leader makes decisions independently, with little or no input from the group. Useful in emergencies or when quick decisions are required, but can suppress creativity and lower morale if overused.
- Democratic (participative) leadership: decisions are made collectively, with the leader encouraging discussion and consensus. This tends to build stronger commitment among group members, though it can be slower in a crisis.
- Laissez-faire leadership: the leader takes a hands-off approach and allows the group considerable freedom to organise itself. Works well with experienced, self-motivated teams, but can lead to a lack of direction in less mature groups.
- Transformational leadership: the leader inspires and motivates followers by presenting a larger vision, encouraging innovation and investing in the personal growth of team members.
- Transactional leadership: leadership built around a system of rewards and consequences; clear structure and expectations, but less focused on inspiring long-term change.
- Situational leadership: rather than sticking to one fixed style, the leader adapts their approach based on the maturity of the team and the demands of the situation. Many trainers consider this the most practical model for NSS volunteers, since community work rarely follows a predictable pattern.

3. Traits of Leadership

Research on leadership over the decades keeps coming back to a similar cluster of personal traits that effective leaders tend to share:

- Self-confidence: a belief in one's own judgement, without slipping into arrogance.
- Integrity and honesty: consistency between what a leader says and what they do.
- Emotional intelligence: the ability to read and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others.
- Decisiveness: willingness to make a call and take responsibility for it.

- Resilience: the capacity to stay steady and keep going when plans fall apart.
- Vision: a sense of direction that goes beyond the immediate task at hand.

4. Qualities of a Good Leader

Traits describe the raw material; qualities describe how that material shows up in day-to-day behaviour. A good leader typically:

- Listens more than they speak and genuinely considers the views of others before deciding.
- Communicates clearly, so that instructions and goals are never left open to confusion.
- Leads by example rather than simply issuing instructions from the sidelines.
- Takes responsibility for mistakes instead of shifting blame onto the team.
- Stays approachable, so that team members feel comfortable raising problems early.
- Shows empathy, recognising that every group member has their own pressures and limitations.
- Encourages growth in others, rather than trying to be indispensable.

5. Importance and Role of Youth Leadership

Young people occupy a unique position in society: they are old enough to take initiative and responsibility, yet still early enough in life to be shaped by the experiences they go through. That combination makes youth leadership especially valuable. Encouraging leadership among the young does the following:

- Builds a pipeline of capable, community minded leaders for the future, rather than leaving leadership only to older, established figures.
- Brings fresh perspectives and energy into addressing long-standing social problems sanitation, literacy, health awareness, environmental protection and so on.
- Gives young people a genuine stake in their community, which tends to reduce apathy and disengagement.
- Strengthens democratic participation, since young leaders often go on to take active roles in civic and political life.

6. Life Competencies

Life competencies are practical skills that enable individuals to deal effectively with everyday challenges, work efficiently with others and make responsible decisions. In the National Service Scheme (NSS), these competencies are developed through community service, field activities, leadership roles and group participation. Unlike academic knowledge, life competencies prepare volunteers to perform confidently in real life situations, adapt to changing environments and contribute positively to society. They strengthen both personal development and professional readiness.

a) Communication Skills

Communication is the ability to exchange information, thoughts and feelings in a clear, accurate and respectful manner. Effective communication includes both speaking and active listening. NSS volunteers interact with community members, government officials and fellow volunteers during awareness campaigns, surveys and social service activities. Strong communication skills improve teamwork, build trust, reduce misunderstandings and ensure that information reaches the intended audience effectively.

b) Teamwork and Collaboration

Teamwork refers to the ability to work cooperatively with individuals from different backgrounds, cultures and viewpoints to achieve a common goal. NSS activities such as special camps, cleanliness drives, tree plantation and disaster relief require volunteers to coordinate their efforts efficiently. Collaboration encourages mutual respect, shared

responsibility, collective decision-making and better problem-solving, leading to successful completion of community development projects.

c) Problem-Solving Skills

Problem-solving is the systematic process of identifying a problem, analyzing its causes, evaluating possible solutions and implementing the most appropriate action. During NSS programmes, volunteers often encounter challenges such as limited resources, unexpected weather conditions, or community related issues. Scientific problem-solving involves logical thinking, creativity, evidence-based decision-making and continuous evaluation of outcomes to achieve effective and sustainable solutions.

d) Time and Resource Management

Time and resource management involve planning, organizing and utilizing available resources efficiently to achieve desired objectives. NSS volunteers learn to prioritize tasks, prepare activity schedules and make optimum use of limited funds, materials, manpower and time during camps and community programmes. Good management skills improve productivity, reduce wastage, enhance efficiency and ensure that projects are completed within the available resources.

e) Adaptability

Adaptability is the ability to adjust positively to new situations, changing environments and unforeseen challenges. NSS volunteers frequently work in rural areas, disaster-affected regions and diverse social settings where conditions may differ significantly from their routine environment. Adaptability enables volunteers to remain flexible, open-minded, resilient and capable of performing effectively despite changing circumstances.

f) Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is the process of addressing disagreements peacefully through communication, negotiation, empathy and mutual understanding. Differences in opinions, responsibilities, or expectations may arise during group activities. NSS encourages volunteers to resolve conflicts respectfully by listening carefully, identifying common interests and finding solutions that benefit all parties. Effective conflict management strengthens relationships, improves teamwork and creates a positive working environment.

g) Self-Discipline and Accountability

Self discipline is the ability to regulate one's behavior, maintain focus and consistently fulfill responsibilities without external supervision. Accountability means accepting responsibility for one's actions, decisions and commitments. NSS volunteers demonstrate these qualities by maintaining punctuality, completing assigned duties sincerely, following organizational guidelines and acting ethically during service activities. These qualities build reliability, integrity, leadership potential and public trust.

EXERCISE-3

Objective: Definition and importance of life competencies, problem solving and decision making interpersonal communication.

Life, in its truest sense, is not just about surviving each day but about handling whatever it throws at us with a certain amount of skill, calmness and maturity. This is where the idea of “life competencies” comes into the picture. As NSS volunteers, you are expected to grow not only academically but also as responsible, capable individuals who can contribute meaningfully to society.

What Do We Mean by Life Competencies?

Life competencies, often referred to as life skills, are the abilities that help a person deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. These are not skills you learn from a textbook alone they are shaped through experience, observation, practice and reflection. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has identified a set of core life skills that every individual, especially young people, should develop. These include self awareness, empathy, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, effective communication, interpersonal relationships, coping with stress and coping with emotions.

In simple words, life competencies are the tools that allow us to think clearly, act wisely, communicate effectively and build healthy relationships with the people around us. They help us handle pressure, make sound choices and adapt to the ever changing situations life presents.

Why Are Life Competencies Important?

You might wonder why NSS, which is generally associated with social service and community work, focuses so much on personal life skills. The answer is simple a volunteer who lacks basic life competencies cannot serve the community effectively. Whether you are organising a blood donation camp, working in a rural area, or dealing with a difficult situation during a relief operation, your ability to think on your feet, solve problems and communicate with different kinds of people becomes absolutely essential.

Beyond NSS activities, these skills prepare you for real life for your career, your relationships and your personal growth. A student who has strong life competencies is better equipped to handle exam stress, workplace challenges, family responsibilities and social situations. These skills build confidence, reduce anxiety and help a person become emotionally balanced and socially responsible which, in many ways, is the very spirit of NSS itself: “Not Me, But You.”

Problem Solving and Decision Making

Let us now look closely at two of the most important life competencies problem solving and decision making. These two often go hand in hand, but they are not exactly the same thing.

- ✓ **Problem solving** is the process of identifying a difficulty or obstacle and finding a practical way to overcome it. It usually involves a few basic steps: recognising that a problem exists, understanding its root cause, thinking of possible solutions, weighing the pros and cons of each option and finally putting the best solution into action. A good problem solver does not panic when faced with a challenge. Instead, they approach it calmly, break it down into smaller parts and work towards a solution systematically.
- ✓ **Decision making**, on the other hand, is the ability to choose the best possible option among the available alternatives. Every day, we make countless decisions some small, like what to wear and some significant, like choosing a career path. Good decision

making requires clarity of thought, the courage to take responsibility for the outcome and the wisdom to consider both short-term and long-term consequences.

For NSS volunteers, these skills are put to the test almost constantly. Imagine you are leading a group during a village survey and suddenly face an unexpected situation maybe a shortage of resources, a conflict between team members, or resistance from the local community. In such moments, your ability to solve problems and make quick, sensible decisions determines the success of the entire activity. This is precisely why NSS camps and activities are designed to place students in real, sometimes unpredictable, situations because that is where these competencies are truly built and tested.

Interpersonal Communication

The third major competency we need to discuss is interpersonal communication the exchange of information, ideas and feelings between two or more people. It is one of the most fundamental human skills, yet one that many people struggle with despite using it every single day.

Effective interpersonal communication is not just about speaking well. It involves listening actively, understanding non-verbal cues like body language and tone, expressing your thoughts clearly and being sensitive to the emotions and perspectives of others. Good communicators know when to speak and when to listen. They express disagreement without being disrespectful and they build trust through honesty and openness.

For an NSS volunteer, this skill is perhaps the most frequently used of all. Whether you are interacting with villagers during an awareness campaign, coordinating with fellow volunteers, or reporting to your programme officer, the way you communicate directly affects how well your message is received and how effectively your work gets done. Miscommunication can lead to confusion, conflict and failed initiatives, while good communication builds cooperation, trust and a sense of unity among the team.

It is also worth remembering that interpersonal communication is closely linked to empathy. When we genuinely try to understand another person's point of view especially someone from a different background, community, or economic situation our communication naturally becomes more respectful and effective. This is a quality every NSS volunteer must consciously develop, since our work often brings us in contact with people whose life experiences are very different from our own.

EXERCISE-4

Objective: Youth development programs

Youth development programs are structured educational and community based activities designed to support the overall growth and development of young people. These programs focus on strengthening the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that enable youth to become responsible, confident and socially committed citizens. During adolescence and early adulthood, individuals undergo rapid physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. This period offers an excellent opportunity to build positive habits, leadership qualities and a sense of civic responsibility.

Objectives of Youth Development Programs

The major objectives of youth development programs under NSS are:

- ✓ To promote the holistic development of students through practical learning experiences.
- ✓ To develop leadership qualities and responsible decision-making abilities.
- ✓ To encourage community participation and voluntary social service.
- ✓ To improve communication, teamwork and interpersonal skills.
- ✓ To promote awareness regarding health, hygiene, environmental protection and sustainable living.
- ✓ To strengthen national integration, social harmony and respect for cultural diversity.
- ✓ To prepare young individuals for future educational and professional responsibilities.

Importance of Youth Development Programs

Youth represent one of the most valuable human resources of any nation. Their energy, creativity and enthusiasm can significantly contribute to social and economic progress when properly guided. Youth development programs provide opportunities to transform this potential into meaningful action through community engagement and practical learning.

These programs also bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real world experiences. Students gain practical exposure to social issues, understand community needs and learn how collaborative efforts can bring positive change. Such experiences enhance self-confidence, improve leadership abilities and encourage responsible citizenship.

Participation in NSS activities further develops emotional maturity, adaptability, time management and ethical values. Volunteers learn to respect different cultures, appreciate diversity and work effectively with people from different backgrounds.

Key Areas Covered Under Youth Development Programs

1. Leadership Development

Leadership development is one of the primary goals of NSS youth programs. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for planning and organizing community activities such as awareness campaigns, blood donation camps, plantation drives and health camps.

Leadership training helps students:

- ✓ Develop decision-making skills.
- ✓ Improve organisational and management abilities.
- ✓ Build confidence while addressing groups.
- ✓ Learn delegation and teamwork.
- ✓ Resolve conflicts through effective communication.
- ✓ Motivate and guide fellow volunteers.

2. Skill Development

Skill development programs equip volunteers with practical competencies that support both personal growth and future employment opportunities. These skills complement formal education and prepare students for real life situations.

Common skills developed include:

- ✓ Effective communication
- ✓ Public speaking
- ✓ Team building
- ✓ Time management
- ✓ Event management
- ✓ First aid and emergency response
- ✓ Digital literacy
- ✓ Basic vocational and entrepreneurial skills
- ✓ Problem-solving and critical thinking

Developing these competencies increases employability and prepares students to face professional challenges confidently.

3. Health and Hygiene Awareness

Good health is essential for personal well being and national development. NSS volunteers participate in awareness campaigns promoting healthy lifestyles and disease prevention.

Activities include:

- ✓ Personal hygiene awareness
- ✓ Handwashing campaigns
- ✓ Nutrition education
- ✓ Mental health awareness
- ✓ Sanitation drives
- ✓ Prevention of communicable diseases
- ✓ Vaccination awareness
- ✓ Menstrual hygiene education

From a public health perspective, improved hygiene practices reduce disease transmission and contribute to healthier communities.

4. Environmental Responsibility

Environmental conservation is an integral part of NSS activities. Volunteers participate in programs that promote ecological sustainability and responsible use of natural resources.

Major environmental activities include:

- ✓ Tree plantation drives
- ✓ Swachh Bharat cleanliness campaigns
- ✓ Plastic waste reduction initiatives
- ✓ Water conservation awareness
- ✓ Biodiversity conservation
- ✓ Waste segregation and recycling
- ✓ Energy conservation campaigns

5. Social and Cultural Awareness

India is known for its rich cultural diversity. Youth development programs encourage students to understand and respect different languages, traditions, religions and social practices while promoting national unity.

Important themes include:

- ✓ Gender equality
- ✓ Social inclusion
- ✓ National integration
- ✓ Communal harmony
- ✓ Eradication of discrimination
- ✓ Prevention of substance abuse
- ✓ Respect for constitutional values
- ✓ Promotion of ethical behaviour

These activities help build socially responsible citizens who value equality, justice and mutual respect.

6. Career Guidance and Personality Development

Career guidance programs assist students in identifying suitable educational and professional opportunities based on their interests, abilities and career goals.

Activities may include:

- ✓ Career counselling sessions
- ✓ Competitive examination guidance
- ✓ Entrepreneurship awareness
- ✓ Resume writing workshops
- ✓ Interview preparation
- ✓ Higher education counselling
- ✓ Soft skill development
- ✓ Personality development training

Career guidance enables students to make informed decisions and enhances their readiness for future academic and employment opportunities.

7. Benefits of Youth Development Programs

Participation in youth development programs provides numerous long-term benefits:

- ✓ Improved leadership and communication skills.
- ✓ Greater self-confidence and self-discipline.
- ✓ Better teamwork and interpersonal relationships.
- ✓ Enhanced problem-solving and decision-making abilities.
- ✓ Increased awareness of social and environmental issues.
- ✓ Development of civic responsibility and ethical values.
- ✓ Better physical and mental well-being.
- ✓ Improved employability and career preparedness.
- ✓ Stronger commitment to community service and nation-building.

EXERCISE-5

Objective: Development of youth programs and policy at the national level, state level and voluntary sector; youth-focused and youth-led organizations

What Do We Mean by “Youth”?

Before looking at organizations, it helps to be clear about who counts as “youth.” The Government of India, under its National Youth Policy, defines youth as persons in the age group of 15 to 29 years, though the United Nations uses a slightly narrower band of 15 to 24 years for international comparison. This age group is significant because it covers the years of secondary and higher education, the search for employment, marriage and family formation for many and the early years of civic and political participation. Any organization working in this space, therefore, is dealing with a population that is still forming its identity, its skills and its place in society which is exactly why the structure of such organizations and who controls them, matters so much.

1. Development of Youth Programmes at the National Level

At the national level, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports functions as the nodal ministry for youth affairs generally, not merely for NSS. It runs several other programmes that complement NSS, such as the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, which works with non-student rural youth through a network of youth clubs and the National Youth Corps, which places young volunteers in developmental work for a fixed tenure. The Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, an autonomous institution under the Ministry, provides training, research and capacity building support that feeds back into the design of these programmes. Programme development at this level typically follows a cycle of policy review, consultation with states and youth organisations, budgetary approval through the planning process and periodic evaluation, often supported by research studies commissioned by the Ministry itself.

2. Development of Youth Programmes at the State Level

States are not merely implementing agencies; many have their own youth policies and youth welfare boards that adapt national priorities to local circumstances. A state with a large tribal population, for instance, may weight its youth programmes more heavily towards livelihood and skill training, while a state facing acute issues of substance abuse among young people may direct greater resources towards counselling and de-addiction. State Youth Boards or Departments of Youth Affairs coordinate this local adaptation, working with the NSS Cell, the state units of Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan and various state run skill development missions, so that the various strands of youth policy do not work at cross purposes with one another.

3. Role of the Voluntary Sector

Voluntary organisations occupy a somewhat different but equally important place in this structure. Non-governmental organisations, community based organisations and youth clubs often possess a depth of local trust and field presence that government departments, however well-intentioned, find difficult to replicate quickly. NSS units are frequently advised and in many states required, to work in partnership with such organisations while conducting special camps or long-term community projects, whether in areas such as health awareness, environmental conservation, disaster relief or literacy. This partnership model allows the voluntary sector to supply local knowledge, sustained community relationships and specialised expertise, while the government provides the volunteer manpower, a degree of institutional backing and financial support. In several well documented cases, NGOs working in fields such as watershed

development or child rights have collaborated directly with NSS units on specific projects and such collaborations are generally regarded as good practice within the scheme.

4. Funding Pattern

NSS is funded jointly by the Union government and the state governments and the exact sharing ratio has changed at different points in the scheme's history depending on the government's broader fiscal arrangements with the states. Funds are released through the State NSS Cells to universities, which in turn disburse the amount to individual colleges based on the number of sanctioned units and the activities actually undertaken. The grant covers items such as honorarium for Programme Officers, cost of the special camp, materials for activities and a modest administrative allowance, though in practice most institutions and volunteers contribute a good deal of unpaid time and effort well beyond what the grant alone would support.

5. Policy Framework for Youth Development

A scheme like NSS does not operate in a policy vacuum. It draws its legitimacy and direction from the National Youth Policy, which lays down the government's broad vision for the young population of the country. India's first National Youth Policy was adopted in 1988, followed by a revised version in 2003 and the current National Youth Policy dates to 2014. Each revision has reflected the changing understanding of what young people need, moving from an early emphasis on discipline and national integration towards a more rounded concern with education, employability, health, participation in governance and social justice.

The National Youth Policy 2014 defines youth as persons in the age group of 15 to 29 years and identifies five priority areas: education, employment and skill development, health and healthy lifestyles, sports and promotion of social values. It also lays down cross-cutting themes such as inclusion and participation, gender equity and youth engagement in governance and community development. Schemes such as NSS, along with the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan and the National Youth Corps, are treated in this policy document as the principal delivery mechanisms through which these priorities are meant to reach young people, particularly outside the formal education system.

6. Comparative Overview of Responsibilities

The table below summarises, in a simplified form, how responsibility for youth programme development is distributed across the three levels discussed in this practical.

Level	Key Institutions	Principal Responsibilities
National	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, NSS Directorate, National Advisory Committee	Policy formulation, budget sanction, national level coordination, monitoring and evaluation
State	State NSS Cell, State Liaison Officer, State Advisory Committee, State Youth Board	Allocation of units, release of state share of funds, training, approval of camps
Institutional / Unit	University Programme Coordinator, College Programme Officer, NSS Unit	Annual action plan, regular activities, special camp, record keeping
Voluntary Sector	NGOs, community based organisations, youth clubs	Local mobilisation, technical expertise, sustained community linkage

7. What Do We Mean by a Youth Organisation?

In simple terms, a youth organisation is any group, association, or institution that works mainly with or for young people, usually those between the ages of 15 and 29, though this age band

varies from country to country. Some of these organizations run programmes for youth, such as skill training, sports, cultural activities, or awareness campaigns. Others exist because young people themselves formed them to raise their voice on issues they care about, from climate change to unemployment to mental health. What separates one type from the other is not the activity itself but who is actually steering the ship.

8. Youth-Focused Organizations

8.1 Meaning

A youth focused organisation is one whose programmes and services are designed with young people in mind, but the planning, funding decisions and day-to-day running are handled mostly by adults. Young people here are the audience or the beneficiaries rather than the ones sitting at the table when decisions are made. This does not mean their opinions are ignored; many well run youth focused organisations consult young people regularly. But the final authority, the budget and the direction of the organisation usually rest with an adult-led board, management committee, or institution.

8.2 Common Examples

- ✓ Schools and colleges running career guidance cells or counselling centres for students.
- ✓ Government departments and ministries that design skill development schemes for youth, such as employment or entrepreneurship programmes.
- ✓ NGOs that run literacy drives, health camps, or vocational training specifically for young people, staffed largely by adult professionals.
- ✓ Sports academies and cultural institutions that train young athletes or artists under adult coaches and administrators.

8.3 Strengths and Limitations

The biggest advantage of youth focused organisations is stability. Because adults with experience, funding networks and institutional backing are running them, these organisations often last longer, follow proper procedures and can mobilise larger resources. The limitation, however, is that young people can end up feeling like passengers rather than drivers. When decisions are always made on their behalf, some of the energy and ownership that youth naturally bring to a cause can be lost.

9. Youth-Led Organizations

9.1 Meaning

A youth led organisation flips the arrangement around. Here, young people are not just the target group; they are the founders, the decision makers and often the ones raising funds and managing the organisation's affairs. Adults may still be involved as mentors or advisors, but the steering wheel is firmly in the hands of young people themselves. This model is built on the belief that young people are capable of identifying their own problems and designing their own solutions, rather than waiting for someone older to do it for them.

9.2 Common Examples

- ✓ Students run clubs and unions that organise their own events, campaigns and welfare activities on campus.
- ✓ Youth-founded NGOs and collectives working on issues like climate action, digital literacy, or gender equality, where founders and core team members are themselves young adults.
- ✓ Informal youth collectives that spring up around a local issue, such as a clean-up drive or a voter-awareness campaign, organised entirely by young volunteers.
- ✓ Youth wings of larger movements where young members set their own agenda within the broader cause.

EXERCISE-6

Objective: Health, hygiene and sanitation. Definition needs and scope of health education; role of food, nutrition, safe drinking water, water borne diseases and sanitation (Swachh Bharat Abhiyan) for health; national health programs and reproductive health.

The National Service Scheme was founded on a very simple belief that education is not complete until it is put to some use for the community around us. Among the many themes that NSS volunteers are trained to work on, health, hygiene and sanitation occupy a special place, because these are areas where even small, consistent efforts by ordinary citizens can bring about real and visible change in the lives of people around them.

➤ **Understanding Health in a Broader Sense**

When we use the word “health,” most people immediately think of the absence of disease. But the World Health Organisation gave us a far more complete definition decades ago health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. This is an important starting point for NSS volunteers to internalise, because it means our work cannot stop at treating illness. A person may be free of any diagnosed disease and still be unhealthy undernourished, mentally stressed, socially isolated, or living in conditions that will make them sick sooner or later. NSS volunteers are trained to look at health holistically: physical fitness, mental peace, nutritional adequacy and a supportive social environment all come together to create what we call a healthy individual and by extension, a healthy community.

Rural and semi-urban India still carries a heavy burden of preventable diseases diarrhoea, typhoid, intestinal worms, skin infections and vector-borne diseases like malaria and dengue. What is striking is that almost all of these are linked not to a lack of medicine, but to a lack of hygiene and sanitation awareness. This is exactly where NSS steps in not as a substitute for doctors and hospitals, but as a bridge that carries preventive knowledge into households that may never have received it otherwise.

➤ **Personal Hygiene:**

Personal hygiene refers to the practices an individual follows to keep their own body clean and free from infection. It sounds elementary, almost too basic to teach at a college level and yet the reality on the ground tells a different story. Handwashing with soap before eating and after using the toilet remains one of the single most effective, low cost interventions against the spread of diarrheal and respiratory diseases, yet studies conducted across Indian villages continue to show alarmingly low compliance. Brushing teeth twice a day, bathing regularly, trimming nails, wearing clean clothes, covering the mouth while coughing or sneezing these are not decorative habits, they are the first line of defence against infection.

For NSS volunteers working with school children or rural households, teaching personal hygiene is often more about demonstration than lecture. A simple activity showing children the correct seven-step method of handwashing, or explaining why nails should be kept short often has a far greater and longer lasting impact than a formal speech on the importance of cleanliness.

➤ **Menstrual Hygiene:**

This is a topic that used to be quietly skipped over in most community programmes, but NSS today rightly gives it dedicated space. Poor menstrual hygiene management, driven largely by social taboos and lack of access to sanitary products, leads to reproductive tract infections and just as seriously, to school dropouts among adolescent girls who feel unable to manage their periods with dignity in the absence of clean toilets or affordable sanitary napkins.

➤ **Environmental Hygiene and Sanitation:**

While personal hygiene is about the individual, environmental sanitation is about the surroundings we all share and it is here that the collective, community based model of NSS finds its truest expression. Environmental sanitation covers safe drinking water, proper disposal of human excreta, solid and liquid waste management, drainage and control of disease carrying vectors like flies and mosquitoes.

Open defecation remains one of India's most persistent public health challenges, despite the enormous strides made under the Swachh Bharat Mission since 2014. The construction of a toilet is only half the battle the other half, arguably the harder one, is changing mindsets so that people actually use the toilets that have been built and maintain them properly. NSS volunteers frequently take part in behaviour change communication campaigns of exactly this kind, going door to door, organising nukkad natak (street plays) and working alongside Anganwadi and ASHA workers to reinforce the message.

Safe drinking water is another pillar of environmental sanitation. Contaminated water sources are responsible for a large share of the diarrheal disease burden in the country and simple interventions boiling water, using chlorine tablets, protecting wells and hand pumps from contamination by nearby latrines or drains can dramatically reduce this burden. NSS volunteers are often trained to test water sources using basic field kits and to educate villagers on simple purification methods that do not require expensive infrastructure.

Solid waste management is the third major component. In most Indian villages and small towns, waste segregation at source is still not practised, leading to garbage accumulation, breeding of disease vectors and contamination of soil and water. NSS camps often include activities such as village clean up drives, composting pit demonstrations and awareness sessions on segregating biodegradable and non biodegradable waste.

➤ **Nutrition and Health:**

No discussion of health is complete without touching upon nutrition, since malnutrition in both its forms, undernutrition and the rising problem of overnutrition and obesity continues to affect a significant proportion of the Indian population, especially children and women. NSS volunteers, particularly those from agricultural and horticultural backgrounds, are in a unique position here. Knowledge of kitchen gardens, nutrient rich crops and simple food fortification techniques can be shared with rural households to improve dietary diversity without requiring large financial investment. Encouraging the cultivation of leafy vegetables, pulses and fruit bearing plants in home gardens is a practical, low cost way of tackling micronutrient deficiencies at the household level.

➤ **Government Schemes Supporting Health and Sanitation**

It is useful for students to be familiar with the major national programmes that NSS activities often align with or support:

- ✓ The **Swachh Bharat Mission** (launched 2014) aims at eliminating open defecation and improving solid waste management across both rural and urban India.
- ✓ The **Jal Jeevan Mission** works towards providing functional household tap connections to every rural home, directly addressing the safe drinking water component of sanitation.
- ✓ The **National Health Mission**, along with its rural and urban sub-missions, focuses on strengthening healthcare delivery, particularly maternal and child health, at the grassroots level.

- ✓ The **POSHAN Abhiyaan** targets malnutrition among children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers through a convergence of health, nutrition and sanitation interventions.

➤ **Health Education: Definition, Need and Scope**

Health is something most of us take for granted until it starts slipping away. As NSS volunteers working closely with rural and urban communities, one of the most powerful tools we have isn't medicine or money it's knowledge. That's exactly what health education is about: helping people understand their own bodies, their surroundings and the choices that keep them well.

➤ **What Do We Mean by "Health Education"?**

Before we define health education, it helps to recall what health itself means. The World Health Organization describes health not merely as the absence of disease or infirmity, but as a state of complete physical, mental and social well being. This is important because it tells us health education cannot just be about telling people "don't fall sick" it has to address the whole person: their body, their mind and their place within family and society.

With that in mind, health education can be understood as a planned, deliberate process of learning that is designed to help individuals and communities improve their health by increasing their knowledge or influencing their attitudes. It is not about lecturing people or handing out pamphlets they'll never read. At its core, it's about creating an opportunity for learning one that encourages a voluntary change in behaviour, so that people choose healthier practices because they understand and value them, not because they've been forced to comply.

➤ **Why Do We Need Health Education?**

If you spend even a little time in villages or urban slums during NSS camps, you'll notice something quickly: many health problems people suffer from are not due to a lack of hospitals or doctors, but due to a lack of awareness. Diarrhoea from unsafe drinking water, malnutrition from poor dietary habits, anaemia among adolescent girls, worm infestations from poor sanitation these are largely preventable, yet they persist generation after generation simply because people don't have the right information at the right time.

This is where the need for health education becomes obvious. Let's look at why it matters so much:

- ✓ **Prevention is better and cheaper, than cure.** A large share of the diseases affecting our population waterborne diseases, communicable infections, lifestyle disorders can be prevented if people simply know what causes them and how to avoid them. Teaching someone to wash their hands before eating costs nothing, but it can prevent illnesses that would otherwise require expensive treatment.
- ✓ **Behaviour, not just biology, drives disease.** Many health problems today obesity, diabetes, tobacco and alcohol use, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS are closely tied to the way people live and behave. No medical advancement can fix a habit; only awareness and motivation can change behaviour and this is precisely what health education aims to build.
- ✓ **Communities carry old myths and misconceptions.** In many rural pockets, health related superstitions still guide decisions for example, families avoiding hospitals during childbirth, or believing that a fever should be treated by a local charm rather than a doctor. Health education becomes necessary to gently replace these misconceptions with scientifically accurate understanding.
- ✓ **Rising population means rising responsibility.** With increasing population pressure on limited health infrastructure, it is not possible for doctors and hospitals alone to serve

everyone. Educating people to take responsibility for their own health and that of their families, eases the burden on the healthcare system.

- ✓ **Mental health needs attention too.** Health is not just physical. Stress, anxiety and social pressures are increasingly common, even in rural areas, yet mental health remains poorly understood and heavily stigmatized. Health education plays an important role in normalizing conversations around mental well being.
- ✓ **Sustainable development depends on healthy citizens.** A nation cannot progress if its people are unwell. Health education contributes directly to human capital, productivity and overall national development making it as important as any other form of education.

➤ **The Scope of Health Education**

Now let's talk about how wide this subject actually stretches. Health education is not confined to hospitals or classrooms its scope touches nearly every sphere of life. Broadly, we can understand its scope under the following heads:

- ✓ **Personal Hygiene**
This includes teaching individuals about cleanliness of the body, hands, teeth, hair and clothing. Simple daily habits like hand washing before meals, bathing regularly and maintaining oral hygiene fall under this. It sounds basic, but a surprising number of infections trace back to poor personal hygiene practices.
- ✓ **Environmental Sanitation**
Health education extends to the surroundings people live in safe disposal of waste, proper drainage, protection of drinking water sources and control of disease carrying vectors like mosquitoes and flies. Community level cleanliness drives, often organized by NSS units, fall squarely within this scope.
- ✓ **Control and Prevention of Communicable Diseases**
This covers awareness about diseases like tuberculosis, malaria, dengue, typhoid and more recently, COVID-19 how they spread, how they can be prevented and the importance of vaccination and timely treatment.
- ✓ **Nutrition Education**
A large part of health education involves teaching people about balanced diets, the value of locally available foods, the dangers of malnutrition and dietary needs during pregnancy, infancy and childhood.
- ✓ **Maternal and Child Health**
This includes educating families about antenatal and postnatal care, safe delivery practices, breastfeeding, immunization schedules for children and the overall importance of spacing between pregnancies.
- ✓ **School Health Education**
Children spend a significant part of their lives in school, making it an ideal setting to instil healthy habits early regular health checkups, correction of vision or nutritional deficiencies and building lifelong hygiene habits.
- ✓ **Occupational Health**
For working populations, especially in agriculture and small industries common in our region, health education also covers safety measures, protection from occupational hazards and the importance of regular health screening.
- ✓ **Mental and Social Health**

As mentioned earlier, this involves creating awareness about stress management, substance abuse prevention and reducing the stigma associated with mental illness, encouraging people to seek help without hesitation.

✓ **Family Welfare and Population Education**

This includes spreading awareness about family planning methods, responsible parenthood and the social and economic benefits of a planned family size.

✓ **Health Education Through Mass Media and Community Programs**

In today's world, the scope of health education has expanded well beyond classrooms and clinics it now includes radio, television, social media, posters, street plays (often performed during NSS camps) and community meetings, all serving as powerful platforms to reach the masses.

❖ **Role of food, nutrition, safe drinking water, water borne diseases and sanitation (Swachh Bharat Abhiyan) for health:**

Health is not merely the absence of disease. It is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and it forms the foundation on which every other aspect of a person's life is built. For a country like India, where a large section of the population still struggles with malnutrition, contaminated drinking water and poor sanitation, the subject of health becomes not just a personal concern but a national one.

➤ **Role of Food and Nutrition in Health**

Food is the most basic requirement for human survival, but the quality and balance of what we eat decides whether that food actually builds health or silently damages it over the years. Nutrition refers to the process by which the body takes in food and uses it for growth, energy, repair and the maintenance of life. A balanced diet must supply carbohydrates for energy, proteins for growth and tissue repair, fats for stored energy and cell function, vitamins and minerals for regulating body processes and adequate fibre and water for digestion.

When any of these components is missing or insufficient over a long period, the body begins to show signs of deficiency. Protein-energy malnutrition, for instance, is still widespread among children in many parts of rural India and leads to stunted growth, low immunity and poor cognitive development. On the other end of the spectrum, unbalanced diets rich in processed food and low in essential nutrients are giving rise to lifestyle diseases such as obesity, diabetes and hypertension even among younger populations.

Good nutrition strengthens the immune system, allowing the body to fight off infections more effectively. It supports proper growth in children, aids recovery from illness and helps maintain energy and productivity in adults. For pregnant women, adequate nutrition directly affects the health of the child being carried, reducing the risk of low birth weight and developmental problems. This is precisely why national programmes such as the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Mid-Day Meal Scheme and POSHAN Abhiyaan have been designed around the idea that food security and nutritional security must go hand in hand for a healthy population.

➤ **Safe Drinking Water**

Water is often called the elixir of life and rightly so, because nearly every function of the human body depends on it. However, water only supports health when it is safe meaning free from disease-causing organisms, harmful chemicals and physical contaminants. Unsafe water, on the other hand, becomes one of the most dangerous carriers of disease, especially in areas where sanitation infrastructure is weak.

Safe drinking water must be clear, colourless, odourless and free from pathogenic microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses and parasites, as well as free from harmful levels of chemical contaminants like arsenic, fluoride and nitrates, which are unfortunately present in groundwater in several regions of India. Common methods of ensuring water safety at the household and community level include boiling, chlorination, use of water filters, solar disinfection and proper storage in clean, covered containers.

Access to safe drinking water is directly linked to reduced incidence of diarrhoeal diseases, cholera, typhoid and other infections that continue to claim thousands of lives every year, particularly among young children. Government initiatives such as the Jal Jeevan Mission aim to provide functional household tap connections to every rural home in India, recognising that safe water at the source is the first and most important line of defence against water borne illness.

➤ **Water Borne Diseases**

Water borne diseases are illnesses caused by pathogenic microorganisms that are transmitted through contaminated water. These diseases remain among the leading causes of illness and death in developing regions, disproportionately affecting children under five years of age. Some of the most common water borne diseases include:

- ✓ **Diarrhoea and Gastroenteritis:-** caused by bacteria such as *E. coli* and viruses like rotavirus, leading to fluid loss, dehydration and in severe cases, death if untreated.
- ✓ **Cholera:-** caused by *Vibrio cholerae*, resulting in severe watery diarrhoea and rapid dehydration; it can spread quickly in areas with poor sanitation following contamination of water sources.
- ✓ **Typhoid Fever:-** caused by *Salmonella typhi*, transmitted through water or food contaminated with faecal matter, leading to prolonged fever, weakness and intestinal complications.
- ✓ **Hepatitis A and E:-** viral infections affecting the liver, spread mainly through faecally contaminated water, common in areas lacking proper sewage treatment.
- ✓ **Dysentery:-** caused by bacteria (*Shigella*) or parasites (*Entamoeba histolytica*), leading to bloody diarrhoea and abdominal cramps.
- ✓ **Worm infestations:-** such as roundworm and hookworm, often transmitted through water or soil contaminated with faecal matter, particularly affecting children in areas without proper toilets.

The common thread linking almost all of these diseases is the faecal oral route of transmission meaning that human or animal waste, if not properly managed, eventually finds its way back into the water or food chain and causes illness. This is exactly why sanitation and not water quality alone, becomes the other half of the solution.

➤ **Sanitation and the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**

Sanitation refers to the safe management and disposal of human waste, along with maintaining cleanliness in the surrounding environment. Poor sanitation practices, especially open defecation, allow disease-causing organisms to contaminate soil and water sources, creating a continuous cycle of infection within communities. For decades, open defecation remained widespread in rural India, contributing significantly to the burden of water borne diseases and child malnutrition, since repeated infections prevent the body from properly absorbing nutrients even when food is available.

Recognising this, the Government of India launched the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission) on 2nd October 2014, with the goal of making India open-defecation free and improving overall sanitation coverage across the country. The mission had two components: Swachh Bharat

Mission (Gramin) for rural areas and Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) for cities and towns. Its major objectives included construction of individual and community toilets, elimination of open defecation, scientific management of solid and liquid waste and behaviour change communication to encourage sustained use of toilets rather than construction alone.

For NSS volunteers, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is one of the most active platforms for direct community engagement. Volunteers regularly participate in cleanliness drives (Shramdaan), awareness rallies on toilet usage and handwashing, campaigns against open defecation and cleaning of water bodies, village streets and public institutions. These activities are not symbolic; they contribute directly to breaking the chain of transmission of water borne diseases at the grassroots level.

❖ **National health programs and reproductive health:**

➤ **National Health Programs**

India's public health system did not develop overnight. Right after Independence, the country was struggling with epidemics of malaria, smallpox, tuberculosis and extremely high rates of maternal and child death. Over the decades, the government has built a whole architecture of programs to deal with these problems one by one and eventually to bring them all under a single umbrella.

✓ **National Health Mission (NHM)**

The National Health Mission is really the parent programme under which most other schemes now function. It was formed by merging two earlier missions the National Rural Health Mission, which started in 2005 and the National Urban Health Mission, which came later to cover cities and towns. The whole idea behind NHM is to provide accessible, affordable and accountable healthcare, especially to people in rural areas, poor urban slums and vulnerable groups like women, children and the elderly. Under this mission, India has invested heavily in strengthening primary health centres, community health centres and sub centres and in training a whole cadre of frontline workers ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) workers being the most visible example. An ASHA worker is usually a woman chosen from within her own village, trained to counsel other women on pregnancy, nutrition and immunization and to act as the vital link between the community and the formal health system.

✓ **Reproductive and Child Health Programme (RCH)**

This programme deserves special mention because it is the direct ancestor of most of today's maternal and child health schemes. RCH brought together earlier, separately run programmes on family planning, maternal care and child survival into a single, integrated strategy. The logic was simple: a mother's health and a child's health cannot really be separated from each other, so why treat them through different departments?

✓ **Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)**

This is one of the most well known schemes at the grassroots level and many of you may have already seen it in action during village surveys. JSY is a conditional cash transfer scheme meaning it gives money directly to pregnant women, but only if they deliver their baby in a proper health institution rather than at home. The scheme specifically targets women below the poverty line and gives extra encouragement to states where institutional delivery rates were historically very low, largely across the northern and eastern parts of the country.

✓ **Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK)**

Building further on JSY, this scheme guarantees free delivery, including caesarean sections, for pregnant women in public health institutions free medicines, free diagnostics, free diet during the

hospital stay and free transport, both to reach the hospital and to go back home. It extends the same benefits to sick newborn babies up to one year of age. In practice, this scheme was meant to remove the excuse that "we didn't have money" from ever standing between a mother and safe delivery.

✓ **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)**

This is a more recent addition and it focuses on the quality of antenatal care rather than just the delivery itself. Under this scheme, on the 9th of every month, pregnant women in their second or third trimester are given a free, comprehensive checkup by a doctor at designated health facilities across the country. The idea is early detection of high-risk pregnancies conditions like anaemia, hypertension, or gestational diabetes so that they can be managed well before delivery, instead of turning into emergencies at the last moment.

✓ **Mission Indradhanush**

This programme is about immunization rather than pregnancy directly, but it is closely tied to child survival. Mission Indradhanush was launched to identify and vaccinate children who had been left out of the routine immunization programme the ones who, for whatever reason, missed their scheduled doses of vaccines against diseases like diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, tuberculosis and measles. Intensified rounds of this mission have specifically gone into hard-to-reach areas, urban slums and migratory populations, where children are otherwise very easily missed by the regular health system.

✓ **POSHAN Abhiyan (National Nutrition Mission)**

Malnutrition among children and anaemia among women and girls remain some of India's most stubborn health problems and POSHAN Abhiyan was designed to attack exactly this. It brings together multiple ministries and departments to reduce stunting, wasting and low birth weight among children and to improve nutritional status among adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers. Anganwadi centres, run under the Integrated Child Development Services scheme, are the main delivery points for this programme at the village level.

✓ **National Family Planning Programme**

India was actually the first country in the world to launch an official family planning programme, way back in 1952. Over the decades this programme has evolved a great deal from a phase that leaned heavily on numerical sterilization targets, to today's approach, which is centred on giving couples a genuine basket of choices: temporary methods like condoms, oral contraceptive pills, intrauterine devices, injectable contraceptives, alongside permanent options like male and female sterilization.

➤ **Reproductive Health**

Now let's turn to reproductive health as a subject in itself, since this is really the conceptual foundation for everything discussed above.

✓ **What Do We Mean by Reproductive Health?**

The World Health Organization defines reproductive health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system and not merely the absence of disease. This is an important definition to sit with for a moment, because it tells us that reproductive health isn't just about whether someone's reproductive organs are functioning normally it also includes the ability to have a satisfying and safe sex life, the capacity to reproduce and crucially, the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so.

This last part the freedom of choice is where the concept of reproductive rights comes in. Reproductive rights recognize that individuals and couples have the right to decide the number,

spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, along with the right to attain the highest standard of reproductive and sexual health.

✓ **Why This Matters So Much in the Indian Context**

India carries one of the largest burdens of maternal and reproductive health problems in the world, even though the numbers have genuinely improved a great deal over the past two decades. Maternal mortality deaths of women during pregnancy or childbirth or shortly after is still concentrated among poorer, rural and less educated populations, largely because of three classic delays: delay in deciding to seek care, delay in reaching a health facility and delay in receiving appropriate treatment once there. Anaemia among pregnant women remains extremely common and it directly increases the risk of complications during delivery. Early marriage, though declining, still pushes many girls into pregnancy before their bodies are fully ready for it, raising risks for both mother and child.

✓ **Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (ARSH)**

This is a particularly important area for NSS volunteers to understand, since most of you are working directly with young people. Adolescence roughly the age group of ten to nineteen is a period of enormous physical and emotional change, but in a country like India, it is also a period where accurate information about one's own body is often extremely hard to come by, because of social hesitation around discussing these topics openly. The ARSH strategy, run under the health mission, tries to fix this gap by training health workers to be adolescent-friendly, setting up dedicated adolescent-friendly health clinics and running peer education programmes where young people themselves are trained to pass on correct information to others their age. Menstrual hygiene, nutrition, the risks of early pregnancy and awareness about reproductive tract infections are typical subjects covered here.

✓ **Reproductive Tract Infections and Sexually Transmitted Infections (RTI/STI)**

Infections of the reproductive tract are extremely common but chronically under reported, largely because of stigma and embarrassment, especially among women in conservative households. Left untreated, these infections can cause infertility, chronic pain and complications during pregnancy and they also increase vulnerability to more serious infections like HIV. Government health centres now typically integrate RTI/STI counselling and treatment into their regular reproductive health services rather than running it as a completely separate clinic, precisely to reduce the stigma of walking into a clinic for that reason alone.

✓ **The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act**

This law, first passed in 1971 and amended more than once since most recently in 2021 allows for legal termination of pregnancy under specified conditions and it is an important part of reproductive rights in India. The amendments over the years have extended the permissible gestation period for termination in certain cases and expanded who can access these services, reflecting a broader shift toward respecting a woman's autonomy over her own reproductive decisions.

EXERCISE-7

Objective: Youth health, lifestyle, HIV AIDS and first aid. Healthy lifestyles, HIV AIDS, drugs and substance abuse, home nursing and first aid.

➤ Youth and Health

You are at an age where your body is still developing, your habits are still forming and whatever patterns you build now good or bad are going to follow you for decades. This is exactly why the youth population is considered the backbone of a nation's health profile. If the youth of a country are healthy, active and aware, the whole nation benefits, because you are the future workforce, the future parents and the future decision-makers.

But here's the reality we're facing today: lifestyle diseases that used to affect only middle-aged and elderly people are now showing up in college students. We're talking about early-onset diabetes, hypertension, obesity and even heart-related issues in people barely in their twenties. Why is this happening? Mostly because of three things poor diet, lack of physical activity and disturbed sleep cycles, all made worse by excessive screen time and stress.

Good health, as you all know, isn't just "not being sick." The World Health Organization describes it as a state of complete physical, mental and social well being. That means if you're physically fit but mentally stressed all the time, you're not actually healthy in the full sense. Similarly, if you're constantly isolated and don't have good social connections, that also chips away at your overall well being.

➤ Lifestyle and Its Impact

Let's talk about lifestyle specifically, because this is where most of the damage happens silently, without you even realizing it.

- ✓ **Diet:** A huge number of students today survive on packaged snacks, instant noodles, sugary drinks and irregular meal timings. This might feel convenient, especially during exam season or hostel life, but over time it leads to nutritional deficiencies, weight gain and digestive problems. A balanced diet with proper proportions of carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and minerals isn't old-fashioned advice it's the actual foundation of long term health.
- ✓ **Physical activity:** Sitting for hours in front of laptops and phones has become the new normal, but our bodies were never designed for that kind of stillness. Even 30 minutes of walking, cycling, or any form of exercise daily can significantly reduce the risk of obesity, cardiovascular disease and even mental health issues like anxiety and depression.
- ✓ **Sleep:** Many students take pride in late night study sessions or endless scrolling on social media, but chronic sleep deprivation affects memory, concentration, immunity and emotional regulation. Seven to eight hours of quality sleep isn't a luxury it's a biological requirement.
- ✓ **Substance use:** Peer pressure during college years often introduces students to smoking, alcohol, tobacco and sometimes drugs. These substances don't just harm the body over time; they also impair judgment, which brings us to something serious risky behavior that increases vulnerability to infections like HIV.
- ✓ **Stress and mental health:** Academic pressure, career uncertainty, relationship issues and family expectations create a constant low hum of stress in student life. Left unaddressed, this can spiral into anxiety disorders or depression. Talking openly about mental health, without shame or stigma, is something NSS volunteers should actively encourage in their communities.

➤ **HIV and AIDS**

Now let's move to a topic that requires both scientific accuracy and social sensitivity HIV and AIDS.

- ✓ **What is HIV?** HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It attacks the body's immune system, specifically targeting CD4 cells (a type of white blood cell), which are crucial for fighting infections. Over time, as the virus destroys more of these cells, the body's ability to defend itself weakens.
- ✓ **What is AIDS?** AIDS, or Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, is the final and most advanced stage of HIV infection. Not everyone with HIV develops AIDS, especially with early diagnosis and proper treatment, but without treatment, HIV can progress to AIDS over several years.
- ✓ **How does HIV spread?** This is where a lot of myths exist and part of your job as NSS volunteers is to bust these myths in your communities. HIV spreads through:
 - Unprotected sexual contact with an infected person
 - Sharing needles or syringes, especially among drug users
 - Transfusion of infected blood
 - From an infected mother to her child during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding.

It does not spread through casual contact like shaking hands, hugging, sharing food, using the same toilet, or mosquito bites. This misinformation is exactly what causes so much unnecessary discrimination against HIV positive individuals in our society.

➤ **First Aid**

Finally, let's talk about first aid a skill every NSS volunteer should have, because emergencies don't wait for a doctor to arrive.

- ✓ **What is first aid?** It's the immediate, temporary care given to a person who is injured or suddenly taken ill, before professional medical help arrives. The goal is simple: preserve life, prevent the condition from worsening and promote recovery.
- ✓ **The basic principles (often remembered as the three P's):**
 - **Preserve life:** the most urgent priority
 - **Prevent further harm:** protect the patient and yourself from additional danger
 - **Promote recovery:** provide comfort and reassurance while waiting for help

➤ **Common situations every volunteer should know how to handle:**

- ✓ **Bleeding and wounds:** Apply firm, direct pressure with a clean cloth to control bleeding. Elevate the injured part if possible and keep the wound as clean as you can until proper medical care is available.
- ✓ **Burns:** Cool the burned area with clean, cool running water for several minutes. Never apply ice directly and avoid using ointments, oil, or toothpaste despite what household remedies suggest, these can worsen the injury.
- ✓ **Fractures:** Immobilize the injured area using a splint or any rigid support you can find. Avoid moving the person unnecessarily, especially if a spinal injury is suspected.
- ✓ **Fainting:** Lay the person down and elevate their legs slightly to improve blood flow to the brain. Loosen tight clothing and ensure they have fresh air.
- ✓ **Choking:** For a conscious adult, back blows followed by abdominal thrusts (the Heimlich maneuver) can dislodge the obstruction.

- ✓ **CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation):** If someone is unresponsive and not breathing normally, chest compressions pushing hard and fast in the center of the chest can keep blood circulating until emergency help arrives. This is a skill best learned through hands on practical training, which I'd strongly encourage all of you to attend if a workshop is organized.
- ✓ **Snake bites:** Keep the person calm and still, immobilize the bitten limb and get them to a hospital immediately. Avoid the outdated practices of cutting the wound or trying to suck out venom these do more harm than good.

The first aid kit: Every NSS unit, hostel and household should ideally have a basic first aid kit containing antiseptic solution, sterile bandages, gauze, adhesive tape, scissors, gloves, a thermometer and any essential personal medication.

❖ **Healthy lifestyles, HIV AIDS, drugs and substance abuse**

✓ **Healthy Lifestyles**

A healthy lifestyle isn't something that can be reduced to just “eating well” or “exercising daily,” although those matter. It's really a combination of physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing working together. The World Health Organisation itself defines health not merely as the absence of disease, but as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing.

Key components of a healthy lifestyle:

- ✓ Physical health comes first regular exercise, adequate sleep (7 to 8 hours for most young adults), a balanced diet with enough proteins, vitamins and minerals and staying away from junk food and sedentary habits. Many college students, especially those staying in hostels, tend to skip meals or rely heavily on processed food, which over time affects immunity and concentration levels.
- ✓ Mental health is equally important and honestly, it doesn't get talked about enough in our society. Stress management, dealing with academic pressure, maintaining a positive outlook and knowing when to ask for help are all part of this. There's still a lot of stigma around mental health issues in India and part of NSS's job is to help break that stigma among youth.
- ✓ Social wellbeing means having good relationships, being part of a community and contributing positively to society which is essentially the whole spirit behind NSS itself.
- ✓ Avoiding harmful habits this includes staying away from tobacco, alcohol and drugs, since these directly undermine every other aspect of a healthy life.

❖ **HIV/AIDS Awareness**

✓ **Understanding the basics**

HIV, or Human Immunodeficiency Virus, attacks the body's immune system, specifically targeting CD4 cells (a type of white blood cell) that help the body fight infections. Over time, if untreated, HIV can lead to AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome), which is the most advanced stage of the infection, where the immune system is severely damaged and the body becomes vulnerable to opportunistic infections and certain cancers.

It's worth stressing this clearly: HIV and AIDS are not the same thing. A person can be HIV positive and live a long, healthy, productive life for decades with proper treatment, without ever progressing to AIDS. This distinction matters a lot because a lot of the fear and stigma around HIV comes from outdated understanding.

✓ **How HIV spreads**

HIV spreads through certain body fluids blood, semen, vaginal fluids and breast milk. The common modes of transmission include unprotected sexual contact, sharing needles or syringes (common among intravenous drug users), transmission from an infected mother to child during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding and, though now much rarer due to improved screening, transfusion of infected blood.

✓ **How HIV does NOT spread**

This is where a huge amount of public misunderstanding exists and honestly, it's this misunderstanding that fuels most of the discrimination faced by HIV positive individuals. HIV does not spread through casual contact hugging, shaking hands, sharing food or utensils, using the same toilet, mosquito bites, or being in the same room as an infected person. Many people living with HIV face social isolation not because of the disease itself but because of this ignorance and that's precisely the gap.

✓ **Prevention**

Prevention strategies include practicing safe sex (correct and consistent condom use), avoiding sharing needles or any sharp instruments, ensuring blood transfusions are properly screened and for HIV-positive mothers, following medical guidance to reduce the risk of transmission to the child. Regular testing and knowing one's status is also emphasized strongly many public health programmes in India offer free and confidential HIV testing.

✓ **Treatment and India's response**

There is no complete cure for HIV yet, but Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) has transformed it from what used to be a fatal disease into a manageable chronic condition. India runs the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) under NACO (National AIDS Control Organisation), which provides free ART to those in need and works extensively on awareness and prevention. December 1st every year is observed globally as World AIDS Day and NSS units across colleges often organise rallies, poster competitions and awareness camps around this date.

❖ **Drugs and Substance Abuse**

✓ **What counts as substance abuse**

Substance abuse refers to the harmful or excessive use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs. It also increasingly includes the misuse of prescription medicines. What starts as recreational or occasional use, often under peer pressure or curiosity, can gradually turn into dependency, where the body and mind start relying on the substance to function normally.

✓ **Common categories of substances**

Tobacco and nicotine products remain among the most widely abused substances in India, in the form of cigarettes, bidis, gutkha and khaini and are directly linked to cancers, heart disease and respiratory illness.

- ✓ Alcohol, while socially accepted in many circles, causes liver damage, is linked to a large percentage of road accidents in India and contributes heavily to domestic violence and broken family situations when abused.
- ✓ Cannabis products like ganja, charas and bhang fall into a legally grey area in parts of India but still carry health and legal risks.
- ✓ Opioids, including heroin (commonly called "smack") and misused prescription painkillers, are highly addictive and among the most dangerous in terms of overdose risk.

- ✓ Synthetic and party drugs such as MDMA, LSD and various designer drugs have seen a worrying rise, especially in urban youth and college circles.
- ✓ Inhalants like whitener, glue, or solvents are a particularly serious issue among street children and very young users, due to easy availability and low cost.

✓ **Why young people get drawn in**

There isn't one single reason it's usually a mix of things. Peer pressure and the desire to "fit in" is a big one, especially in hostel environments. Curiosity and experimentation, academic and family pressure, easy availability near college campuses and in some unfortunate cases, exposure at home due to family members' habits, all play a role. Social media glamorisation of substance use has also become a more recent contributing factor.

✓ **The effects**

Physically, substance abuse damages vital organs liver, lungs, brain weakens immunity and in cases of injectable drug use, significantly raises the risk of HIV and Hepatitis B/C transmission through shared needles. This is actually one of the important links between this topic and the HIV section above the two issues are not unrelated at all.

Mentally, substance abuse is closely tied to anxiety, depression, memory and cognitive decline and in severe cases, can trigger psychotic episodes.

Socially, it commonly leads to broken relationships, poor academic or work performance, financial strain and increased involvement in crime to fund the habit.

✓ **Prevention and rehabilitation**

Prevention works best when it starts early and stays honest this includes proper life skills education in schools and colleges, providing constructive outlets like sports, arts and NSS type community activities, strengthening family communication and enforcing stricter regulation around the sale of tobacco and alcohol near educational institutions.

✓ **Government initiatives**

The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, is the primary law governing drug-related offences in India. The Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan (Drug-Free India Campaign) is a more recent initiative targeting the most affected districts across the country. Numerous state-run de-addiction centres also operate under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

❖ **Home nursing and first aid.**

✓ **Basic Principles of Home Nursing**

While caring for a patient at home, certain basic principles should always be kept in mind. The sick room should be well ventilated, clean and free from unnecessary noise, with adequate but not harsh lighting. The patient's bed should be comfortable, clean and changed regularly to avoid bed sores, particularly in patients who are bedridden for long periods. Personal hygiene of the patient, including regular sponging, oral care and care of hair and nails, should not be neglected even when the patient cannot manage it themselves. Diet plays a very important role in recovery and food should be light, nutritious, easily digestible and served at regular intervals according to the doctor's advice or the nature of the illness. Medicines must be given strictly according to the prescribed dosage and timing and never altered without medical advice. The temperature, pulse rate and general condition of the patient should be monitored and recorded so that any doctor visiting later has a clear picture of how the illness has progressed.

Prevention of bed sores deserves special mention, since patients who remain in one position for long hours, especially those who are paralysed or very weak, are at high risk. Changing the

patient's position every two to three hours, keeping the skin dry and clean and using soft bedding can help prevent this painful and sometimes dangerous complication.

✓ **First Aid — Meaning and Definition**

First aid is defined as the immediate and temporary care given to a person who has suffered an injury or sudden illness, before regular medical help becomes available. It is important to understand that first aid is not a substitute for professional treatment; its purpose is to preserve life, prevent the condition from worsening and promote recovery until the injured or sick person can be handed over to a doctor or taken to a hospital.

✓ **Aims and Objectives of First Aid**

The three main aims of first aid, which every NSS volunteer should remember, are often summarised as the three P's: to Preserve life, to Prevent the condition from becoming worse and to Promote recovery. Alongside these, first aid also aims to relieve pain and suffering as far as possible, to protect the unconscious patient, to arrange for removal of the patient to hospital or medical aid without causing further harm and to keep the patient calm and reassured until help arrives.

✓ **Qualities Required in a First Aider**

A good first aider should be observant enough to notice the signs and symptoms of injury or illness quickly, resourceful enough to make the best use of whatever materials are available at the scene, gentle in handling the patient so as to avoid causing additional pain or injury, tactful in dealing with the patient and bystanders and above all should act with confidence but without panic, because a calm first aider can prevent panic from spreading among onlookers as well.

✓ **Contents of a First Aid Box**

Every home, institution, vehicle and NSS unit should ideally maintain a first aid box. A basic first aid box generally contains sterilised cotton wool, roller and triangular bandages of different sizes, adhesive plaster, antiseptic lotion such as Dettol or Savlon, antiseptic cream or ointment, a pair of scissors, safety pins, a clinical thermometer, some crepe bandage, a small torch, disposable gloves and commonly required tablets such as those for fever or pain relief, though administration of any medicine should always be done cautiously and preferably under guidance.

EXERCISE-8

Objective: Youth and yoga. History, philosophy, concept, myths and misconceptions about yoga; yoga traditions and its impacts, yoga as a tool for healthy lifestyle, preventive and curative method.

Yoga is one of those rare gifts from Indian civilization that has quietly travelled across the world and settled into the daily lives of millions of people, regardless of their nationality, religion, or age group.

✓ **What Yoga Actually Means**

The word “yoga” comes from the Sanskrit root “yuj,” which means to join or unite. It essentially refers to the union of the individual consciousness with universal consciousness, or in simpler terms, bringing harmony between the body, breath and mind. Yoga is not merely a physical exercise routine as it is often portrayed in modern gyms and fitness centres. It is a science of living that was systematised thousands of years ago and its roots go back to the Indus Valley Civilisation, with clear textual references found in the Vedas, Upanishads and later codified beautifully by Sage Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras.

✓ **Why Youth and Yoga Matter Together**

Before we get into the history and philosophy, it helps to ask a simple question: why is yoga even a part of the National Service Scheme curriculum for young people? The answer is not just about fitness. NSS was built on the idea of shaping character, discipline and social responsibility among students and yoga fits into that vision because it works on the body, the mind and the sense of self all at once. Today’s youth face a strange mix of pressures academic stress, screen addiction, competitive anxiety and a general restlessness that comes from living in a hyper connected world. Yoga, in its true form, was never meant to be a quick fitness fix.

1. History of Yoga

The word “yoga” comes from the Sanskrit root *yuj*, meaning to join, unite, or yoke together. This idea of union between mind and body, between the individual self and universal consciousness sits at the very heart of the practice, even before we talk about postures or breathing exercises.

✓ **Ancient Origins**

The earliest hints of yoga like practices go back nearly 5,000 years, to the Indus Valley Civilization. Archaeologists found seals and figurines from sites like Mohenjo daro showing figures seated in meditative postures, which many scholars believe are early depictions of yogic practice. However, yoga as a structured philosophy really begins to take shape in the Vedic period, especially in texts like the Rigveda, where the word “yoga” first appears in a spiritual context.

✓ **Vedic and Upanishadic Period**

As we move into the Upanishads (roughly 800-500 BCE), yoga starts becoming more clearly linked with meditation, self realization and the idea of controlling the mind to reach a higher state of consciousness. The Katha Upanishad, for instance, describes yoga as the steady control of the senses, which is one of the earliest formal definitions we have.

✓ **Classical Period – Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras**

If there is one single most important text in the history of yoga, it is the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, composed somewhere around the 2nd century BCE. Patanjali didn’t invent yoga he organized and systematized centuries of scattered practices into a clear, structured philosophy known as **Ashtanga Yoga**, or the Eight Limbs of Yoga. This text remains the single most referenced source in both traditional and modern yoga education even today.

✓ **Post-Classical and Medieval Period**

Later on, yoga branched into different schools. Hatha Yoga emerged strongly during the medieval period, with texts like the Hatha Yoga Pradipika focusing heavily on physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama) and purification practices. This is actually the branch of yoga that most modern yoga classes are based on, even though people often assume it's the “original” or ‘only’ form.

✓ **Modern Revival**

In the late 19th and early 20th century, figures like Swami Vivekananda introduced yoga philosophy to the Western world, especially through his famous speech at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. Later, teachers like T. Krishnamacharya, B.K.S. Iyengar, K. Pattabhi Jois and Swami Sivananda helped popularize yoga as both a spiritual and physical discipline across the globe. In 2014, the United Nations officially declared June 21st as International Yoga Day, following a proposal by India, marking a major moment of global recognition for this ancient practice.

2. Philosophy of Yoga

Yoga is often mistaken for just a set of stretching exercises, but at its core, it is one of the six classical schools of Indian philosophy (Shad Darshana), alongside Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Mimamsa and Vedanta.

✓ **The Core Philosophical Idea**

Yoga philosophy, particularly as laid out by Patanjali, defines yoga as “*Chitta Vritti Nirodha*” the stilling of the fluctuations of the mind. In simpler words, yoga is the discipline of quieting the constant noise and restlessness of our thoughts so that our true nature can be experienced clearly, without distortion.

✓ **Ashtanga Yoga – The Eight Limbs**

This is the philosophical backbone students should understand clearly:

- **Yama** : Ethical restraints (non violence, truthfulness, non stealing, moderation, non greed)
- **Niyama** : Personal observances (cleanliness, contentment, discipline, self study, surrender)
- **Asana** : Physical postures for stability and comfort
- **Pranayama** : Control and regulation of breath
- **Pratyahara** : Withdrawal of the senses from external distractions
- **Dharana** : Concentration on a single point
- **Dhyana** : Meditation, a continuous flow of concentration
- **Samadhi** : The state of complete absorption or union with the object of meditation

✓ **Yoga and Samkhya Philosophy**

Yoga philosophy is closely tied to Samkhya philosophy, which explains the universe through two fundamental principles Purusha (pure consciousness) and Prakriti (matter/nature). Yoga provides the practical method to realize the separation between these two, ultimately leading the practitioner toward liberation, or *Moksha*.

3. Concept of Yoga

For students, it's useful to break “the concept of yoga” into a few clear layers:

- ✓ **Yoga as Union**: union of body, mind and spirit; union of the individual self with universal consciousness.

- ✓ **Yoga as Discipline:** a lifestyle involving ethical living, dietary awareness and mental regulation, not just physical exercise.
- ✓ **Yoga as a Science of the Mind:** working systematically on thought patterns, emotional regulation and awareness.
- ✓ **Yoga as Therapy:** used today in modern healthcare for stress management, hypertension, anxiety and even certain chronic conditions, under proper medical guidance.
- ✓ **Yoga as a Social and Ethical Framework:** the Yamas and Niyamas essentially form a moral code for living respectfully in society, which is directly relevant to NSS values of community service and social responsibility.

4. Myths and Misconceptions about Yoga

This is often the most important section for young students, because most misunderstandings about yoga come from modern pop culture rather than the actual tradition.

Myth 1: Yoga is only about physical flexibility.

Reality: Flexibility is a side effect, not the goal. Yoga is primarily a mental and spiritual discipline; physical postures were designed to prepare the body to sit comfortably for long periods of meditation.

Myth 2: Yoga is a religion.

Reality: Yoga is a philosophical and practical system, not a religion. People from all religious backgrounds Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, or with no religious affiliation at all practice yoga without conflict with their personal faith.

Myth 3: You need to be young or already fit to start yoga.

Reality: Yoga is adaptable to every age group and body type. In fact, many yoga therapy programs are specifically designed for older adults and people with physical limitations.

Myth 4: Yoga is only for spiritual or religious people, not for "normal" scientific-minded students.

Reality: Modern medical research, including studies published by AIIMS and other institutions in India, has repeatedly shown measurable benefits of yoga on cardiovascular health, stress hormones and mental focus, making it a subject of serious scientific interest.

Myth 5: More difficult postures mean better yoga.

Reality: The complexity of a posture has nothing to do with its spiritual or health value. A simple seated breathing practice can be far more powerful than an advanced acrobatic pose done incorrectly.

Myth 6: Yoga gives instant results.

Reality: Like any discipline sports, music, or academics yoga requires consistent, long term practice. Expecting overnight transformation leads to disappointment and dropout, which is a common issue among young beginners.

Myth 7: Yoga is only exercise, unrelated to lifestyle or ethics.

Reality: As we discussed in the Ashtanga Yoga section, yoga includes ethical guidelines (Yama and Niyama) that shape how a person behaves in society a detail almost entirely ignored in commercial yoga culture.

❖ Yoga traditions and its impacts,

Yoga, at its heart, is a complete science of self care that touches the body, the breath and the mind together.

➤ The Major Traditions of Yoga

Over centuries, different sages and schools of thought developed different paths of yoga, each suited to different temperaments and life situations. It is worth going through these briefly:

1. **Raja Yoga:** Often called the “royal path,” this is the yoga of meditation and mental discipline, systematised by Patanjali through the Ashtanga Yoga or the eight limbed path (Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi).
2. **Hatha Yoga:** This is the tradition most people recognise today, focusing on physical postures (asanas) and breath control (pranayama) to prepare the body for higher meditative states. Most modern yoga classes are derived from this tradition.
3. **Karma Yoga:** The yoga of selfless action. This tradition teaches that one should perform their duties without attachment to the results.
4. **Bhakti Yoga:** The path of devotion and love towards a higher power, emphasising surrender and emotional purification.
5. **Jnana Yoga:** The path of knowledge and intellectual inquiry, meant for those inclined towards philosophical reasoning and self analysis.
6. **Kundalini Yoga:** A more esoteric tradition focused on awakening the dormant spiritual energy located at the base of the spine through specific breathing techniques and postures.

Each of these traditions is not separate or competing; rather, they are complementary paths suited to different personalities and many practitioners blend elements from more than one tradition in their daily practice.

➤ **Impact of Yoga on the Individual**

The impact of regular yoga practice on a person is well documented, both traditionally and through modern scientific research. A few important dimensions are worth highlighting for NSS volunteers:

- ✓ **Physical Health:** Regular practice of asanas improves flexibility, muscular strength, joint mobility and posture. It also has a positive effect on the cardiovascular and respiratory systems, largely due to the emphasis on controlled breathing.
- ✓ **Mental Health:** Yoga, particularly practices like pranayama and meditation, has shown measurable benefits in reducing stress, anxiety and symptoms of depression. For students especially, this becomes relevant during examination stress and the general pressures of academic life.
- ✓ **Emotional Balance:** Consistent practice cultivates patience, tolerance and emotional regulation, which are qualities every NSS volunteer needs while working with diverse communities.
- ✓ **Self-Discipline:** Yoga demands regularity and commitment. This habit of discipline often extends into other areas of a student's life, including studies and personal conduct.
- ✓ **Improved Concentration:** Practices like Dharana (concentration) and Dhyana (meditation) sharpen focus and attention span, which directly benefits academic performance.

➤ **Impact of Yoga on Society**

Yoga's influence goes beyond the individual and extends meaningfully into the social fabric:

- ✓ It promotes a culture of non violence (Ahimsa), truthfulness (Satya) and non possessiveness (Aparigraha), which are core ethical principles under the Yamas in Patanjali's system. These principles, when adopted widely, contribute to a more peaceful and cooperative society.

- ✓ Yoga has become a significant tool in public health promotion. Government initiatives, including free yoga camps and awareness drives, especially around International Yoga Day observed on 21st June every year, have helped bring preventive healthcare practices to rural and underprivileged populations.
- ✓ Yoga has also emerged as a soft power tool for India's cultural diplomacy, with the United Nations officially recognising International Yoga Day in 2014, following India's proposal. This has strengthened India's global cultural identity.
- ✓ On a community level, group yoga sessions organised in villages, schools and colleges (something NSS units frequently do) build a sense of collective wellbeing and social bonding among participants.

❖ **Yoga as a tool for healthy lifestyle, preventive and curative method.**

Yoga is one of India's oldest gifts to the world, a science of living that was developed and refined by our sages thousands of years ago and is now practised across almost every country on earth. The word itself comes from the Sanskrit root “Yuj,” which means to join or unite referring to the union of body, mind and spirit and ultimately to the union of the individual self with the universal consciousness. For NSS volunteers, understanding yoga is not just about learning a few postures for personal fitness. It is about grasping a complete philosophy of health that can be carried into the community, taught to others and used as a tool for social wellbeing.

➤ **Yoga and the Idea of Healthy Living**

Health, according to the World Health Organization, is not merely the absence of disease but a state of complete physical, mental and social well being. Modern lifestyles, unfortunately, work against this definition every single day. Long hours in front of screens, poor eating habits, disturbed sleep patterns, chronic stress from academic or professional pressure and a general lack of physical movement have created a generation that is, on paper, “not sick,” but is far from truly healthy. This is where yoga steps in as a corrective force.

➤ **The Eight Limbs of Yoga (Ashtanga Yoga)**

To understand yoga properly, students should be familiar with the eight limbs described by Sage Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras. These are:

1. **Yama** - ethical restraints such as truthfulness, non-violence and self-control
2. **Niyama** :- personal observances like cleanliness, contentment and discipline
3. **Asana** :- physical postures
4. **Pranayama** :- breath regulation techniques
5. **Pratyahara** :- withdrawal of the senses from external distractions
6. **Dharana** :- concentration
7. **Dhyana** :- meditation
8. **Samadhi** :- a state of complete absorption and inner peace

➤ **Yoga as a Preventive Method**

One of yoga's greatest strengths lies in prevention rather than cure. A regular practitioner of yoga builds up a kind of physiological reserve that keeps ordinary lifestyle diseases at bay before they ever take root. Some preventive benefits worth noting for class discussion include:

- ✓ Regular asana practice keeps the spine flexible and the joints mobile, which helps prevent the postural problems so common among students who sit for long hours studying or using laptops and mobile phones.

- ✓ Pranayama exercises such as Anulom Vilom and Bhramari improve lung capacity and oxygen supply to the body, which strengthens immunity and helps prevent respiratory issues.
- ✓ Practices like Kapalbhati and Surya Namaskar improve blood circulation and metabolic rate, helping to prevent obesity and related metabolic disorders before they develop.
- ✓ Meditation and relaxation techniques such as Yoga Nidra reduce the secretion of stress hormones like cortisol, which in the long run helps prevent hypertension, anxiety disorders and even certain heart conditions.
- ✓ Regular practice cultivates better sleep patterns, which prevents the cascade of problems that come from chronic sleep deprivation poor concentration, weakened immunity and mood disturbances.

In short, yoga acts almost like a daily vaccination against the diseases of modern living, most of which are caused not by external germs but by our own habits.

➤ **Yoga as a Curative Method**

Alongside its preventive role, yoga has a well-documented curative or therapeutic application, often referred to as Yoga Therapy. Many hospitals and wellness centres today integrate yoga alongside conventional medical treatment, not as a replacement for it, but as a complementary support system. A few examples that are useful for classroom discussion:

- ✓ Patients suffering from diabetes often show better blood sugar control when specific asanas such as Mandukasana, Paschimottanasana and pranayama practices are added to their routine, since these stimulate the pancreas and improve insulin sensitivity.
- ✓ People with hypertension benefit from Shavasana, Yoga Nidra and slow, deep breathing exercises, which calm the sympathetic nervous system and help bring blood pressure down.
- ✓ Yoga is widely used in the management of chronic back pain and arthritis, since gentle, controlled stretching improves flexibility and reduces stiffness without the strain that harder physical exercise might cause.
- ✓ In cases of anxiety, depression and other stress-related conditions, yoga and meditation have shown genuine value in improving mood and emotional regulation, largely because they activate the parasympathetic nervous system, the body's natural "rest and repair" mode.
- ✓ Even in respiratory conditions like asthma and bronchitis, controlled pranayama practices have been found to improve lung function over time.

It is important for students to understand that yoga therapy works best as a complementary approach, used alongside proper medical guidance rather than as a substitute for it, especially in serious or acute medical conditions.

EXERCISE-9

Objective: Important Weeks Observed by NSS Units

The National Service Scheme, since its inception in 1969, has always tried to connect young students with the larger idea of nation building. One of the simplest yet most effective ways it does this is by observing certain weeks through the year, each tied to a historical figure, a national concern, or a social value that we as citizens need to keep revisiting.

➤ **National Youth Week (12th–19th January)**

Every year, NSS units across the country observe National Youth Week from the 12th to the 19th of January. The date is not arbitrary the 12th of January is the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, a monk whose ideas on youth power, self confidence and service to humanity continue to inspire generations. This week is essentially built around his teachings and his famous call to the youth to rise, awake and not stop until the goal is achieved.

During this week, NSS units usually organise lectures and discussions on Vivekananda's philosophy, debates and quiz competitions on youth related themes, personality development workshops and camps that encourage leadership qualities among students.

➤ **Van Mahotsav Week (1st-7th July)**

Van Mahotsav, which literally translates to “festival of trees,” is observed from the 1st to the 7th of July. This tradition actually goes back to 1950, when it was started by the then Union Minister for Agriculture, K. M. Munshi, to draw public attention to the importance of forests and tree cover for a healthy environment.

For NSS units, this week becomes a very hands-on, practical exercise. Volunteers usually take part in tree plantation drives, awareness rallies about deforestation and its consequences, seminars on biodiversity and climate change and clean-up drives in and around campus or in nearby villages. Since July generally coincides with the onset of monsoon in most parts of India, it is also the most suitable time biologically for planting saplings, giving them the best chance of survival.

➤ **National Unity Week (31st October - 6th November)**

This week is observed in the memory of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, popularly known as the “Iron Man of India,” whose birth anniversary falls on the 31st of October. Patel's greatest contribution was the integration of over five hundred princely states into a single, unified India after independence a task that required immense political skill and determination. National Unity Week, therefore, is a tribute to that legacy of unity and integration.

NSS units mark this week through activities such as taking the Unity Pledge, organising Ekta rallies or padyatras and holding discussions on the theme of “Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat” (One India, Best India), which encourages states to understand and appreciate each other's languages, cultures and traditions.

➤ **Quami Ekta Week / National Integration Week (19th-25th November)**

The last of the four major weeks is Quami Ekta Week, observed from the 19th to the 25th of November, with the sole aim of promoting communal harmony and national integration among India's diverse religious and cultural communities. Given India's plural social fabric, this week holds particular significance in reminding citizens, especially young students, that religious or cultural differences should never become a source of division or conflict.

NSS volunteers typically organise communal harmony camps, inter-faith dialogue sessions, cultural programmes that showcase the traditions of different communities and awareness drives against rumours or misinformation that can spark social tension.

EXERCISE-10

Objective: List of International and National Days to be Observed by NSS

S. No.	Occasion	Date
1	National Youth Day	12 January
2	National Voters' Day	25 January
3	Republic Day	26 January
4	Martyrs' Day	30 January
5	World Cancer Day	4 February
6	World Water Day	22 March
7	International Women's Day	8 March
8	World Health Day	7 April
9	Anti-Terrorism Day	21 May
10	World No Tobacco Day	31 May
11	World Environment Day	5 June
12	International Day of Yoga	21 June
13	World Population Day	11 July
14	International Youth Day	12 August
15	Independence Day	15 August
16	Sadbhavana Diwas (Harmony Day)	20 August
17	International Literacy Day	8 September
18	International Day of Peace	21 September
19	NSS Day	24 September
20	National Voluntary Blood Donation Day	1 October
21	International Day of Non-Violence / Swachh Bharat Mission (Clean India Mission)	2 October
22	Global Handwashing Day	15 October
23	National Unity Day (Rashtriya Ekta Diwas) – Birth Anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel	31 October
24	National Integration Day	19 November
25	Constitution Day (National Constitution Day / Samvidhan Diwas)	26 November
26	World AIDS Day	1 December
27	Human Rights Day	10 December