



# National Cadet Corps (NCC) And Its Role In National Human Capital Development

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**Abstract:** The review of the role of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) in developing youth and its possible role in National Human Capital Development in India. NCC is a voluntary organization that has contributed to developing leadership, discipline, physical fitness, and resilience among school and college students. However, because of capacity constraints, enrollment into NCC is only about 30% of students. The review emphasizes that NCC training helps in the overall development of the youth by tackling issues of academic pressure, emotional stress, and societal expectations that the youth of today are facing. Moreover, it highlights the need for policy changes to increase the reach of NCC by including it as an elective subject in the school curriculum and making it a compulsory activity in educational institutions. We reveal the lasting effect of NCC training in making former cadets career-ready, resilient, and have a positive outlook in their professional lives, as former cadets share with us. Expanding NCC enrollment and incorporating it into mainstream education is recommended to empower more young people to develop responsible and capable citizens. This paper also focuses on the role of NCCs in shaping India's future workforce and calls for a greater reach and influence of NCCs across the country.

**Keywords:** National Cadet Corps, Human Capital, Workforce, Capital development, Nation development

## 1.Introduction:

The National Cadet Corps (NCC) is India's premier youth organization through which the young population of the country is developed in leadership qualities, discipline, and national spirit. The National Cadet Corps (NCC) was established in 1948 under the National Cadet Corps Act as a link between the youth and the military services with a unique combination of military training and social service activities. It is an organization under the Ministry of Defence that works with schools, colleges, and universities. The main goal of the organization is to develop in young people leadership, responsibility, and patriotism, which will lead to responsible citizens and future leaders [1]. One of the fundamental roles of the NCC is the holistic development of its cadets and taking care of the multifaceted needs of today's youth. The NCC is a voluntary, non-political, and non-military organization that provides opportunities for young people to acquire physical fitness, leadership skills, teamwork, and a sense of discipline. The NCC is a safe and structured platform that enables students to grow themselves in these times when we are in such an academic pressure cooker, with social challenges, and emotional stress. Cadets can be made to imbibe a sense of duty towards society to form future leaders, who are academically as well as socially responsible by their exposure to a variety of activities like community service, disaster management, and social awareness campaigns [2]. In the context of India's growing economy and its ambition to be a global leader, the idea of human capital development has become very important. Knowledge, skills, and abilities possessed by individuals for the growth and development of societies are called human capital. In this respect, the role of youth organizations, for instance, the NCC is important, because it has a key role in the development of the values, skills, and capabilities of the next generation. NCC is very important in developing human capital which is a key to national progress by molding students to become leaders, disciplined, team players, and socially responsible [3]. India has some of the best human capital in the world and India has to invest in the education, health, and development of its young population. The NCC's structured programs contribute to the holistic development of young people in this investment. The organization is also concerned with life skills, employability, and strong ethical values besides academic performance [2]. The NCC aims to develop leadership and character among the youth. National development is enhanced by leadership and the ability to lead effectively increases the productivity and success of an organization in the military, government, or private sectors. NCC's diverse training programs are important for personal and professional success and promote leadership development in students. Students are trained by NCC to work in teams, be disciplined in life, manage time, and be responsible and accountable [1]. The NCC also brings the armed forces closer to the civilian population. The program combines military training with the chance to see if cadets might have a career in the armed forces – but with no obligation to join the latter. The NCC Structure is highly flexible such that the students can grow by taking up leadership roles in different spheres of life without compromising their exposure to the NCC foundation values. This has a great impact on national human capital development because, apart from training NCC trainees to take up a career in the Armed Forces, they are also trained to be successful in other careers [3]. The National Cadet Corps (NCC) serves as a bridge between youth development and military training, preparing cadets for leadership roles. as seen in Figure 1.



Figure:1 Leadership Qualities of NCC Cadets.

The development of human capital is another area in which NCC has contributed to physical fitness. In an age of a sedentary way of life and mental health problems, physical fitness has become a pillar of complete well-being. The NCC provides the students with rigorous physical training through exercises, drills, and adventure activities to increase their fitness and well-being. These activities not only help to build the body but also help to build mental resilience in cadets to be able to cope with stress and pressure in the different aspects of life. Discipline is another important element of human capital development and the NCC's discipline through its training programs is critical to the success of the organization. Disciplined people are usually reliable, efficient, and goal-oriented in their professional lives. NCC helps the cadets learn a sense of discipline and a structured lifestyle which helps them be more productive in their academic and future careers [1].

Besides leadership and physical fitness, the NCC also places great importance on community service and social responsibility. Through different outreach programs, disaster relief operations, and social awareness campaigns, cadets are encouraged to give back to society, assist other people, and help us secure the well-being of other people. Besides this, it also aids in the development of important life skills and encourages the youth to develop a sense of civic responsibility and patriotism. Fostering empathy and a sense of duty towards others is an important factor in creating responsible citizens who are responsible to others and the betterment of society [3], and the NCC plays a part in this.

The NCC has done a lot for the development of the youth, but it is not everywhere. Due to capacity constraints, only about 30 percent of the students who express interest in joining the NCC can be accommodated. This severely limits the potential impact that the NCC could have on the youth of the country. If NCC training can increase enrollment and make its training available to a greater number of students, it could play a much greater role in national human capital development. The participation of the NCC training can be increased and its benefits can be maximized by integrating it as an elective subject in the school curriculum and making it a compulsory activity in educational institutions [2].

### 1. Objectives of the Study:

1. To understand the concept of NCC training and its role in human capital development.
2. To explore the integration of NCC training into the formal education system.
3. To unearth the role of NCC in shaping India's future workforce.
4. To provide policy recommendations for enhancing accessibility and reach.

The National Cadet Corps has been an important institution for the youth of India's future. The NCC contributes to human capital development through its overall training programs that instill such values as character building, discipline, leadership, et al. As India is expected to grow economically and further its developmental goals, investment in the holistic development of its youth through programs like NCC will be extremely important. By expanding its reach and integrating its training in the formal education system, the NCC can transform India's human capital development so that the country's youth are prepared to meet the challenges of the future with confidence, resilience, and patriotism.

### 2. Evolution and Structure of the National Cadet Corps (NCC):

The National Cadet Corps (NCC) is one of India's premier youth organizations, playing a crucial role in fostering discipline, leadership, and a sense of national service among young individuals. Its history and structure reflect its evolution from a military reserve to a broader youth development initiative.

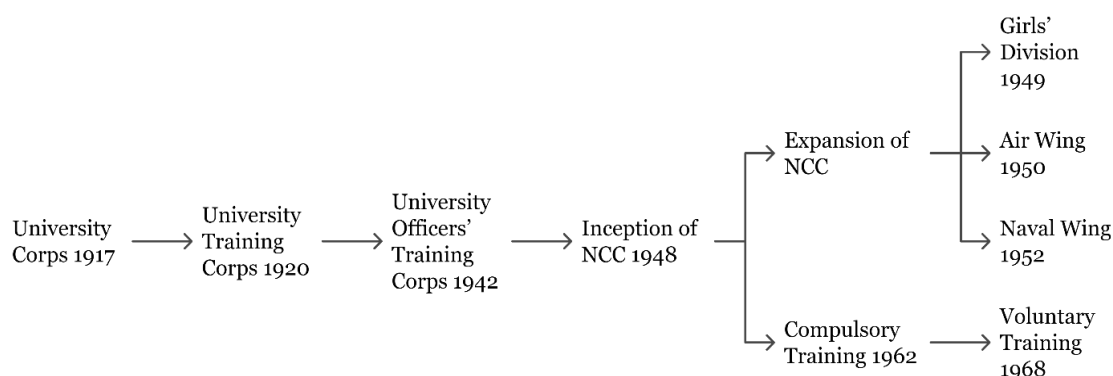
#### 2.1 History and Establishment of NCC:

The NCC has its origins in British India. In 1917, the British set up the University Corps under the Indian Defence Act to train university students for military service in response to manpower shortages [4]. Later, this



initiative was restructured as the University Training Corps (UTC) in 1920, to make military training available to students [5]. In 1942 it was renamed the University Officers' Training Corps (UOTC) and continued its role of training young men for leadership in the armed forces [6].

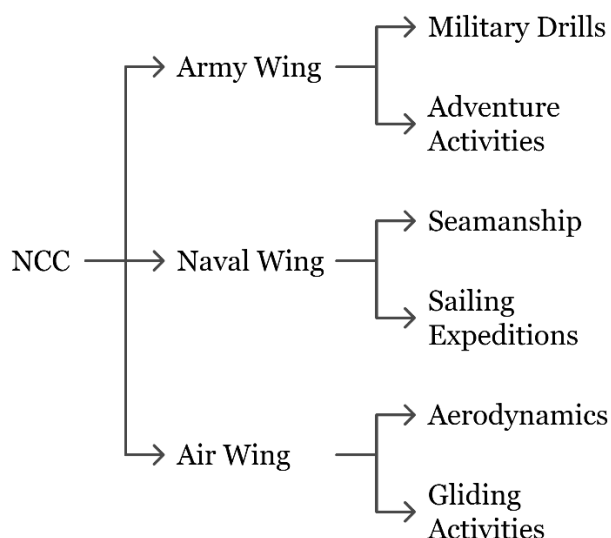
When India became independent in 1947, the government realized the necessity of a national youth organization that would inculcate discipline and patriotism in the youth of the country. Consequently, in April 1948 the National Cadet Corps Act was passed and the NCC was formally inaugurated on July 15, 1948. The first model of the organization was UOTC, and later on, the distinct structure and training programs of its own were developed by the organization [7]. In 1949, the Girls' Division was recognized as being important, and young women were allowed to participate in NCC activities. In 1950, the Air Wing was established and in 1952 in Figure 3, the Naval Wing was established, which widened the scope of NCC training to include the Army only [8]. NCC training was made compulsory for a short while after the 1962 Sino-Indian War to strengthen national defense preparedness. However, in 1968, the government re-established its voluntary nature [9]. Since 1946, the NCC has become an important part of India's youth development programs.



**Figure 3: Evolution of the NCC**

## 2.2 Organizational Structure and Division:

The NCC operates under the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, and is headed by a Director General, typically a senior officer from the Indian Armed Forces [10]. The organization is divided into 17 Directorates, each covering different states and union territories in figure 4. These Directorates are further classified as Battalions, ensuring extensive geographical coverage and operational efficiency [11].



**Figure 4: NCC Division and Training focus**

**The NCC comprises three main service divisions, each focusing on specialized training:**



1. **Army Wing:** The largest division, focusing on military drills, fieldcraft, weapon handling, map reading, and tactical exercises. Cadets participate in Republic Day Parades, military camps, and adventure activities [12].

2. **Naval Wing:** This division provides training in seamanship, navigation, ship modeling, and naval communications. Cadets participate in sailing expeditions and are introduced to naval operations [13].

3. **Air Wing:** Cadets receive training in aerodynamics, meteorology, air navigation, and aviation regulations. Many cadets get opportunities to fly microlight aircraft and participate in gliding activities [14].

Each of these divisions plays a critical role in developing cadets' skills, discipline, and sense of duty toward the nation.

### 2.3 Key Objectives and Vision of NCC:

The NCC has a broad set of objectives aimed at fostering discipline, leadership, and patriotism among the youth [15]. According to its charter, its core objectives include:

- Developing character, discipline, leadership, and a secular outlook among youth.
- Creating a pool of trained and motivated young individuals who can contribute to national development and emergency response efforts.
- Promoting social service activities, including disaster relief, community health initiatives, and literacy campaigns.
- Encouraging participation in adventure sports, cultural exchange programs, and leadership training.

### 3. NCC as a Voluntary Training Organization:

The vision of the NCC is to shape young cadets into responsible, disciplined, and patriotic citizens. By engaging cadets in national integration camps, social service programs, and skill development activities, the NCC aims to build a generation of leaders who contribute positively to society.

#### 3.1 NCC's Role in Training School and College Students:

NCC plays a crucial role in shaping students into responsible and disciplined citizens. It provides structured military-style training while promoting social responsibility, leadership, and national integration. The training is conducted at two levels:

- **Junior Division (JD) / Junior Wing (JW):** For students enrolled in schools (Classes 8–10).
- **Senior Division (SD) / Senior Wing (SW):** For students in colleges and universities.

The training modules offered by NCC include:

- Cadets undergo physical training, drill exercises, map reading, rifle shooting, and disaster management training. These activities help them to be fit, and strong and have leadership qualities, which helps them to play different roles in defense and civil services.
- NCC has a focus on Social Service and Community Development through projects like blood donation drives, Swachh Bharat campaigns, literacy programs, and environmental initiatives. These activities promote social responsibility and civic engagement of students [16].
- NCC cadets are offered specialized training in soft skills, team management, and crisis response, which goes a long way in enhancing their employability. Furthermore, training and discipline of NCC cadets are also given preferential recruitment in many defense services, paramilitary forces, and corporate organizations [17].
- Mountaineering, trekking, parasailing, and sailing expeditions are organized to build courage and resilience. Through these activities, they are exposed to adventure sports, and their mental and physical endurance is boosted [18].

#### 3.2 Enrollment Process and Eligibility Criteria:

The NCC follows a structured enrollment process to select candidates who demonstrate potential in leadership, discipline, and physical endurance.

#### Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment in NCC

As of 2024, the NCC has enrolled approximately 20 lakh (2 million) cadets across schools, colleges, and universities. The enrollment trend has been steadily increasing, with an additional 3 lakh cadet vacancies introduced recently to meet growing demand.

#### Gender Diversity in NCC

One of the key aspects of NCC's evolution is its emphasis on gender inclusivity. Female cadet participation has steadily increased over the years:

- Male Cadets: ~64.52%
- Female Cadets: ~35.48%

Female enrollment reflects NCC's commitment to empowering young women by providing them with leadership, discipline, and career opportunities [19,20].

To join the National Cadet Corps (NCC), students must meet the following eligibility criteria:



### 1. Nationality:

The candidate must be an Indian citizen.

### 2. Age Limit:

- Junior Division (JD) / Junior Wing (JW): Between 12 and 18.5 years of age.
- Senior Division (SD) / Senior Wing (SW): Up to 26 years of age.

### 3. Educational Qualification:

- JD/JW: The candidate must be enrolled in a recognized school.
- SD/SW: The candidate must be enrolled in a college or university with an NCC unit.

4. Physical Fitness: The candidate must meet the physical fitness standards as prescribed by the NCC authorities.

### 5. Commitment Duration:

- JD/JW: A commitment of 2 years.
- SD/SW: A commitment of 3 years, with an option to extend up to 4 years [21].

### Enrollment Process

The selection process consists of the following steps:

1. Application Submission: Students must apply through their schools/colleges that have NCC units.
2. Screening and Physical Test: Applicants undergo a basic physical fitness test to ensure they can withstand NCC training requirements.
3. Interview and Selection Board: A panel of NCC officers assesses candidates based on discipline, motivation, and communication skills.
4. Final Selection and Enrollment: Selected students receive NCC uniforms and begin their training after completing enrollment formalities [22,23].

### 3.3 Limitations of NCC Intake:

Although NCC is very popular and has many benefits, the organization has a very severe intake limitation, with only 30% of applicants enrolled because of the following reasons:

#### 3.4 Challenges Faced by Students Unable to Enroll in NCC:

Students who fail to enroll in NCC face several setbacks, as they miss out on the personal and professional development opportunities that NCC offers.

- Many government and corporate organizations offer preferential recruitment to NCC cadets. These career advantages are lost to students who are unable to enroll, particularly for careers in defense services, paramilitary forces, and administrative services [24].
- No Structured Personality Development Programs: NCC offers discipline, leadership training, and teamwork exposure, which are not offered by the regular school/college curricula. Without NCC training, students may find it difficult to develop their personality and get exposure to leadership [25].
- Not Able to Participate in National and International Events: NCC cadets are given a chance to represent India in Republic Day Parades, international exchange programs, and military training camps. For those who do not enroll, they miss out on these prestigious experiences [26].
- NCC cadets are engaged in adventure sports, rescue operations, and social service programs. Students who are not selected for NCC do not have such enriching experiences [27].

The NCC serves as a vital voluntary training organization that molds school and college students into disciplined, responsible, and service-oriented individuals. Despite its benefits, only a fraction of applicants get enrolled due to limited resources, infrastructure constraints, and high competition.[28] Students who fail to secure a spot in NCC face career disadvantages missed leadership opportunities, and reduced exposure to adventure activities. To address these challenges, the government should consider expanding NCC units, increasing funding, and implementing alternative leadership training programs for students who cannot enroll in NCC.

### Government Funding and Support for NCC

The National Cadet Corps (NCC) has received consistent financial support from the Government of India, reflecting its importance in youth development and national security. Over the past five years, there has been a significant increase in the NCC budget allocation:

**Table 1: NCC Budget Allocation over the past five years**

| Financial Year | Budget Allocation (₹ Crore) |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| FY 2020-21     | 1,883.00                    |





|            |                               |
|------------|-------------------------------|
| FY 2021-22 | 2,219.00                      |
| FY 2022-23 | 2,480.00                      |
| FY 2023-24 | 2,726.41                      |
| FY 2024-25 | 2,900.00 ( <i>Projected</i> ) |

This rising budget is being utilized for expanding NCC enrollment, improving training infrastructure, and introducing digital learning modules to modernize cadet training programs. The increase in financial support also aims to integrate NCC into mainstream education, making it more accessible to students from rural and underprivileged backgrounds [29].

### NCC Certification and Success Rates

NCC training is divided into different certificate levels (A, B, and C), with cadets appearing for exams annually. In 2024, approximately 6 lakh cadets took NCC certificate exams. The pass rate has also improved over the years, reflecting better training modules and mentorship:

**Table 2: NCC Certificate Exam Pass Rates over the years**

| Year | Pass Percentage (%) |
|------|---------------------|
| 2020 | 78%                 |
| 2021 | 80%                 |
| 2022 | 82%                 |
| 2023 | 84%                 |
| 2024 | 85%                 |

This steady improvement highlights the growing interest and preparation levels among NCC cadets. The certification is highly valuable as it provides career advantages in both government and private sectors, especially in defense services [30,31].

### NCC Cadets in the Armed Forces

One of the biggest incentives for NCC cadets is the opportunity to join the Indian Armed Forces through direct entry schemes. The NCC Special Entry Scheme provides a direct pathway for 'C' certificate holders to join the military.

Annual NCC Cadet Recruitment in the Armed Forces

- Indian Army: ~500-600 cadets recruited
- Indian Navy: ~55-60 cadets recruited
- Indian Air Force: ~25-30 cadets recruited
- Overall Percentage of NCC Cadets Joining Defense Services: ~6-10%

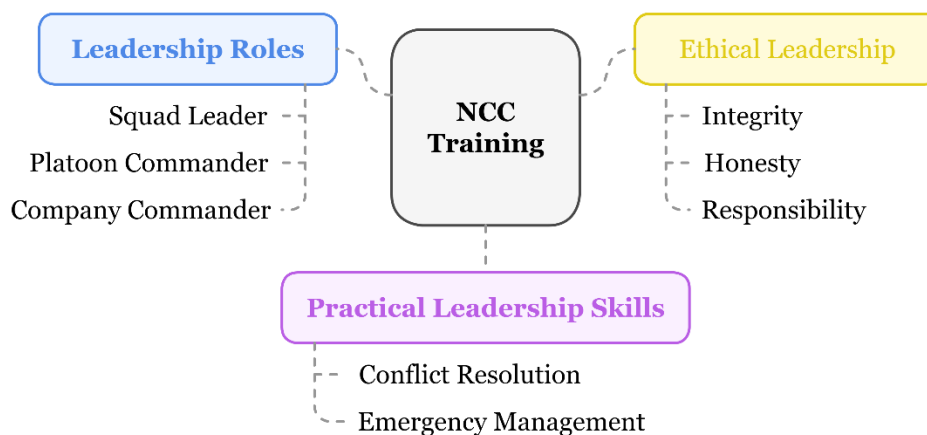
This scheme reduces the need for additional entrance exams, making it an efficient route for students pursuing careers in defense [32,33].

## 4. Holistic Development Through NCC Training:

The National Cadet Corps (NCC) is instrumental in the all-round development of students by developing their character, leadership, physical fitness, discipline, teamwork, career readiness, and employability skills.[29]NCC imparts these values to the cadets so that they can cope with real-life challenges excel in all fields of life and become responsible citizens and leaders. This section discusses how NCC training promotes the all-round development of cadets, focusing on the main areas of character building, physical fitness, discipline, teamwork, and career readiness[30]. Moreover, it provides testimonials of NCC-trained professionals who have successfully applied their NCC training in their careers.

### 4.1 Character Building and Leadership Development:

NCC training is one of the core goals to develop leadership qualities and character-building among cadets in Figure5.[34] In different situations, NCC encourages cadets to take responsibility, make decisions, and lead others. It concentrates on giving people the power to become leaders in their professional and community lives. [35;36].



**Figure 5: Leadership and Character development in NCC training**

As cadets train, NCC provides cadets with leadership roles such as squad leader, platoon commander, and company commander. These are roles that oversee and organize activities and decisions with a group of cadets. They are trained to lead in real-life situations where leadership skills are required. However, through these leadership experiences, cadets learn to manage, resolve conflicts, and take charge in the case of emergencies.[37]

NCC also places a great emphasis on ethical leadership in addition to practical leadership skills. From the outset, cadets are taught to have the values of integrity, honesty, and responsibility. These values help cadets develop as ethical leaders who can make morally sound decisions in their personal and professional lives [35]. Moreover, they are instructed to serve society with humility and emphasize the need for selfless leadership.[37] NCC training is aimed at developing the character of a cadet through values like integrity, self-discipline, commitment, and a sense of duty. This approach is comprehensive and helps cadets become better individuals and develop a strong moral compass (National Cadet Corps, n.d.). They are encouraged to display high ethical standards in their behavior, relationships, and work ethic, which would make them responsible and law-abiding citizens [37].

#### 4.2 Physical Fitness, Discipline, and Teamwork:

**Physical Fitness:** Physical fitness is one of the basic NCC training. Physical training is rigorous and is designed to make cadets stronger, more enduring, more agile, and more stamina. The NCC curriculum includes activities like running, marching, obstacle courses, and endurance drills. Physical fitness training also helps cadets develop a sense of perseverance and improve their overall health and fitness levels. Physical training discipline is required for the cadets to be able to face physical challenges with resilience. In addition, physical fitness enhances the sense of well-being among cadets, thereby increasing their confidence and self-esteem.[38] NCC is famous for its discipline. Cadets are trained to follow very strict routines, have schedules, and be punctual. This discipline is extended to every part of their training, from dress codes to behavior, to attitudes. They are meant to regard authority, to follow instructions, and to take responsibility for their actions. The emphasis on discipline is critical in molding cadets into reliable and dependable persons[36] Self-control arising from disciplined training is essential for them to deal with stress, overcome barriers, and accomplish long-term goals. It is useful for cadets to learn to remain calm under pressure, a skill useful in both personal and professional environments.[36]

One another important section of NCC teaching is venture miss and Collaboration The training of cadets is to work as a team, in which collaboration, mutual support, and understanding are necessary. The majority of the activities within the NCC program involve cadets working in groups such as during drills, adventure camps, and community service projects, where cadets learn the significance of working together for a common goal. The teamwork lessons foster trust, cooperation, and communication skills that are necessary in the workplace and society. NCC instills in cadets the spirit of teamwork, the awareness of their strengths, and the need to work together to achieve success.[35]

#### 4.3 NCC's Role in Career Readiness and Employability Skills:

This makes NCC training of high relevance not only for personal development but also to help in improving career readiness and employability skills. NCC training provides holistic development that makes cadets highly sought after by employers in different industries. The most prominent career opportunity for NCC cadets is in the defense services, namely, the Army, Navy, and Air Force. The NCC Special Entry Scheme is one of the ways many cadets join the Indian Armed Forces and get commissioned as officers directly. NCC training helps cadets to develop leadership, discipline, and physical fitness skills which are a good foundation for those who



wish to join the military as a career. Apart from defense services, NCC cadets are also recruited in various paramilitary forces, police services, and other government agencies where their training provides them with an edge over others. In addition, many private sector companies, especially in management, logistics, and aviation, prefer candidates with NCC training as they are known to possess leadership qualities and a disciplined approach to work.[36]

**Employability Skills:** Beyond defense careers, NCC training equips cadets with employability skills that are valued by employers in a range of industries. These skills include:

- **Leadership and Decision-Making:** NCC cadets develop strong leadership and decision-making abilities through various training exercises and leadership roles.
- **Communication Skills:** Cadets are trained to articulate their thoughts clearly, both verbally and in writing. Effective communication is crucial in the professional world, and NCC training fosters this skill.
- **Time Management:** NCC instills the ability to manage time effectively. Cadets are trained to balance rigorous physical training with academic commitments, which teaches them how to prioritize tasks and manage workloads efficiently.
- **Problem-solving and Critical Thinking:** NCC cadets are frequently put in situations that require critical thinking and problem-solving. This experience allows them to approach challenges analytically and find practical solutions.

These employability skills ensure that NCC-trained individuals are well-prepared for the workforce and have the potential to excel in a variety of fields.[36]

#### 4.4 Testimonials from NCC-Trained Professionals:

Many professionals have gone through NCC training and attest to the life-changing effect it has had on their careers and lives. NCC has helped them develop discipline, leadership, and teamwork skills that have enabled them to serve in the defense services and corporate leadership positions.

**Testimonial 1:** Lt. Gen. (Retd.) A.K. Singh: Lt. Gen. (Retd.) According to a former officer in the Indian Army (A.K.Singh), his NCC service helped him to develop his leadership and discipline. He said that the values he learned as an NCC cadet were useful in his military career and beyond. He explained that 'NCC instills qualities like leadership, teamwork and resilience which are very useful in military service and civilian life'[34]

**Testimonial 2:** Radhika Sharma, Corporate Leader, is a senior executive at a multinational corporation and feels that her NCC training helped her on her way in the world of work. She said that the leadership roles she had in NCC provided her with the confidence to take on challenging projects in her corporate career. NCC training has fostered the holistic development of students, which is indispensable in shaping them as well-rounded individuals, "The teamwork and discipline I learned here are essential in managing teams and meeting organizational goals"[33]. NCC provides focused leadership, character building, physical fitness, teamwork, and career readiness skills so that the students may achieve success in different spheres of life. Testimonials from successful professionals who have been trained with NCC also convey how the training can greatly change the fate of a person's life or work

#### 5. Policy Recommendations and Future Prospects:

The National Cadet Corps (NCC) has played a vital role in making the youth of India disciplined, leader, and resilient. Because of this, the ability to expand the NCC's reach so that more students could have access to these critical life skills also has potential for holistic youth development. In the following section, we present policy recommendations to enhance the NCC's role in creating the future of Indian youth. The recommendations are to integrate NCC as an elective subject in the curriculum, make it a compulsory activity in educational institutions, strengthen the government efforts to make NCC more accessible and study the impact of increasing NCC enrollment.

##### 5.1 The Need to Integrate NCC as an Elective Subject in the Curriculum:

Including NCC as an elective subject in school curricula is one of the key recommendations to enhance the role of the NCC in education. At present, the NCC is a voluntary activity with limited enrollment and very few students are exposed to it. According to the Ministry of Defence (2020), the NCC can only enroll about 30% of eligible students. As NCC becomes an elective subject, schools will be able to offer it in their academic program and this may motivate more students to join and enjoy the various NCC offerings such as leadership development, physical training, and community service. In addition, NCC would be integrated into the academic curriculum so that students would receive academic credit for participation in NCC activities. This would be a great motivation, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, as it will assist them in moving up the academic ladder and also equip them for future challenges. Moreover, it would provide an extra academic route combining theory with practice [38]. For a long time, the NCC has been one of India's leading institutions for developing young adults. From soft skills to military training, the instruction spans a wide range of curricular and co-curricular activities and from soft skills to military training. Enhancing emotional intelligence and developing leaders of tomorrow, the NCC has long been one of India's premier and pioneer institutions. [39].





### 5.2 Making NCC a Compulsory Activity in Schools and Colleges:

One policy suggestion to enhance the effect of NCC is to make it a mandatory activity for students in schools and colleges. As it stands now, NCC participation is still voluntary which limits its capacity. According to the report by the National Cadet Corps Directorate (2020), only 14% of the students in the country are part of the NCC. Increasing this percentage could be made possible by making NCC a compulsory part of the curriculum so that more students get to benefit from NCC's leadership and personal development opportunities. Compulsory NCC participation could help to minimize the gap between urban and rural students. Rural students are limited in their access to extracurricular activities such as NCC due to logistical and financial barriers that many rural students face. NCC should be mandated in schools because it would guarantee that every student, regardless of his/her socioeconomic background, has equal opportunity to grow personally and develop leadership. In addition, making NCC compulsory will enable schools and colleges to provide a standardized, nationwide curriculum that will foster a more cohesive and disciplined youth population [40].

### 5.3 Government Initiatives and Policy Suggestions to Strengthen NCC's Reach:

The NCC has been an active part of the Government of India which has been trying to increase the reach and impact of the NCC. In the past years, several initiatives have been undertaken to increase the number of NCC units, especially in rural and remote areas. Also, the Ministry of Defence (2020) has allocated funding for the improvement of infrastructure such as the setting up of more NCC training camps and recruitment of more trained instructors. Yet, the government should do more to bolster the NCC by investing more resources in capacity building such as training instructors and building NCC infrastructure in rural schools. This would expand the presence of the NCC in smaller towns and villages paving the way for equal opportunities for rural students to have as much as their urban counterparts in a more inclusive and diverse environment. Increased financial investment for NCC units, but especially for rural NCC units, could make a huge difference in enrollment and involvement. [41] Moreover, financial incentives for educational institutions that adopt NCC programs would motivate more schools to participate. It could be government-sponsored scholarships for students who wish to enroll in NCC or grants for schools that do not have the infrastructure to support NCC activities. The government could also introduce schemes to leave an incentive for those institutions that show maximum participation. Such an environment can prove to be a competition for both students and the community as a whole [42].

### 5.4 The Potential Impact of Expanding NCC Enrollment:

The enrollment capacity of the NCC could be increased to have profound effects on individual students and the nation. Increasing participation implies that more youth would be exposed to the all-around development offered by NCC training in the areas of physical fitness, leadership, community service, etc. Chauhan and Shah's (2021) study revealed that students who undertook NCC training were more inclined to opt for careers in public service, armed forces, and other areas of national development. In addition, greater enrollment might benefit student well-being. Physical fitness, mental resilience, teamwork, and leadership are all skills that the NCC focuses on, which are all skills that students need to cope with the pressures of modern education and society. While NCC is a structured program of physical fitness and personal development, it can help to minimize stress and thus promote the emotional well-being of students. The rise of the global youth mental health crisis means that the NCC would be a welcome platform for building resilience and promoting a positive outlook amongst young people [43]. With increased enrollment, civic duty, and national pride are also possible. Students trained by NCC are usually associated with disaster relief operations, blood donation camps, and other community service activities. The government can train a larger number of students in such activities and foster a more socially responsible generation of youth who contribute to their communities and serve the nation when the need arises [44]. In addition, a wider pool of NCC-trained youth could contribute to a more cohesive society in the nation. When students from different backgrounds come together for training, they can create relationships and understanding of one another, which can lead to more unity and patriotism. Indeed, this would be very beneficial in a country with such diversity as India, where it is extremely important to create a national identity and national purpose to maintain social stability ([45]). In conclusion, the National Cadet Corps (NCC) can do even more to form India's future by developing leadership, discipline, and resilience in its youth. To make NCC more accessible to a larger number of students, the program can be integrated as an elective or compulsory part of the curriculum, government support for NCC units can be increased and enrollment can be expanded. If implemented, these policy recommendations would go a long way in developing Indian youth as a whole and provide them with the skills to deal with the complexities of the modern world and contribute to the country's development.

### 6. Conclusion:

The National Cadet Corps (NCC) is an important organization for the development of qualities like discipline, leadership, physical fitness, and resilience among the youth of India. Even though the NCC has only been able



to reach a small minority of students, it could have a much wider impact based on policy recommendations like the inclusion of NCC in the school curriculum, making it mandatory for all schools to adopt the program and increasing the role of the government in infrastructure and capacity building initiatives. If NCC is introduced as an optional or mandatory subject, more students, especially from the disadvantaged sections, can develop holistically as NCC offers. In addition, increasing the NCC enrollment would result in a generation of youth that is socially responsible, disciplined, and resilient, able to meaningfully contribute to their communities and the nation. With increasing problems of youth mental health, stress, and societal pressures, the NCC is a platform to develop emotional resilience and a positive mind in the youth. If the government follows these suggestions, it would only strengthen the government's grip on the power of NCC to make a unified India with a pack of young leaders who are ready to face today's and tomorrow's challenges with confidence and unity.

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