Theme 1

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The concept of sustainable development has multiple dimensions. The fundamental approach to development is balanced development, encompassing environmental, social, and economic sustainability with equity. Sustainable development, as defined by the Brundtland Report (1987), is "development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 and explained how the goals are integrated and indivisible to achieve sustainable development at the global level. The 17 goals address global challenges, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. This is based on the principle of "leaving no one behind" and emphasizes a holistic approach to achieving sustainable development for all. The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly (UN-GA) and are intended to be achieved by 2030.

Despite a reasonably high economic growth rate achieved in India during past decades, the employment situation has not been satisfactory and even sustained growth has not translated into creating decent jobs. Additional concerns include rising inequity and inequality and environmental challenges, threatening the progress towards sustainable development. While some other sectors, such as education, health, sanitation, infrastructure, and energy have witnessed improvements over the years, yet a lot remains to be done to achieve the targets.

In 2018, the NITI Aayog initiated a powerful tool to track the SDGs and prepared an "SDG Index & Dashboard States and UTs" to measure the progress in the States and UTs. This has helped identify issues and required policy interventions for improvement. In addition, the index highlights the achievements until now and gaps to be bridged (SDG India: Index & Dashboard 2020-21, Niti Aayog, 2021).

The SDG India Index (2020–21) is more powerful and vigorous than its previous editions primarily because of the broader coverage of targets and indicators with a greater alignment with the National Indicator Framework

(NIF). The 115 indicators include 16 out of the 17 SDGs, showing improvement over the 2018–19 and 2019–20 index. Overall, the SDG score improved by six points — from 60 in 2019 to 66 in 2020–21. This improvement is due to significant progress in Clean Water and Sanitation (Goal 6) and Affordable and Clean Energy (Goal 7). Across states, Jharkhand and Bihar have performed the worst and are unlikely to achieve the target by 2030. Kerala has done the best, followed by Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh, jointly ranked second. Goa, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Uttarakhand jointly ranked third in the state ranking.

Some of the key concerns and challenges that can be considered for prospective paper writers on this theme are:

- ❖ Poverty and unemployment
- ❖ Energy security
- ❖ Water resource management and conservation
- ❖ Biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services
- ❖ Changing climate and disasters
- ❖ Circular economy and waste management
- ❖ Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices in sustainability
- ❖ Sustainable consumption and production patterns
- ❖ Green energy and renewable technologies
- ❖ Implementation and governance
- ❖ Responsible technology governance
- ❖ Financing sustainable development goals
- ❖ Financial inclusion
- ❖ Partnership with civil society and government