

ANNUAL REPORT



NITI Aayog

2020–21



सत्यमेव जयते

NITI Aayog

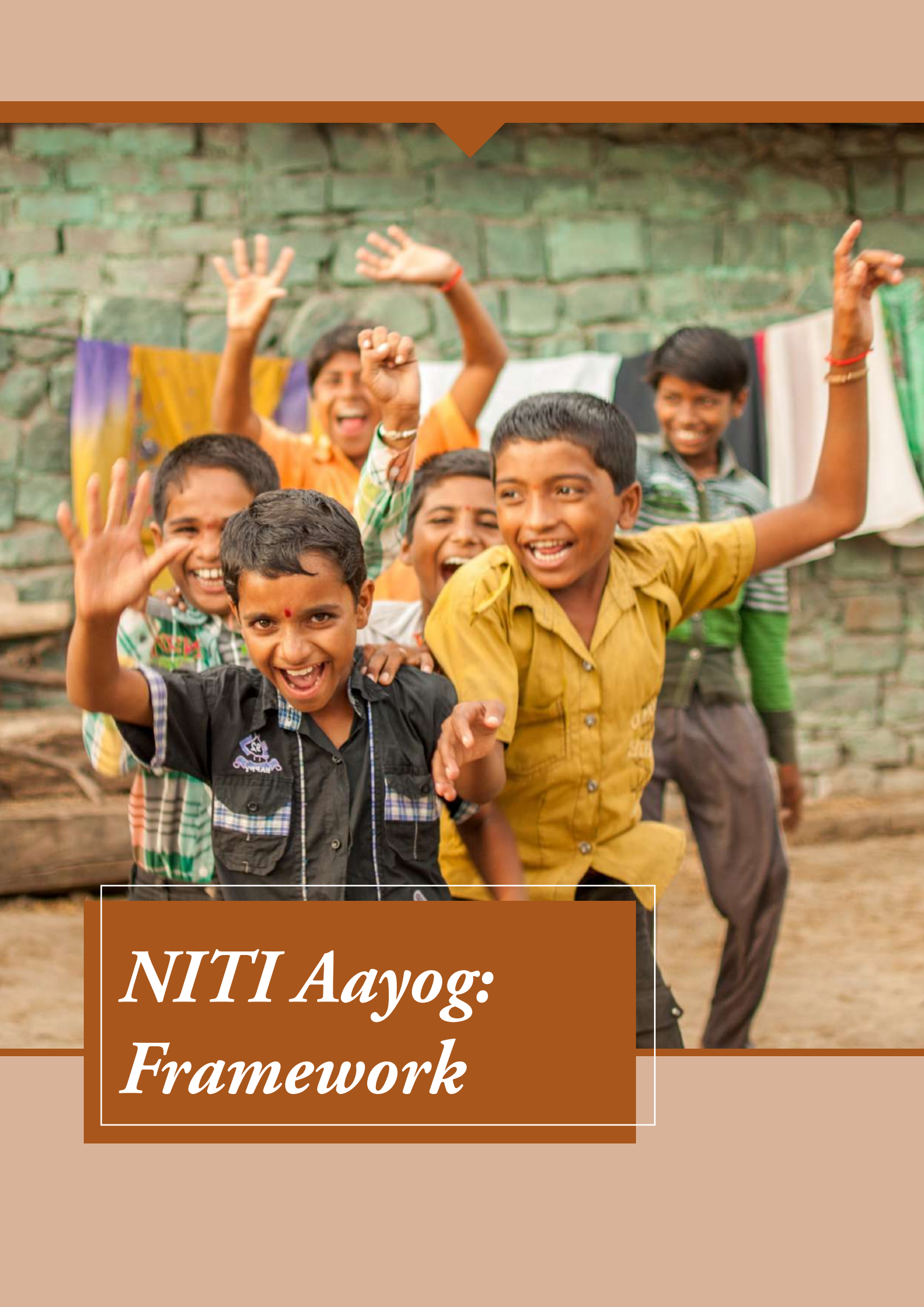
**ANNUAL
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CONTENTS

A. NITI AAYOG: FRAMEWORK	1
1. Constitution of NITI Aayog	2
2. Objectives of NITI Aayog	4
B. POLICY AND PROGRAMME	7
1. Introduction	8
2. Agriculture Reforms	8
3. Aspirational Districts Programme	9
4. Energy Sector Reforms	13
5. Health Sector Reforms	14
6. Higher Education Reforms	17
7. Industry Sector Reforms	18
8. Nutrition Sector Reforms	20
C. MONITORING AND EVALUATION	25
1. Introduction	26
2. Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office	26
3. Performance Dashboards	35
4. Key Performance Indices	39
D. COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM	45
1. Introduction	46
2. Sustainable Action For Transforming Human Capital In Education	46
3. Development Support Services for States and Union Territories for Infrastructure Projects	49
4. NITI Forum for North-East	50
5. Holistic Development of Islands	51
6. Sustainable Development in Indian Himalayan Region	53
7. SDG Localization	55
E. THINK-TANK ACTIVITIES	59
1. Introduction	60
2. Technology Commons	60
3. Adoption of Frontier Technologies	61
4. Blockchain	63

5. Methanol Economy	63
6. NILERD	64
7. International Cooperation	67
• Collaboration with Countries	67
• Collaboration with International Agencies	69
8. Promoting Innovation	80
• Atal Innovation Mission	80
• Women Entrepreneurship Platform	92
F. COVID-19 MANAGEMENT	97
1. Introduction	98
2. Empowered Group 1	99
3. Empowered Group 3	101
G. SECTORAL OBJECTIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS	105
1. Administration and Support Units	106
2. Agriculture and Allied Services	107
3. Culture	109
4. Career Management Activities	109
5. Communications Cell	110
6. Data Management and Analysis	110
7. Decentralized Planning	112
8. Digital Communications	113
9. Economics and Finance Cell	116
10. Energy	118
11. Governance and Research	123
12. Governing Council Secretariat	126
13. Health and Nutrition	127
14. Human Resource Development	128
15. Industry	131
16. Information and Broadcasting	133
17. Infrastructure Connectivity	133
18. Land and Water Resources	142
19. Library and Documentation Centre	144
20. Managing Urbanization	146
21. Minerals	151
22. Natural Resources and Environment	152
23. Official Language Division (Hindi Section)	153
24. Organization Methods and Coordination Section	155
25. Project Appraisal and Management Division	156
26. Parliament Section	159
27. Public-Private Partnership	160
28. Rural Development	166

29. RTI Cell	167
30. Science and Technology	167
31. Skill Development and Employment	171
32. Social Justice and Empowerment	173
33. State Finances and Coordination	175
34. Sustainable Development Goals	176
35. Tourism	178
36. Vigilance Section	179
37. Voluntary Action Cell	179
38. Women and Child Development	182
H. REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS	185
I. ANNEXURES	189



NITI Aayog: Framework

CONSTITUTION OF NITI AAYOG

NITI Aayog was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on 1 January 2015. It is the premier policy think tank of the Government of India, providing directional and policy inputs. Apart from designing strategic and long-term policies and programmes for the Government of India, NITI Aayog also provides relevant technical advice to the Centre, States, and Union Territories.

NITI Aayog acts as the quintessential platform for the Government of India to bring States to act together in national interest and thereby fosters cooperative federalism.

On 6 June 2019, the Hon'ble Prime Minister approved the reconstitution of NITI Aayog.

NITI Aayog



Chairperson
Hon'ble Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister of India



Vice Chairperson
Dr Rajiv Kumar

Shri Rao Inderjit Singh

Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Planning; and Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation



Full-Time Members



Dr VK Saraswat



Dr Ramesh Chand



Dr VK Paul



CEO
Shri Amitabh Kant

Additional Secretaries



Shri R. Ramanan
Mission Director, Atal Innovation Mission



Dr Sekhar Bonu
Director General, DMEQ



Dr Rakesh Sarwal
Additional Secretary



Dr K. Rajeswara Rao
Additional Secretary

OBJECTIVES OF NITI AAYOG

To evolve a shared vision of national development priorities, sectors, and strategies with the active involvement of States, NITI Aayog works towards the following objectives:

- ▶ To foster cooperative federalism through structured support initiatives and mechanisms with the States on a continuous basis, recognizing that strong States make a strong nation.
- ▶ To develop mechanisms to formulate credible plans at the village level and aggregate these progressively at higher levels of the Government.
- ▶ To ensure, on areas that are specifically referred to it, that the interests of national security are incorporated in economic strategy and policy.
- ▶ To pay special attention to the sections of our society that may be at risk of not benefiting adequately from economic progress.
- ▶ To design strategic and long-term policy and programme frameworks and initiatives and monitor their progress and efficacy. The lessons learnt through monitoring and feedback will be used for making innovative improvements, including necessary mid-course corrections.
- ▶ To provide advice and encourage partnerships between key stakeholders and national and international like-minded think tanks, as well as educational and policy research institutions.
- ▶ To create a knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurial support system through a collaborative community of national and international experts, practitioners and other partners.
- ▶ To offer a platform for resolution of inter-sectoral and inter-departmental issues to accelerate the implementation of the development agenda.
- ▶ To maintain a state-of-the-art resource centre, be a repository of research on good governance and best practices in sustainable and equitable development as well as help in their dissemination to stakeholders.
- ▶ To actively monitor and evaluate the implementation of programmes and initiatives, including the identification of the needed resources to strengthen the probability of success and scope of delivery.
- ▶ To focus on technology upgradation and capacity building for implementation of programmes and initiatives.
- ▶ To undertake other activities as may be necessary to further the execution of the national development agenda, and the objectives mentioned above.

NITI Aayog's entire gamut of activities is divided into two main hubs: Team India and Knowledge and Innovation. The two hubs are at the core of NITI Aayog's efficient functioning. The Team India Hub carries out the mandate of fostering cooperative federalism and designing policy and programme frameworks. It provides requisite coordination and support in NITI Aayog's engagement with States. The Knowledge and Innovation Hub maintains a state-of-the-art resource centre, a repository of research on good governance and best practices, provides advice and encourages partnerships with key stakeholders, including colleges, universities, think tanks and non-governmental organizations at home and abroad.

List of Verticals and Cells in Team India and Knowledge and Innovation Hubs

1. Administration, General Administration and Accounts
2. Agriculture and Allied Sectors
3. Aspirational Districts Programme
4. Communication and Social Media Cell
5. Data Management and Analysis, and Frontier Technologies
6. Economics and Finance Cell
7. Governance and Research
8. Governing Council Secretariat and Coordination
9. Human Resource Development
10. Industry-I
11. Industry-II
12. Infrastructure-Connectivity
13. Infrastructure-Energy, International Cooperation
14. Natural Resources and Environment
15. Project Appraisal and Public-Private Partnership
16. Science and Technology
17. Social Justice and Empowerment
18. Social Sector-I (Skill Development, Labour and Employment, and Urban Development)
19. Social Sector-II (Health and Nutrition, and Women and Child Development)
20. State Finances and Coordination
21. Sustainable Development Goals and Rural Development
22. Water Resources/Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana/Land Resources



Policy and Programme

INTRODUCTION

NITI Aayog plays an integrative role, with the active involvement of States, the civil society, and other think tanks, in the development of a shared vision of national priorities and strategies in critical areas of human and economic development.

One of the main objectives of NITI Aayog is to design strategic and long-term policy and programme frameworks and initiatives and monitor their progress and efficacy. In 2020–21, NITI Aayog took the lead in setting up sectoral targets and fostering an environment of innovation and cooperation by bringing together technology, enterprise, and efficient management at the core of policy formulation and implementation.

AGRICULTURE REFORMS

The Government of India has undertaken historical reforms in the areas of agricultural marketing and trade, and contract farming by bringing in two new laws, and modifying the Essential Commodities Act (1955) to attract investments in logistics and modern infrastructure. These reforms were debated for a long time and are considered essential to address the structural problems of the agriculture sector and transform it by seizing upcoming opportunities. NITI Aayog provided the background material and inputs for these reforms and formulation of new Acts.

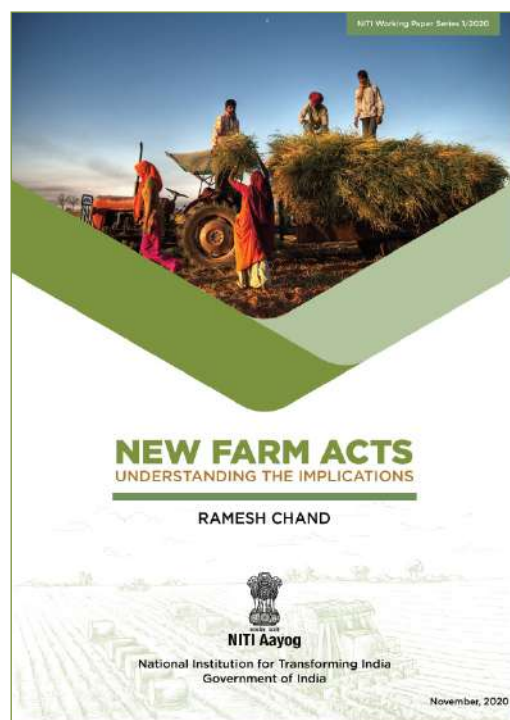
NITI Aayog played a significant role in creating awareness, through newspaper articles, webinars and TV debates, on the need for these reforms, their benefits to farmers and consumers, and the role they will play in transforming the agriculture sector and rural economy. NITI Aayog prepared *working papers* in English and Hindi to put into perspective the implications of the new farm laws. The working

papers were shared with the Union Council of Ministers, all Chief Ministers and Members of Parliament, progressive farmers across the country and all Krishi Vigyan Kendras of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

It was demonstrated that the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act 2020 will ensure better prices to farmers and a better deal for consumers by:

- i. providing more options to farmers to sell their produce
- ii. facilitating direct sale by farmers without any intermediaries
- iii. increasing competition among buyers
- iv. promoting barrier-free inter- and intra-state trade and commerce

Other expected benefits are market integration, higher export competitiveness, lower logistics costs and a push to processing activities.



The Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act 2020 covers two aspects:

- a. provision for guaranteed price, and
- b. input and technical services to farmers by registered individual, firm, company, cooperative society, etc., under mutually acceptable agreements between farmers and sponsors prior to production.

This Act intends to insulate interested farmers, especially small ones, against market and price risks so they can go for high-paying options, such as the cultivation of high-value crops, without worrying about the market and price fluctuations in the harvest season. If a farmer is interested, they can also get technical services and inputs from the sponsor. There is nothing in the Act beyond these two provisions. The Act does not require any farmer to go for this agreement; it is entirely left to them to enter into the agreement or not. The Act prohibits the farming agreement to include transfer, sale, lease, mortgage of the land or premises of the farmer.

The modification in the Essential Commodities Act (ECA) specify transparent criteria in terms of price trigger for imposing ECA rather than leaving it to the arbitrary decisions of bureaucrats to revoke it. The power of the government to impose ECA remains intact. The modification in ECA sets a much higher limit for the rise in producer prices before the government can take action on stock limits, which is favourable to the farmers. The modification in ECA will attract much-needed private investments in agriculture.

NITI Aayog publications have clearly stated that the three policy reforms undertaken by the Central Government through the three Acts are in keeping with the changing times and requirements of farmers and farming. If they are implemented in the right spirit, they will take Indian agriculture to new heights and usher in transformation of the rural economy. The reforms have generated optimism for India to become a global power in agriculture and a powerhouse of global food supply. The reforms carry the seeds for farmers' prosperity and transformation of the rural economy.

ASPIRATIONAL DISTRICTS PROGRAMME

In January 2021, the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) completed three years of its implementation and marked the culmination of the year that posed a multitude of unprecedented challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the unique governance template that ADP represents responded effectively and creatively to deal with the many hardships inflicted by the pandemic. Since the beginning of 2020, many Aspirational Districts began to internalize and adopt the model of data-driven governance and formulation of targeted interventions at the local level with the collaboration of all stakeholders. NITI Aayog's continuous focus on improving the quality of data being provided by the District administration in all the 112 Aspirational Districts intersects with the ever-increasing realization across India that rapid improvement in socio-economic outcomes is possible only when policy intervention targets critical gaps identified through data analysis. Inculcation of these practices by the entire government machinery at the grassroots level is the most significant contribution of this programme to India's growth story.

During its three years of implementation, the Aspirational Districts Programme has brought about definite improvement in the socio-economic outcomes of the Districts on all thematic priorities. In discharging this responsibility, NITI Aayog has actively collaborated with State Governments and Central Line Ministries and Departments. As a result of these synergies, not only have there been improvements in the outcomes but various best practices have also

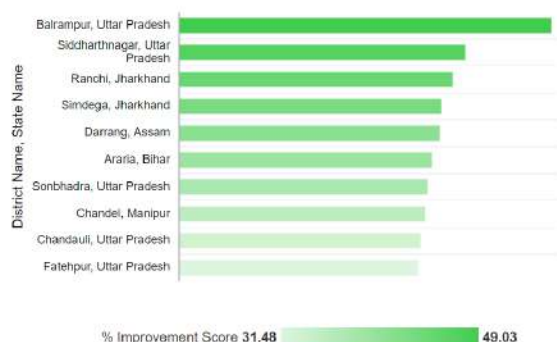
emerged from the Districts that could be scaled up to other parts of the country. NITI Aayog has utilized the support of development partners as well as technology-enabled solutions in doing so. NITI Aayog recently completely upgraded the digital infrastructure, Champions of Change (CoC), that is the backbone of ADP. The new CoC digital platform now facilitates advanced data analytics, digitized project management workflow, and machine-learning capabilities.



The Aspirational Districts Programme has brought about definite improvement in the socio-economic outcomes of the Districts on all thematic priorities

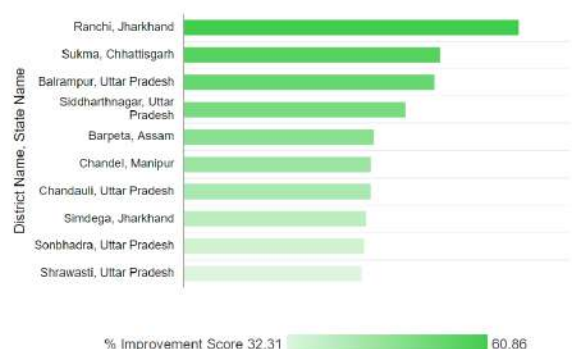
ADP can be characterized as a results-based governance programme to improve the ease of living in the 112 most under-developed Districts of the country. It marks a clear shift in the orientation of the development model, relying not just on economic growth but also on social progress. The 49 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), on which all the 112 Districts are measured every month, function as spokes of the wheel of social progress. By strengthening a District's status on each of them, the vast potential of these under-developed pockets of India is unleashed. Some indicators, such as household electricity connections and individual toilets, have reached near-saturation level across most Aspirational Districts. The programme is also credited with expanding the coverage of various Central schemes aimed at financial inclusion and for enabling sustained improvement in children's health and nutrition, especially in reducing malnutrition and increasing immunization coverage. By covering five critical sectors, ADP has had a major impact on India's progress in localizing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Top 10 Districts Since Inception (Apr 2018)



Overall

Top 10 Districts Since Inception (Apr 2018)



Health & Nutrition

Top 10 Districts Since Inception (Apr 2018)



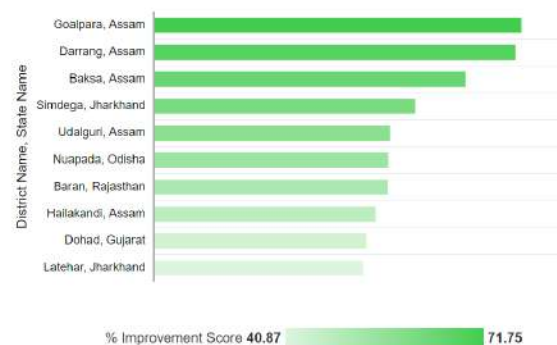
Education

Top 10 Districts Since Inception (Apr 2018)



Agriculture & Water Resources

Top 10 Districts Since Inception (Apr 2018)



Financial Inclusion & Skill Development

Top 10 Districts Since Inception (Apr 2018)



Basic Infrastructure

Top-performing Aspirational Districts across sectors (as of September 2020)

The respective Line Ministries formulated short- and long-term plans in February 2020 to focus their efforts towards priority areas in the Aspirational Districts. Representing the targets to be attained by each Central Ministry, the plans are being implemented in consonance with State Governments and District administration. NITI Aayog regularly reviews the progress on actualization of these plans and continues to have a sustained dialogue with the Districts regarding the challenges they are facing. NITI Aayog also holds periodic review meetings with the Chief Secretaries of States and the District Magistrates (DMs) of all Aspirational

Districts. These interactions are useful in identifying the challenges that invariably surface during implementation and promote convergence in the schemes of Central and State Governments.

NITI Aayog has also sanctioned comprehensive projects in a select group of Districts. These include a project to reduce the prevalence of anaemia in five Districts, equip schools with smart classrooms in 19 Districts of Jharkhand, decentralize inclusion of millets in hot-cooked meals in Telangana, and provide safe drinking water in Districts encumbered with arsenic and fluoride contaminants.

The best evidence of this new paradigm in the Aspirational Districts is the emergence of numerous innovative best practices. As many of these Districts face common challenges, they seek inspiration in the success of other Districts. In some instances, the challenges are unique and are being tackled through innovative solutions, which are identified via pooling of knowledge and experience of all stakeholders. NITI Aayog plays a crucial role in compiling a repository of these best practices and bridging the information asymmetries by sharing them with all stakeholders. Many Districts have successfully tapped into the knowledge of their local District teams, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and development partners to implement best practices to bring about rapid improvement in indicators.

These Aspirational Districts commendably rose to face the emerging challenges that the Covid-induced lockdowns posed. During the lockdown, development partners played an integral part in actively setting up community kitchens; creating awareness about prevention, physical distancing and isolation; providing shelter to the homeless, daily wage workers and urban poor; supporting Government efforts in setting up health camps; and in deputing volunteers and caregivers to deliver services to the elderly, Persons with Disabilities, children, transgender persons, and others in vulnerable situations. Notably, the ‘Surakshit Dada-Dadi Nana-Nani Abhiyaan’ in all 112 Aspirational Districts was spearheaded by NITI Aayog and the Piramal Foundation to reach out to more than 1.5 million senior citizens residing in these Districts regarding Covid-prevention measures, through collaboration with local NGOs and field volunteers.

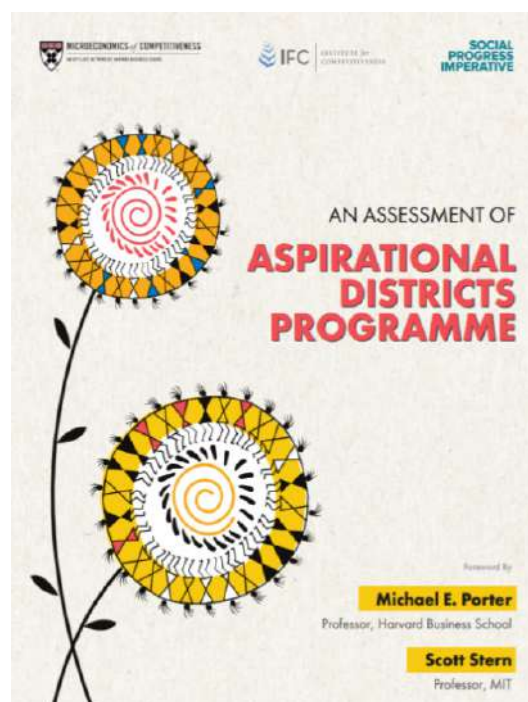


To promote the consumption of millets in everyday diet, Aspirational District Malkangiri started Millet Shakti foodstalls

Aspirational Districts are also emerging as innovation labs for start-ups and social entrepreneurs as many of them have successfully deployed their products and services in these Districts. Smart classroom platforms have been hugely successful in improving learning outcomes, and doctors are being trained online in Covid management. By closely working with development partners in the Aspirational Districts, NITI Aayog has also finalized a unique and first-of-its-kind impact-funding model to bridge learning gaps for middle school students, which will be implemented soon after schools reopen.

Guided by the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, NITI Aayog has undertaken various efforts to equip the Districts to emulate the ADP template at the block-level and use competition and incentives to improve governance right up to the gram panchayat level. Some States have finalized their respective models by identifying the poorest blocks, conducting baseline surveys, and choosing the appropriate indicators. Many others are in various stages of completing this process as surveys had to be postponed due to the pandemic. Not just the State Governments, but all other Central Ministries have modelled their programmes on ADP's template. The Border Area Development Programme, implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs in border Districts, and the Namami Gange Mission of the Ministry of Jal Shakti have also adopted features from ADP's template.

An independent assessment of ADP was released by Prof. Michael E. Porter, Harvard Business School, and Prof. Scott Stern, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in September 2020. Some of the major takeaways from the study were that the Aspirational Districts have made rapid improvements in the health, nutrition, and education sectors, especially in improving maternal and child health-related indicators. The assessment further noted that the programme has greatly emphasized real-life experiences, making it a very manageable initiative, which handles regional development more smartly. The close entwinement of development partners within the institutional rubric at the District level is another positive outcome of the programme, which attests to the efficacy of the cooperative-competitive federalism model that ADP exemplifies.



ENERGY SECTOR REFORMS

High-Level Committee on Coal Sector

A high-level committee on the coal sector, under the chairmanship of Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, was constituted by the Government to provide recommendations for enhancing domestic exploration and production of coal, reduction of imports and increase of exports. Based on the committee's recommendations, the Ministry of Coal notified commercial coal mining in June 2020, where 41 blocks were offered, of which 19 have so far been allotted.

The proposed auctions have liberal terms and conditions, allowing new companies to participate in the bidding process. The successful bidders will also have the flexibility to use coal for gasification projects and get additional incentives for revenue sharing.

HEALTH SECTOR REFORMS

Development of Public Health and Management Cadre

The National Health Policy 2017 seeks to institutionalize inter-sectoral coordination at national and sub-national levels to optimize health outcomes, through the constitution of bodies that have representation from relevant non-health Ministries. This is in line with the emergent international 'Health in All' approach as a complement to 'Health for All'. The policy prerequisite is for an empowered public health cadre to address social determinants of health, by enforcing regulatory provisions. NITI Aayog is engaged in dialogue with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and other stakeholders for developing a framework for adoption and implementation of the Model Public Health and Management Cadre. The proposal for the creation of this cadre was adopted during the thirteenth conference of the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare, held from 10–11 October 2019, and its smooth implementation initiated to achieve 'Health in All' and 'Health for All', as mandated in the National Health Policy 2017 by 2022. An expert group and secretarial support for this have been created at MoHFW.

Telemedicine Guidelines

The Telemedicine Guidelines issued in March 2020 by the National Medical Council (NMC) and MoHFW were prepared in partnership with NITI Aayog and were well received. These guidelines were issued to bring clarity to the process of telemedicine, remove ambiguities regarding its status, and provide an easy guide to how teleconsultations should be conducted. The guidelines have provided the much-needed thrust to teleconsultations. It could not have been better timed than in the present circumstances of the Covid outbreak. These guidelines have been adopted by AYUSH as well, expanding their reach beyond allopathic consultations. Also, MoHFW has developed an e-Sanjeevani telemedicine portal to provide virtual OPDs to patients accessing public health facilities.

Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India

Public health surveillance is an important public health function. It cuts across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of healthcare. It includes the early detection of diseases and early warning signs of impending outbreaks or epidemics, both those endemic to the country and those that constitute a public health emergency of international concern. Tracking acute and chronic disease trends and responding with timely action are critical functions of surveillance. Surveillance is 'information for action'.

NITI Aayog developed and released a vision document on India's public health surveillance by 2035. It articulates the core building blocks and envisions integration within India's three-tiered health system, enhanced citizen-centric and community-based surveillance, strengthened laboratory capacity, expanded referral networks and a unified surveillance information platform. Individual



electronic health records are envisioned to become the basis for surveillance and to be built into e-hospital and vertical disease control programmes.

The building blocks for this vision include:

1. An interdependent federated system of governance architecture between the Centre and States.
2. New data collection and sharing mechanisms for surveillance based on unitized, citizen-centric electronic health records with a unique health identifier, amalgamating existing disease surveillance programmes once electronic health records stabilize. This will not be dependent on traditional vertical programme-based data collection.
3. Periodic surveys to calibrate case definitions.
4. Enhance the use of new data analytics and advanced health informatics tools to enable India to be a global/regional leader with 'information for action', in consideration of the overarching principle 'for public good'.



Book release of Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India

Employment State Insurance Scheme (ESIS) Reforms for Improving Governance, Management, and Service Delivery

ESIS is the largest contributory health insurance programme in India and one of the biggest in the world, covering about 86 million beneficiaries in the low-income, formal labour market. The membership of ESIS has grown substantially over the last decade, along with its contributions and revenues. However, ESIS has far more potential. To improve its current health service access and fulfil its potential, NITI Aayog has prepared a reform note on ESIS, outlining a four-pronged plan:

- a. network expansion
- b. changes in governance and management
- c. management and upgradation of IT
- d. increased beneficiary engagement

Based on this, a roadmap has been prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, which will be implemented with all possible support from NITI.

Integrative Health

An integrative health system to achieve inclusive, affordable, and evidence-based healthcare is being explored. Four working groups have been constituted to look at core areas of education, research, clinical practice and public health administration, which will explore and recommend integrative approaches for functional integration.

Reforms in Pharmaceutical and Medical Devices Sector

Promoting and Boosting R&D and Easing Regulatory Process

In a quest to promote R&D and facilitate ease-of-doing business, NITI Aayog brought together key stakeholders from the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD), MoHFW, Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), and Department of Health Research (DHR) to review the committees involved in the clinical trial approval process and discuss ways to not only streamline but also expedite the process. Ensuring regular and timely meetings of various committees, such as the Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM), Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), Cell Biology Based Therapeutic Drug Evaluation Committee (CBBTDEC), Committee for the Purpose of Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals (CPCSEA), and the availability of a single portal for online tracking of applications are some of the initiatives that have been undertaken.

Production-Linked Incentive Scheme to Boost Domestic Manufacturing

To boost indigenous manufacturing and build India's production capability, NITI Aayog suggested the adoption of the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme in the pharma and medical devices sectors. Consequently, to shore up domestic manufacturing of active pharmaceutical ingredients, key starting material, and medical devices, the PLI scheme was announced for these sectors in July 2020. In addition to this, schemes related to the promotion of bulk drug parks and medical devices parks were approved by the Government to promote the setting up of common facilities for testing, development, and production.

Regulation of Medical Devices Sector in India

India's National Health Policy 2017 recommends 'strengthening the regulation of medical devices and establishing a regulatory body for medical devices to unleash innovation and the entrepreneurial spirit for the manufacture of medical devices in India'.

NITI Aayog has drafted a Medical Devices (Safety, Effectiveness, and Innovation) Bill 2020 to regulate medical devices in view of patient safety, technological evolution, and Make in India goals. The draft Bill aims to bring all medical devices (notified and un-notified) under regulation, complying with the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

The draft Bill was discussed with various Government Departments, such as DBT, Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser, DHR, CDSCO, BIS, civil society representatives and medical devices associations. The final Bill is under consideration of the Government.

Medical Education Reforms

Scheme to Augment PG Training Programmes by Collaboration of Government Medical Colleges and AFMS Hospitals by MoU: 'SANGAM'

Many Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) hospitals and Government medical colleges are located close to each other. SANGAM proposes to utilize few departments of AFMS hospitals as extended 'units' of the medical colleges through an MoU. By doing so, Government medical colleges can increase the number of PG seats. This proposal presents a win-win situation for all stakeholders: for the State Government and medical education system in the form of increase in the number of PG seats; for AFMS hospitals in an opportunity to accrue teaching experience; and for students in the form of exposure to a disciplined work culture. The scheme has received approval from the Ministry of Defence and four AFMS hospitals have been identified so far. It has been envisaged that more opportunities can be explored through this model by its extension to other AFMS/Government hospitals in the coming years.

SRESTA: Scheme for Re-Deploying Superannuated Teachers of AFMS

Superannuated medical teachers of AFMS generally have 5–10 years of active residual service after retirement. SRESTA envisages recruiting this trained, disciplined and qualified workforce back into the Government medical college system on a contractual basis. The proposal has found traction amongst the AFMS administration and 12 States and UTs have already given in-principal approval for this scheme.

Nationwide Study of Emergency-and-Trauma-Care Services at Secondary and Tertiary Centres

Emergency and trauma care constitutes an important component of healthcare delivery. It addresses 50% of deaths and 40% of the total disease burden in low middle-income countries, apart from often being the first mode for the public to enter health systems. Despite this, emergency medical care has made uneven progress across various States and in different domains, comprising pre-hospital care (including ambulance services), hospital care, and post-hospital care (including rehabilitative care). To identify the current gaps in the system, NITI Aayog commissioned AIIMS, New Delhi, to conduct a nationwide study of emergency-and-trauma-care services at secondary and tertiary care centres. The landscape of the study included 100 centres, comprising District hospitals, medical colleges (Government and private) and private hospitals. The study has been completed and is ready for dissemination.

EDUCATION REFORMS

National Education Policy 2020

The human resource development (HRD) vertical appraised the Cabinet Note regarding National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and conveyed valuable inputs covering school and higher education to the Ministry of Education (MoE). Consequently, the Ministry incorporated almost all recommendations/suggestions of NITI Aayog in NEP 2020.

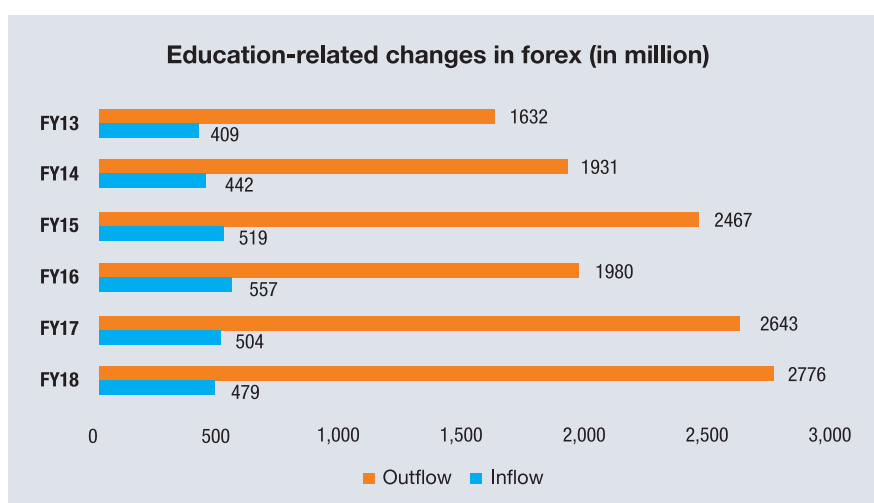
Higher Education Commission of India

NITI Aayog has played a key role in identifying challenges and contributing to reforms in higher education regulatory frameworks. After the first phase of reforms that was implemented through the regulations and guidelines of the University Grants Commission (UGC), NITI Aayog contributed substantially to the development of the Higher Education Commission of India under NEP 2020, in collaboration with the Department of Higher Education, MoE.

Rebranding India as Study Destination

A strategy paper to 'Rebrand India as Study Destination' is being prepared by NITI Aayog to transform the current education system. The strategy aims at improving the quality of tertiary education in India to create nationally and internationally competitive education by enhancing the capacity of higher education institutions, promoting industry-relevant education, and leveraging the strengths of traditional knowledge systems.

While in 2018–19, India was home to 47,427 foreign students, according to MoE, during the same time, more than 7,50,000 Indian students went abroad for higher education, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Career opportunities, safe and clean environment, better labour laws, quality of education, etc., continue to be the major driving factors behind this movement. The top destinations are Canada (1,07,650), USA (42,694), Australia (34,334), UK (19,505) and New Zealand (7883), as of 2018. The graph below indicates the changes in education-related foreign exchange expenses in India:



INDUSTRY SECTOR REFORMS

Production-Linked Incentive Scheme

In order to provide a major impetus to manufacturing in India and exports from India, the industry vertical in detailed consultation with several Ministries and Departments anchored the introduction of the PLI scheme in ten key sectors for five years. The scheme was approved by the Union Cabinet in a meeting held on 11 November 2020.

The PLI scheme is designed to incentivize incremental production for a limited number of eligible anchor entities in each of the selected sectors that will invest in technology, plant and machinery, as well as in R&D. The scheme will also have beneficial spill-over effects by the creation of a wide supplier base for the anchor units established under the scheme. Along

with the anchor units, these supplier units will also help in generating massive primary and secondary employment opportunities. A key benefit the scheme is that it can be implemented in a very targeted manner to attract investments in areas of strength and to strategically enter certain segments of global value chains. This will help bring scale and size in key sectors and create and nurture global champions.

A list of sectors, implementing Ministry/Department and sector-wise approved outlays over a five-year period, is provided below:

Priority	Sectors	Implementing Ministry/ Department	Approved Financial Outlay over 5 years (INR Crore)
1	Advance Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery	NITI Aayog and Department of Heavy Industry	18,100
2	Electronic/Technology Products	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)	5000
3	Automobiles and Auto Components	Department of Heavy Industry	57,042
4	Pharmaceuticals Drugs	Department of Pharmaceuticals	15,000
5	Telecom Networking Products	Department of Telecommunications	12,195
6	Textile Products: Man-Made Fibre segment and technical textiles	Ministry of Textiles	10,683
7	Food Products	Ministry of Food Processing Industries	10,900
8	High Efficiency Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Modules	Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)	4500
9	White Goods (ACs and LED)	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)	6238
10	Specialty Steel	Ministry of Steel	6322
Total			1,45,980

The sectors for PLI have been shortlisted on the basis of their potential for revenue and employment generation. The extent of benefit to the rural economy and their criticality in the next few decades have also been considered while finalizing the sectors.

With a focus on building a forward-looking manufacturing segment, the scheme incentivizes upcoming technologies, which represent the biggest economic opportunities of the twenty-first century. These include ACC batteries, electronic and technology products, and solar photovoltaic modules. These are crucial sectors for sustaining rapid growth in futuristic segments of the digital economy, electric vehicles, and renewable energy. Extremely strong manufacturing capabilities in these sectors are also essential for taking on Asian competitors who have made immense progress in one or more of these sectors. The scheme will also ensure continuous availability of electricity and digital connectivity in rural areas.

The scheme intends to generate large-scale employment by incentivizing the development of traditional, labour-intensive sectors like food processing and textiles. The current basket of Indian manufacturing constitutes a large volume of low-value products. The scheme aims to correct this by encouraging large manufacturers to bring technology and build capabilities for high-value output, thereby providing higher returns to upstream producers. It will also enable an increase in exports.

Finally, the scheme envisages globally integrated manufacturing in sectors such as automobile and auto components, pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, white goods and steel. These are crucial sectors in terms of their strategic importance, contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment-generation potential. The scheme aims to further strengthen these sectors. It will also encourage manufacturers to seize emerging international opportunities, given the changing geo-political orientation of the world.

Each of these sectors will have specific criteria of investment, production volumes, export focus with ingredients of domestic value addition and employment. The beneficiaries will be shortlisted based on their level of commitment towards achieving scale while meeting other specified performance parameters such as minimum investments, minimum incremental growth, etc. The performance of the scheme as well as the shortlisted beneficiaries will be reviewed periodically during the operation of the scheme.

NUTRITION SECTOR REFORMS

Third Biannual Report on POSHAN Abhiyaan

NITI Aayog has been mandated to prepare biannual reports to appraise the progress of POSHAN Abhiyaan. So far three monitoring reports have been submitted to PMO. The third report was recently submitted. It takes stock of the roll-out status on the field and implementational challenges encountered at various levels, using secondary data from surveys, such as NFHS-4 and CNNS, to predict trends in the decline of stunting, wasting and anaemia. Also, to assess how POSHAN Abhiyaan can scale up the coverage of key interventions to accelerate this reduction, a modelling analysis was done using the Lives Saved Tool.





Aspirational District Bastar organized Du Paidal – Suposhan Bar, an awareness campaign on malnutrition. Thousands of cyclists travelled to interior villages of Bastar, interacting with locals and creating awareness on the menace.

Quarterly Monitoring of Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana

As per the mandate under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, NITI Aayog has been assigned the task of monitoring and evaluating the maternity benefit programme. Accordingly, ten quarterly reports have been prepared with inputs received from the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) and shared for performance review. The efforts of the Ministry, along with constant monitoring and facilitation efforts, have resulted in the enrollment of 1.94 crore beneficiaries (pregnant women and lactating mothers) nationally and successful disbursement of Rs 7,408.60 crore under the scheme, up to 18 November 2020.

POSHAN-Related Institutional Arrangements



Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, addressing a POSHAN Abhiyaan event at Hapur, UP, in 2019

National Council on India's Nutritional Challenges under POSHAN Abhiyaan

This apex body was formed by MoWCD and is chaired by Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog. It formulates overall policies and guidelines, and monitors all nutrition-based schemes, highlighting a life-cycle approach. It coordinates and reviews convergence among Ministries for providing policy directions to address India's nutritional challenges. In 2019, the Council met twice and focused on the following:

1. **Monitoring Procurement of Growth Monitoring Devices:** Expeditious procurement of smartphones and growth monitoring devices by the States and Union Territories, as per the provision under POSHAN Abhiyaan, is being done; the procurement status is monitored monthly. The status report and timelines for procurement of devices and measures taken to expedite the same will be presented by MoWCD to Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog. As of August 2020, 56.36% of smartphones, 65.58% of infantometers, 64.19% of stadiometers, 63.99% of weighing scales (infant) and 66.75% of weighing scales (mother and child) had been procured.
2. **Rashtriya POSHAN Maah, September 2020:** The third POSHAN Maah was re-positioned to a digital mode due to the Covid-19 situation. The two major activities of Rashtriya POSHAN Maah 2020 were: (i) identification and tracking of children with severe acute malnutrition (ii) plantation drive for promotion of kitchen gardens at the grassroots level. A letter was sent by Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, for mobilizing NGOs/CSOs registered on NITI Aayog's Darpan portal and working in the field of health and nutrition to participate in the POSHAN Maah activities. NITI Aayog supported these NGOs/CSOs by sharing links to Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials available on the POSHAN Abhiyaan website and addressing their queries regarding POSHAN Maah and their potential contribution to the same. An overwhelming response was received from these organizations.

National Technical Board of Nutrition

Under the chairmanship of Dr VK Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog, the National Technical Board of Nutrition was constituted to provide technical, responsive, and evidence-based recommendations on policy-relevant issues concerning nutrition for women and children. The third board meeting was held on 12 April 2019. It was a scientific consultation on childhood and adolescent overweight and obesity in India. Likewise, the fourth meeting was conducted on 31 July 2019 to discuss the following issues:

1. Pilot study to be conducted on conditional cash transfer
2. Periodicity of measurement and recording of height at Anganwadi centres

NITI Aayog has undertaken many initiatives to strengthen the health and nutrition sector. For this purpose, technical inputs and advice related to nutrition are sought through the Board from time to time.

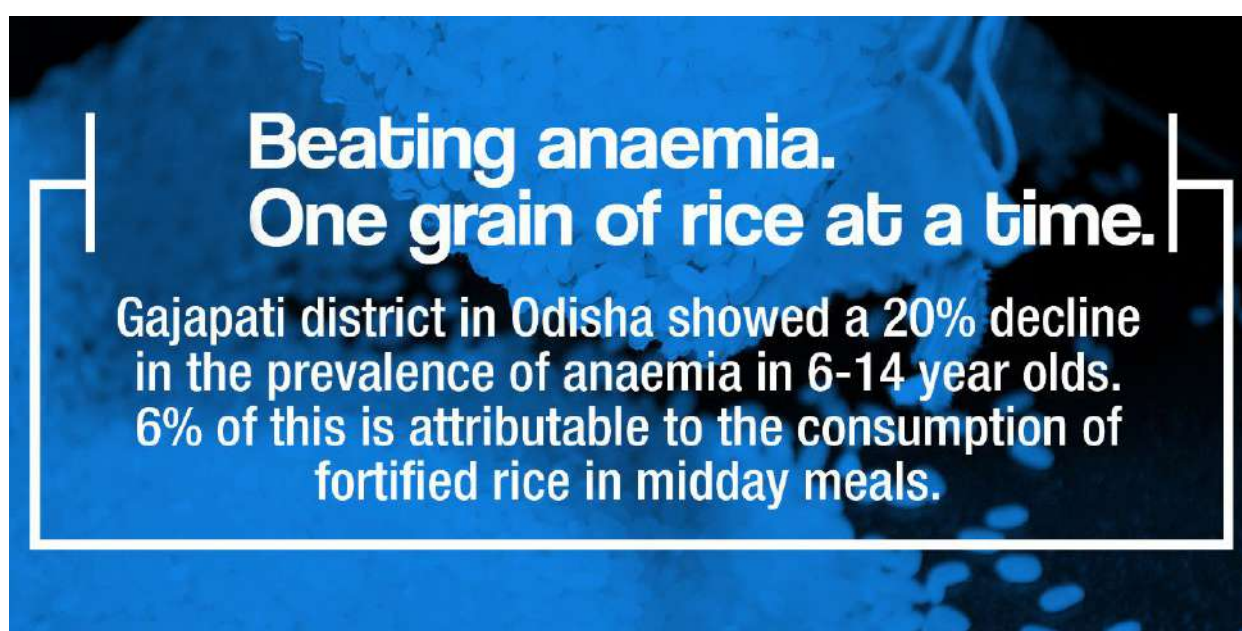
Promotion of Millets in Safety Net Schemes

Dietary Diversification through Use of Millets

Promotion of production and consumption of millets to bring in dietary diversification have been planned and efforts in this direction are ongoing. NITI Aayog facilitated the presentation and approval of millet-based projects received from three Aspirational Districts of Telangana. The projects involved piloting decentralized procurement, production, and processing of millets. They will be implemented for two years and incur a total cost of Rs 4 crore for all three Districts. Further, the National Consultation on Promotion of Millets was constituted to invite those States already implementing certain measures in this regard (Odisha and Telangana) to share their experiences with others (Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan), who could then share potential areas of implementation.

Food Fortification

After successive stakeholder consultations at NITI Aayog, the Department of Food and Public Distribution proposed a Centrally sponsored pilot scheme on the fortification of rice and its distribution under the public distribution system for a period of three years, which will focus on 15 Districts initially. Recognizing the importance of rice fortification to improve nutritional outcomes, it was decided that rice fortification will be rolled out in 112 Aspirational Districts. The proposal or scheme to initiate rice fortification in the Aspirational Districts will be shared by the Department of Food and Public Distribution soon.



Evaluation of Integrated Child Development Services Scheme

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) evaluation study was done in collaboration with the Institute of Economic Growth and IIT Gandhinagar. The study was undertaken in nine States and Union Territories to understand specifically the governance and implementation mechanisms and key processes under the ICDS scheme. The evaluation report was shared with MoWCD. Some of the key recommendations centred on streamlining the governance and monitoring mechanisms for supplementary nutrition to ensure greater efficacy and impact of the

allocated resources. ICDS's take-home ration and hot-cooked meals should adopt a progressive view to promote dietary diversity and coverage. ICDS should evolve as per the changing needs and aspirations of the community, particularly in the urban areas where households are drawn towards an increasingly vibrant pre-schooling environment. The quality of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) is thus emerging as a major parameter to sustain the relevance of ICDS. Gaps and inadequacies in ICDS financing, infrastructure and human resources have detrimental effects on service delivery and require renewed attention. The Ministry found the objectives and broad recommendations of the evaluation in alignment with the overall vision of the scheme. They were also of the opinion that the report is 'an endorsement of the Ministry's efforts towards the concept of 'Saksham Anganwadis'.

Strengthening Quality of Care at Child-Care Institutions

A robust monitoring framework to assess the quality of care provided in child-care institutions is being developed under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), which is being implemented by MoWCD. To evaluate the performance of the scheme in terms of efficiency and effectiveness in reaching the desired outcomes for children, NITI Aayog partnered with Duke Global Health Institute, Duke University. Key activities undertaken include developing and contextualizing a quality assessment tool for the Indian setting, baseline, and gap assessment of alternative care settings for children in approximately 60 centres across four States: Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, and Telangana. The work was concluded and a report with recommendations was submitted to NITI Aayog and MoWCD, for the inclusion of some of the indicators in the Output-Outcome Monitoring Framework for quality assessment of the scheme. Additionally, an academic paper titled, 'Strengthening Child-Care Institutions (CCIs) in India: Variation in Government-Affiliated CCI Care Quality in Four States', has been submitted to the journal *BMC Public Health* and is currently under review for publication.



Monitoring and Evaluation

INTRODUCTION

Evidence-based policymaking should be integral to the overall governance structure of New India. To achieve this, it is important to be able to track performance, determine outcomes to understand how well a scheme is performing, help diagnose reasons for poor performance, and generate recommendations for course corrections. This requires not only the collection of data but also putting in place proper frameworks with measurable parameters to help strengthen the effective management of limited public resources and achieve a deeper and broader impact of scheme interventions.

The Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), an attached unit of NITI, is driving accountability in governance through proper monitoring and evaluation, along with the other verticals.

Apart from this, NITI Aayog has also developed a number of social sector indices and dashboards by focusing on effective management and better outcomes, backed by data analysis.

DEVELOPMENT MONITORING AND EVALUATION OFFICE

DMEO monitors and evaluates programmes and initiatives funded by the Central Government. It also provides technical advisory services to the States, under NITI Aayog's mandate of cooperative and competitive federalism. DMEO is headed by the Director General who is equivalent to an Additional Secretary to the Government of India. To have complete functional autonomy, a separate budgetary allocation has been exclusively provided to DMEO.

DMEO's major projects in 2020–21 included:

- ▶ Evaluations of Umbrella Centrally Sponsored Schemes (UCSS)
- ▶ Output-Outcome Monitoring Framework (OOMF)
- ▶ Infrastructure Sector Review
- ▶ Quick Assessment Studies
- ▶ Monitoring of Global Indices
- ▶ Data Governance Quality Index
- ▶ Support to Sewapuri Vikas Abhiyaan
- ▶ Other Activities for Institutional Strengthening

Third-Party Evaluation of UCSS

To consider the continuation of UCSS in the Fifteenth Finance Commission (FC) cycle, DMEO has been mandated to undertake third-party evaluations of 28 UCSS. As there are 125 schemes under 28 UCSS, DMEO is undertaking this through 10 evaluation-study consultant packages: i) agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries, ii) women and child development, iii) human resource development iv) urban transformation v) rural development vi) drinking water and sanitation vii) health viii) jobs and skills ix) water resources, environment, and forest x) social inclusion, law and order, and justice delivery.

The consultant firms were engaged through an open tender process. Of the 10 packages, the reports for five have been finalized; the remaining are near completion. Work in all the packages is expected to be completed by January 2021. Compendiums of best practices emerging from the studies have been shared with Chief Secretaries of States for two packages, namely, agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries, and women and child development; the others will be shared in due course.

Output-Outcome Monitoring Framework



Since 2018, DMEO has been undertaking a rigorous process annually to improve OOMF, with the objective of strengthening outcome-based monitoring for the effective management of limited public resources and to facilitate a deeper and broader impact of scheme interventions. The framework puts in place nearly 5000 output and outcome indicators for 530 outlays for Central Sector (CS) and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS).

This framework was tabled in Parliament with the Union Budget 2020–21. These schemes formed the primary mode of Government service delivery to beneficiaries, covering Rs 9.77 lakh crore of the total budget of Rs 30.42 lakh crore in 2020–21. By juxtaposing this financial outlay with quantitative measurements of scheme performance, it is expected that more judicious use and greater accountability can be encouraged.

Collaboration with Participating Ministries/Departments

DMEO is working closely with 65 Ministries and Departments for developing a deeper understanding of outputs and outcomes, setting quantitative targets for measurable output and outcome indicators, training for and troubleshooting operation of the online dashboard, and collecting scheme performance data for FY21. DMEO also worked extensively on enhancing the technical capacity of the online dashboard to support Application Programming Interface (API) linkage with the existing Ministry Management Information System (MIS). It is in the process of completing API linkage for seven.

A virtual workshop was organized in September 2020 on 'improving OOMF'. The workshop was aimed at familiarizing officials with the framework and for refining the quality of OOMF in collaboration with Ministries/Departments through a systemic review to keep pace with changes in schemes/scheme components over time and identify relevant and exhaustive indicators with appropriate data-capturing mechanisms. The workshop was attended by 425 participants across all Ministries/Departments. Consequently, the process for framework cleaning was initiated jointly with 65 Ministries/Departments.

Outcome-Based Reviews of Schemes

Based on OOMF, performance reviews for FY 2018–19 and FY 2019–20 were conducted with 30 Ministries/Departments under NITI Aayog Vice Chairperson and Members, with the respective Secretary and officers from the Ministry/Department to discuss (a) the status on compliance of progress updated on OOMF dashboard by the concerned Ministry/Department; and (b) progress on key indicators of the scheme. The details are given in Annexure I.

Concept Note for Inclusion of Log Frame in Scheme Design Documents

DMEO has developed and shared a concept note with the Department of Expenditure, outlining the significance of log frame as an effective tool for facilitating clear articulation of outputs, outcomes, their respective indicators, data source, baselines, targets and progress at the scheme proposal stage (Expenditure Finance Committee [EFC]/Standing Finance Committee [SFC]/Public Investment Board [PIB]) itself.

Institutionalization of Output-Outcome Monitoring Framework

In August, DMEO initiated the process to select a suitably qualified consultancy firm through the open tender process to support it as a programme management unit in the institutionalization of OOMF and undertake parallel activities to speed up the overall national development agenda. The consultancy firm is expected to assist in the transfer of international best practices to select stakeholders, expand the outcome monitoring framework to interested State Governments, and train concerned officers of select Departments in utilizing methodologies related to adopting an integrated development approach.

Infrastructure Sector Review Dashboard/Performance Trackers

The infrastructure sector reviews are held by the Hon'ble Prime Minister for 14 infrastructure sectors and three social sectors. These presentations are prepared by DMEO in consultation with the concerned NITI vertical and Ministry. A sector review dashboard is also maintained by DMEO. The concerned Ministry/Department updates quarterly progress data, against targets set for the financial year, for review by the Hon'ble Prime Minister. It also tracks action points emerging from previous reviews. Action-taken reports provided by the concerned nodal Ministries are synthesized for use by PMO.

This process is unique because of its sector-level focus, which transcends Ministry goals and showcases global comparison of a particular sector on key parameters. It facilitates convergence by tracking indicators and action points that are cross-ministerial in nature.

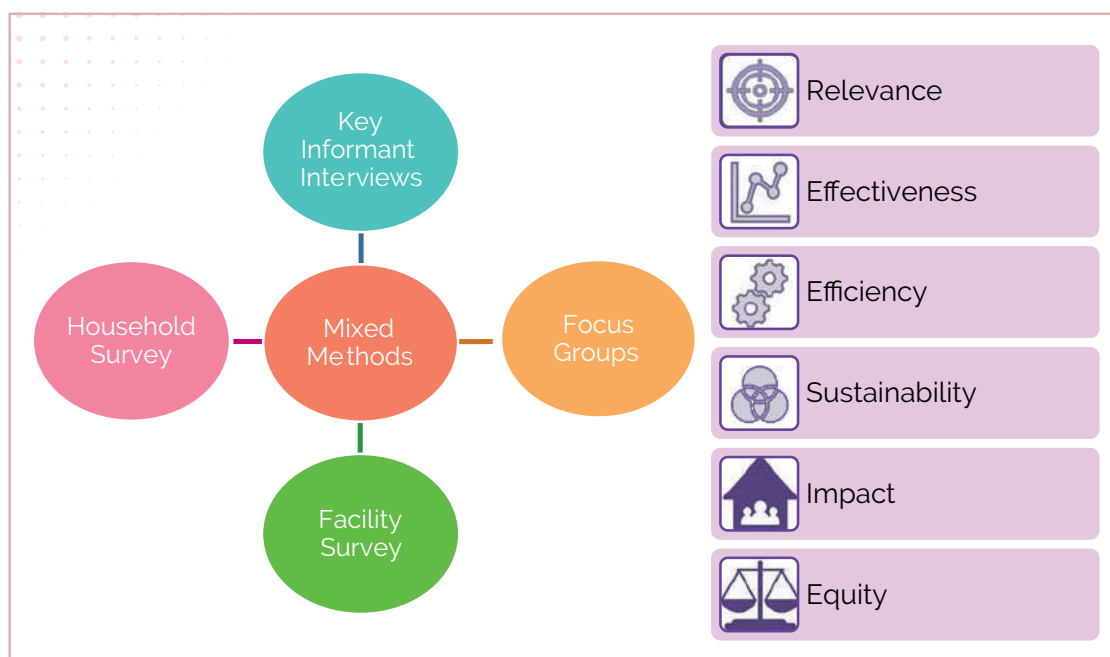
Quick Assessments, Field Visits and Other Studies Conducted by DMEO

DMEO undertakes evaluation of select programmes, either suo moto or on request of the implementing Ministry/Department. The purpose of evaluation includes an objective assessment of the long-term impact of the development programmes; identification of the areas and reasons for the successes and failures at different stages of programme execution; suggesting mid-course corrections; and disseminating lessons for the future.

S. No.	Scheme	Status of field assessment
1	Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme	The study was taken up on the request of the Ministry of Textiles and was conducted by M/s. Technopak Advisors in eight States. Finalization of the assessment report is currently underway.
2	Social Impact Assessment of Corporate Social Responsibility in India	The concept note for this study has been finalized after consultation with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. KIs were conducted with various academicians, research experts and industry leaders. The secondary literature survey and preparation of the terms of reference for the study are currently underway.
3	Evaluation regarding the continuation of Indian Development and Economic Assistance (IDEA) Scheme.	The evaluation of the IDEA Scheme of the Department of Economic Affairs was assigned to DMEO by the Department of Expenditure for determining revamping/continuation of the scheme beyond 2020–21. KIs have been conducted with DEA, MEA, Exim Bank and several Indian diplomatic missions and Indian exporters. The final report is currently being prepared.
4	Sarda Mines Private Limited: Study of Process of Grant of Environmental Clearance/Forest Clearance	A case study was prepared on the process of grant of Environmental Clearance (EC) and Forest Clearance (FC) by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The study focused on evaluating the as-is process for securing/renewing mining lease, grant of EC and FC, identifying the gaps and deficiencies, and thereby suggesting recommendations and interventions to address the gaps and observed irregularities.
5	Study on Health and Wellness Centres	The Ayushman Bharat scheme calls for revamping the existing primary health centres/sub-centres as health and wellness centres and provide comprehensive healthcare services. DMEO and NITI's health vertical have finalized the terms of reference for the preliminary assessment of scheme performance in the last three years and provided recommendations on the necessary adjustments to be made either in the scheme guidelines or implementation mechanisms.

Toolkit for Conducting Quick Assessment Studies

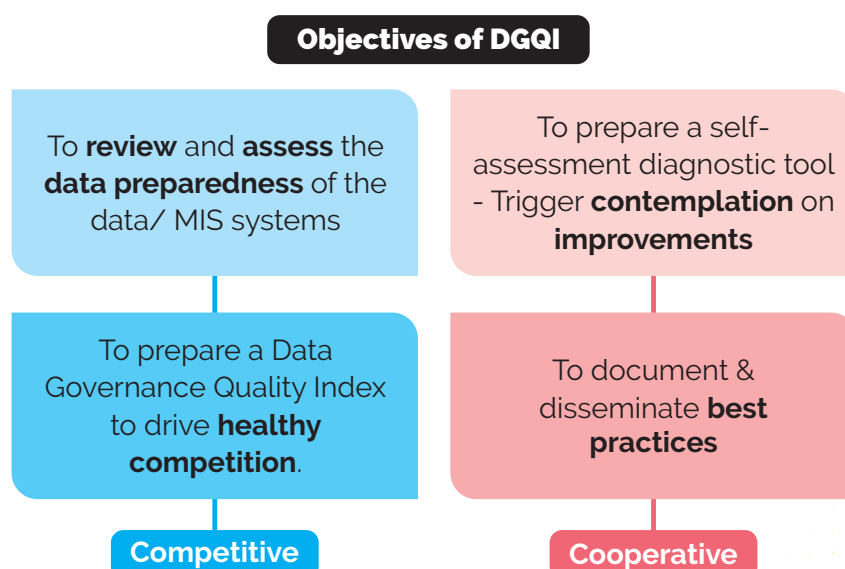
The objective of this toolkit, developed by DMEQ, is to introduce the concept of rapid appraisal processes by providing a set of concise, practical and user-friendly tools to conduct quick assessment studies within a short duration of time.

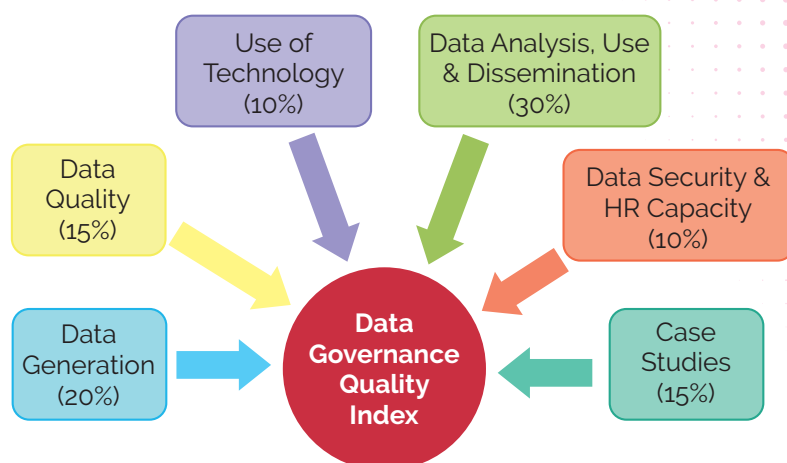


The guidelines help evaluation offices to design and execute a quick and short study in line with standard international evaluation principles. It can be an effective tool for the rapid assessment of a recently launched scheme and/or policy, to provide swift feedback to concerned decision-makers, which can be used to tweak the scheme and/or policy to make it more effective through mid-course correction.

Data Governance Quality Index

DMEQ and National Informatics Centre (NIC) were mandated to conduct a review of data preparedness levels across Ministries/Departments to assess the use of IT-based systems for scheme monitoring.





For this, DMEO developed a 'Data Governance Quality Index' based on self-assessment by 65 Ministries/Departments on six key parameters: data generation, analysis, dissemination, use and security, use of technology, and HR capacity and case studies. The draft report, focusing on the data systems of 250 Central Government schemes, is being finalized.

Support to Sewapuri Vikas Abhiyaan

To execute the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of inclusive and participatory development, *Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas*, the Sewapuri Block in Varanasi District has been selected for a unique gram panchayat saturation programme. Sewapuri Vikas Abhiyaan (SeVA) was launched on 15 July 2020.



Volunteers from Sewa Foundation being trained on behaviour change communication, as part of the Sewa initiative, in Sewapuri on 19 January 2021

The objective of the Abhiyaan is to ensure that the Centre and the State Government jointly saturate all the 87 gram panchayats in this block in terms of performance of the agreed schemes/interventions in a timebound manner. The Abhiyaan focuses on 138 key performance indicators spread across 12 Central Ministries, for which the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) is the nodal agency.

DMEO and the Aspirational Districts Programme, with the support of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, are supporting the District administration in the implementation of the Abhiyaan. By channelizing the support of various technical agencies across areas such as behavioural change, health, education, nutrition, agriculture, water, and sanitation, DMEO is driving the Abhiyaan's success through strategic and tactical support. DMEO is also responsible for designing and enabling the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation strategy for the Abhiyaan.

Scheme Performance Notes

Performance notes are prepared by DMEO based on desk review, using secondary sources, supported by primary key informant interviews. They provide a brief analysis of a specific Government scheme, cover achievements during the reporting period, provide Line Ministries with inputs on strengths/weaknesses and best practices and recommend interventions for necessary course corrections. In 2020–21, performance notes for seven schemes were prepared and shared with the concerned Ministries. Details are provided in Annexure I. In addition, work on performance notes for five schemes is underway.

Interim assessment notes for 86 schemes (53 Central Sector and 33 Centrally Sponsored Schemes) were also prepared and shared by DMEO with the Department of Expenditure in July 2020 on the latter's request.

Partnerships and External Collaborations

Over the past couple of years, DMEO has been building synergic partnerships with Government stakeholders, global experts, relevant think tanks and academic organizations. The key goals of these partnerships are to leverage existing capacities in the external ecosystem; meet M&E technical assistance needs of the Centre, State Governments and other stakeholders; jointly conduct high-quality evaluation and research; strengthen evidence-based policymaking; and foster a development data architecture for programme management. Over the last year, the following activities were undertaken:

Statement of Intent (Sol) signed with Haryana, International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) and three academic institutions

DMEO has signed an Sol with Swarna Jayanti Haryana Institute for Fiscal Management on behalf of the State Government of Haryana to collaborate on driving outcome-based budgeting and linkage with SDGs 2030. DMEO has also signed Sols with 3ie, Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad, Indian School of Business, Mohali, and Indian School of Public Policy, New Delhi.

Webinars with external experts and partners

In June 2020, DMEO participated in the gLOCAL International Evaluation Week, through three webinars, organized by the CLEAR initiative and supported by the World Bank to discuss key themes in monitoring and evaluation. The webinars were attended by more than 250 evaluation practitioners and researchers from across the globe. Webinars were also organized with external experts from organizations such as the Ministry of Statistics, IIM Bengaluru, and J-PAL to build capacity within DMEO and NITI Aayog around key M&E concepts. Details are provided in Annexure I.

Capacity Building of Central and State Stakeholders

Since its inception in 2015, DMEO has focused largely on responding to the immediate Government environment. However, there remains a need for long-term, continuous and sustainable engagement with DMEO's two key stakeholders, Central Ministries and State Governments, to inculcate and institutionalize an understanding of monitoring and evaluation as management tools that should be used to improve Government service delivery and outcomes. To address this lacuna, DMEO has been actively reaching out to all stakeholders through the following activities:

Engagement with States

To build a strong monitoring and evaluation ecosystem in the country, it is critical for all State Governments to build monitoring and evaluation units or agencies (like Karnataka, which remains unique and gold standard), and create capacities to improve outcome monitoring and for conducting quality evaluations. Strengthening monitoring and evaluation capacities across various States and Union Territories is the key focus of DMEO, for which the office has reached out to States to partner with them for sharing knowledge, experiences and best practices. DMEO conducted an online webinar in August 2020 with officials from Meghalaya, wherein both teams exchanged knowledge about activities in monitoring and evaluation and key areas for support. In line with NITI Aayog's mandate for cooperative federalism, DMEO plans to engage with the planning departments of all the State Governments and UTs, along with the respective State administration training institutes on capacity-building activities, especially for OOMF, disseminating guidelines and toolkits on evaluation studies, among others.

Development of Monitoring and Evaluation Curriculum for Government Officers

In addition to undertaking monitoring and evaluation programmes, DMEO is working on strengthening existing capacities at the Central and State levels through training, workshops, etc. As a part of this initiative, DMEO has developed a comprehensive curriculum with the World Food Programme for introducing Government officers to key monitoring and evaluation concepts. DMEO has reached out to the Department of Personnel and Training to collaborate with central training institutes to incorporate this curriculum in existing in-service training, apart from exploring other platforms such as iGOT (Integrated Government Online Training).

DMEO Conversation Series

DMEO launched a conversation series aimed at bringing together leading monitoring and evaluation practitioners from the development sector to discuss theory and emerging practices in this field. The inaugural session of the series took place virtually on 28 August 2020 and was organized in collaboration with the World Food Programme, wherein the speakers presented findings from the Joint Rapid Needs Assessment conducted in Odisha, articulating the impact of Covid-19 on food security and nutrition and sharing their learnings in designing short- and medium-term responses for the most vulnerable groups. The second session was organized in October 2020, in partnership with 3ie, wherein the consolidated evidence from the implementation research on nutrition-specific interventions in India published between 2000 and 2018 was presented in the form of a country-focused implementation research gap map.

Other Activities Undertaken

Flagship Evaluation of Central Sector Schemes

DMEO intends to undertake rigorous evaluation of 5–6 flagship Central Sector Schemes in a two-year cycle (*i.e.* evaluation of 2–3 schemes per year). The proposed rigorous evaluation would be a comprehensive and large-scale study based on globally adopted standard evaluation frameworks, *inter alia*, REESI+E (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, and equity). In consultation with different Ministries/Departments, DMEO has identified 18 Central Sector Schemes having an outlay of Rs 2000 crore or more for conducting rigorous flagship evaluation. These schemes have been selected based on their budgetary importance, duration for continuation (*i.e.* sunset clause), previous evaluations undertaken, and outreach, among others.

EFC/SFC/PIB/Delegated Investment Board (DIB) Appraisal Process

For initiating a new scheme or continuation of an existing scheme, proposals are received from the Ministry/Department as EFC/SFC/PIB/DIB appraisal process. DMEO outlines outputs, outcomes, and their measurable indicators, helping Ministries establish what they should be measuring to monitor the implementation of the scheme. Recommendations are also made regarding the mapping of clear scheme logic chains, making provisions for mid-term and end-line evaluations with separate budget earmarked, etc. DMEO has provided inputs for 169 schemes between April and October 2020.

Development and Compilation of Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkits

Various toolkits have been developed and made available on the DMEO website to provide practitioners, Government officials and other stakeholders access to tools and knowledge in the monitoring and evaluation domain. Details of the toolkits available on the DMEO website are given in Annexure I.

Supporting Ministry/Department Evaluation

DMEO provides technical inputs to Line Ministries in the process of developing terms of reference for the evaluation studies they commission. DMEO has vetted seven of these up to October 2020.

Right to Information

A note was prepared for proactive disclosure under Section 4(1) (b) of the RTI Act, 2005. The approved note has been submitted to NITI Aayog to be uploaded on the Central Information Commission's website. RTI applications/appeals were disposed of in time.

Hindi Week

Efforts have been made to use Hindi in official correspondence and file notings. The Hindi Divas/Hind Pakhwara was observed in DMEO. The DMEO administration attended the inspection of Hindi correspondence conducted by Deputy Director Hindi *Rajbhasha Vibhag*.

Recruitment Rules

Post the approval and concurrence of UPSC and Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), respectively, the recruitment process for DMEO has been initiated to fill up vacant posts under the flexi recruitment rule guidelines of NITI Aayog.

PERFORMANCE DASHBOARDS

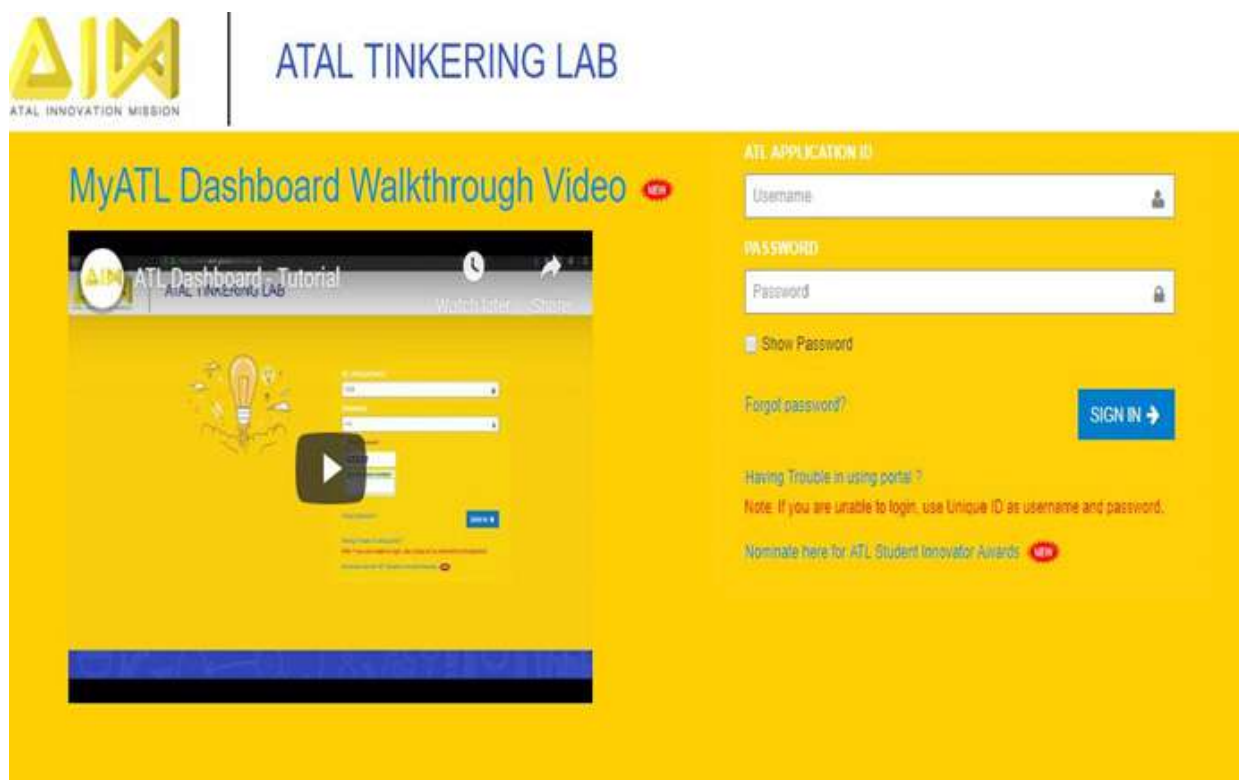
Atal Tinkering Labs

The Atal Tinkering Labs' (ATLs) dashboard 'MyATL' presents the status of such laboratories across the country in a single snapshot. The dashboard provides the distribution of ATLs across the Districts of a particular State. The information of a school of a particular District is available with details such as the board the school is affiliated to, associate partners, social media handles, etc. ATL schools are supposed to furnish their monthly reports on the MyATL dashboard, thereby giving Atal Innovation Mission an opportunity to recognize their active participation, innovation journey, achievements, and to determine the suitability for disbursement of subsequent tranche(s) of grants.

Regular updation of the dashboard by the schools also enables AIM to identify the top performers. The focus is on the quality of learning rather than just recording higher numbers.

The consistently top-performing schools are recognized on the basis of different parameters and rewarded, which further incentivizes them to perform better.

The ATL schools are also visible on MoE's GIS portal. The geotagged map of the ATL school helps in understanding the clusters spread across the District, along with easy identification of areas that need more schools, ensuring the efficacy and quality of the programme.



Champions of Change

NITI Aayog regularly conducts training and hand-holds District officers in District planning units. Continuing with the objective of empowering the District team, led by the District Magistrate/Collector, the 'Champions of Change' dashboard was upgraded into a cloud-based platform equipped with an advanced data visualization tool and machine-learning capabilities. In July 2020, the upgraded 'Champions of Change' platform was officially launched and comprehensive training sessions for all 112 District teams were conducted in August 2020. The new CoC platform generates automatic data-quality reports that aid in corrective action, along with monthly performance reports for District, Central and State Prabhari Officers of each District and the Chief Secretaries of States. The data visualization tool also enables all Districts to analyse the data in creative ways. The District teams have now been empowered with a slew of planning tools to identify critical gaps and submit proposals to cover them.

As an incentive to keep performing well, Districts are rewarded with additional allocation, up to Rs 10 crore per District, based on their monthly performance in the delta rankings released on the CoC platform every month. The Districts then utilize these additional untied funds to implement innovative projects in their areas. In the last one and a half year, more than 207 projects, worth Rs 237 crore, have been sanctioned under this process to over 70 Aspirational Districts.



<http://championsofchange.gov.in/>

Global Indices for Reforms and Growth

The Government has decided to leverage select global indices to drive reforms and growth across the country. DMEO has been assigned the responsibility of facilitating the measurement and monitoring of India's performance on these indices through a single dashboard. The project would encompass monitoring select 30 global indices to drive reforms and growth across 18 nodal Ministries/Departments, 47 Line Ministries/Departments and all State Governments. The objective is to use the indices as tools for self-improvement in guiding reforms in policies and processes of government agencies and financial institutions while creating a conducive ecosystem for foreign and domestic investment flow.

The project will facilitate (a) monitoring the progress of States in the indigenized indices; (b) driving reforms and growth to support improvement in outcome parameters, thereby enhancing scores on the indices; and (c) subsequently improving India's global rankings. The thirty significant indices have been categorized under four groups: (i) economy (ii) industry (iii) development (iv) governance. Based on the discussions held at Cabinet Secretariat and NITI Aayog, nodal Ministries/Departments have been assigned to each of these indices. In this sequence, the following activities have been initiated:

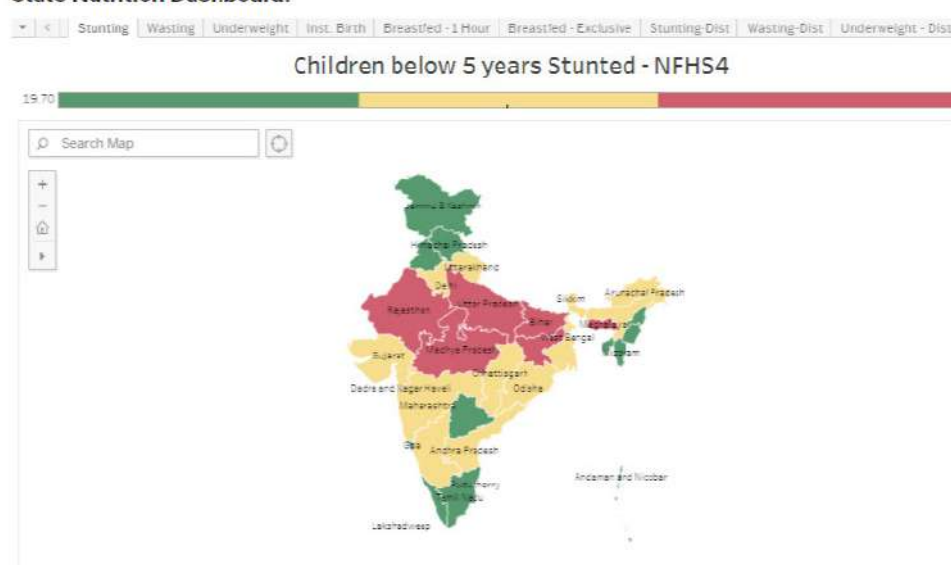
- ▶ Two workshops have been organized, one on 10 July 2020 under the chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary, and another on 17 August 2020 under Director General, DMEO, to facilitate and prepare data/information for each of the indices. Nodal officers have been directed to expeditiously prepare data/information in close coordination with the concerned Line Ministry/Department.
- ▶ DMEO is also working with NIC and National Informatics Centre Services Inc. for the development of a dashboard to enable the monitoring of the indices and reforms. DMEO is also coordinating activities of the nodal Ministries/Departments in obtaining the necessary information on the indices and reforms required for configuration of the dashboard.

Nutrition

NITI Aayog has developed a nutrition dashboard, which provides an overview of the overall situation related to malnutrition in India by intuitively comparing the performance of various States with the national average, based on the National Family Health Surveys.

The dashboard also provides a deeper analysis of the many Districts of a particular State, by providing information on various nutritional child health parameters, starting since pregnancy. Comparison of various input and output parameters across 10 years (between NFHS 3 and 4) is made as part of the monitoring dashboard, highlighting States that have shown the maximum improvement. The various aspects linked to the nutrition outcome for a particular District are presented in a colour-coded chart and shared with the District Collectors.

State Nutrition Dashboard:



<https://niti.gov.in/content/nutrition-charts>

SDG India Index

The dashboard for the index is being revamped for the SDG India Index 2020–21. The dashboard hosts state-of-the-art visualization and analytic tools for data at the national, State and UT levels to analyse the performance of SDGs. The dashboard benefits Governments, think tanks, the civil society and academia in carving out useful insights, which the States and Union Territories can utilize for faster progress under the SDG framework.

The index is designed to function as a tool for focused policy dialogue, formulation, and implementation. It also highlights crucial gaps related to monitoring SDGs and the need for improving statistical systems at the national, State and Union Territory levels.



<http://sdgindiaindex.niti.gov.in/>

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICES

Composite Water Management Index

Work is underway on the third round of the index. Along with the third edition, NITI Aayog will also launch a new and comprehensive dashboard, with District-wise data in the water sector. A training session on the new dashboard was conducted on 17 November 2020 for all State nodal officers who will update the data on the portal.

District Hospital Index

Despite the critical role of District hospitals in providing inclusive secondary-level healthcare services and the generous funds allocated to them under the National Health Mission, there is no comprehensive system to assess their performance based on their outcomes. Therefore, as per a framework designed by a working group, comprising Joint Secretary (Policy) MoHFW; Adviser (Health) NITI Aayog; Principal Secretary (Health and ME) (Punjab); and WHO Representative to India, NITI Aayog undertook the exercise of tracking the performance of District hospitals based on outcomes. The National Accreditation Board of Hospitals–Quality Council of India (NABH-QCI) was selected for data validation through a competitive bidding process. The draft report is under compilation.

Export Preparedness Index

The first-ever Export Preparedness Index (EPI), launched in August 2020, and developed by NITI Aayog in partnership with the Institute for Competitiveness, ranks all States and Union Territories based on their export readiness and performance. EPI 2020 is based on four pillars: export policy; business environment; export infrastructure; and export performance. The major objectives of EPI are:

- ▶ Examining export preparedness and performance of Indian States
- ▶ Identification of challenges and opportunities at State level
- ▶ Enhancing the effectiveness of Government policies
- ▶ Encouraging a facilitative regulatory framework

EPI can be used by States and UTs to benchmark their performance against their peers and analyse the potential challenges to develop better policy mechanisms to foster export-led growth at the sub-national level. The index will also provide analytical inputs to States and UTs to improve their understanding of future export opportunities.





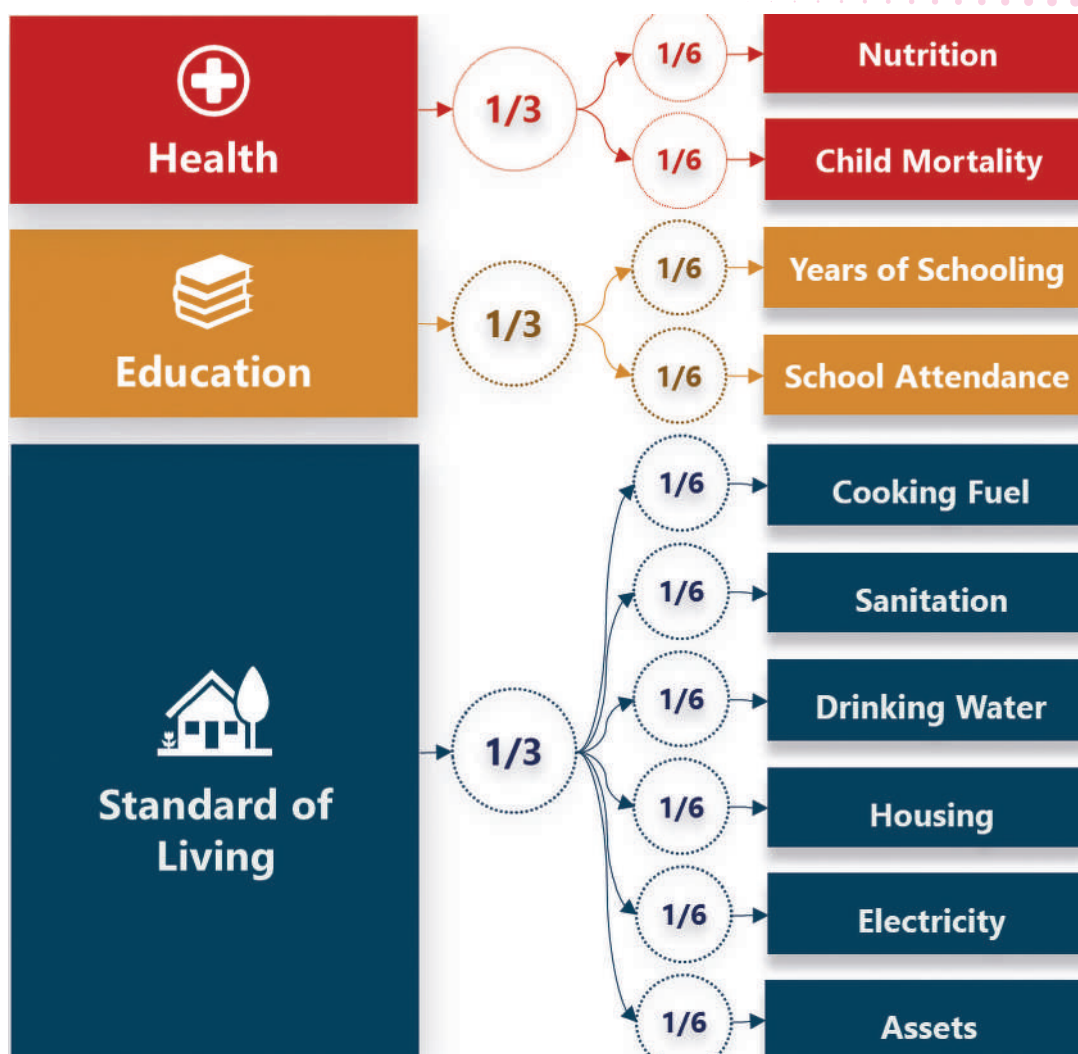
Launch of Export Preparedness Index

Multidimensional Poverty Index

The global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is an international measure of acute multidimensional poverty, covering over 100 developing countries. It was first developed in 2010 by Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and UNDP for inclusion in UNDP's flagship Human Development Report in 2010. Since 2018, the global MPI provides guidance for the implementation and monitoring of SDG 1, which aims to 'end poverty in all its forms everywhere'. Although often defined according to income, poverty can also be defined in terms of the deprivations people face in their daily lives. The global MPI scrutinizes a person's deprivations over 10 indicators across the three dimensions of health, education and standard of living. It offers a high-resolution lens to identify those who are poor and the extent to which they are poor. The three dimensions and the 10 indicators have been illustrated in Indicators and Weights of MPI.

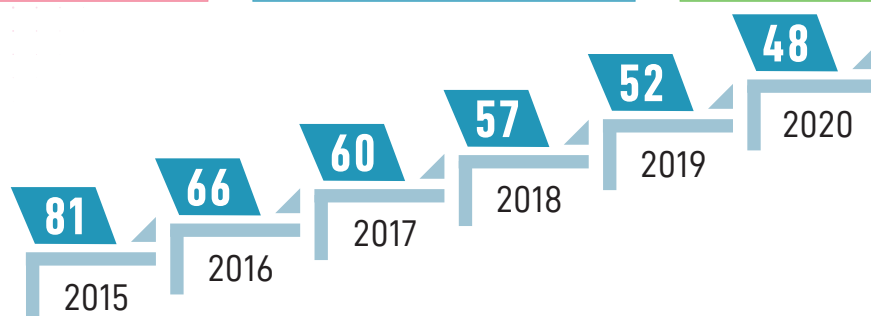
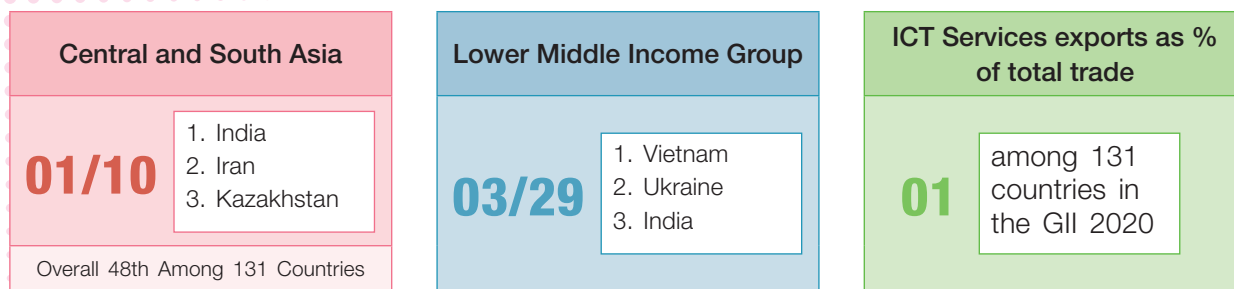
NITI Aayog has been assigned the nodal responsibility for the global MPI in India. As part of this mandate, NITI Aayog is responsible for monitoring progress, reviewing States' and Union Territories' rankings and performance, preparing reform action plans, and constructing an indigenized national MPI in collaboration with the publishing agencies, OPHI and UNDP. An indigenized national MPI, which will include national priorities that are not present in the original MPI framework, will provide opportunities to the Central and State Governments to understand multiple factors that are hindering growth and assist them in making interventions more effective, impactful and durable.

The inter-ministerial Multidimensional Poverty Index Coordination Committee (MPICC) was constituted by NITI Aayog for the purpose of developing reform action plans to address the pressing challenges of multidimensional poverty in the States and Union Territories. The MPICC was also responsible for the selection of indicators for the national MPI measure.



Global Innovation Index

NITI Aayog has been continuously working towards improving India's ranking in the global indices, including the Global Innovation Index. The science and technology vertical is the nodal department in NITI with respect to improving India's ranking in the Global Innovation Index. The vertical has been in touch with the publishing agency World Intellectual Property Organization as well as Line Ministries to address gaps in the availability of reliable data. NITI Aayog is also working proactively towards bringing policy interventions that could leverage India's underlying potential. Due to NITI Aayog's sustained efforts, India improved its global position from the 52nd position in 2019 to the 48th position in 2020. The S&T vertical is constantly in touch with top-ranking countries such as Switzerland and Sweden in the Global Innovation Index to understand their best practices for improving India's ranking in the index. Improvement in India's ranking in the Global Innovation Index since 2015 has been show below:



India in Global Innovation Index

India Innovation Index

The India Innovation Index is released by NITI Aayog, and the Institute for Competitiveness as knowledge partner, every year. The index attempts to create an extensive framework for the continuous evaluation of the innovation environment in all States and Union Territories; it ranks them based on their scores:

- ▶ NITI Aayog released the second edition on 20 January 2021.
- ▶ NITI Aayog is also handholding States and Union Territories in improving their ranking in the index, which will subsequently result in improvement of India's ranking in the Global Innovation Index.



Launch of India Innovation Index 2020

School Education Quality Index (SEQI)

NITI Aayog had successfully released SEQI in September 2019. Now, as per the inputs received from various State Governments, the SEQI indicators will be revisited/ revised in consultation with all stakeholders, and some new indicators will be prepared. The next version of SEQI will be released after the availability of the National Achievement Survey 2021 data.

SDG India Index

Given the federal structure of the country, and the division of powers and responsibilities between the Central and State Governments as per the Constitution, for the SDGs to be achieved at the national level, the States must play a leading role. Therefore, the approach of cooperative and competitive federalism has resulted in the concept of the SDG India Index, which is the world's first Government-led sub-national measure of SDG progress. It measures the progress of all States and Union Territories in their journey towards achieving the SDGs. The first edition of the index was launched in December 2018; the second came out on 30 December 2019; and the third edition will soon be launched. A dashboard has been developed for the index, with interactive visualization, which is in the public domain. The dashboard is presently being upgraded with multiple new features and interactive user elements to further increase its utility.

The index adopts a methodology in which the status on each SDG, and the performance of every State and Union Territory, and that of the country, are measured on a scale of 0 to 100, where 100 implies achieving the target and 0 indicates the worst performance.

While the 2018 edition of the index covered 13 SDGs, the 2019 edition covered all of them, with ranking on 16 SDGs and a qualitative assessment of Goal 17. While the 2018 edition used 62 indicators, the 2019 edition included 100 indicators. The 2020 version of the index will include a greater number of indicators to improve the coverage of SDG targets.

State Energy Index

NITI Aayog is working on a State Energy Index to assess the performance of States based on indicators covering the discoms' viability and competition, access, affordability and reliability of energy, clean energy initiatives, energy efficiency, and new initiatives. The tool will further improve States' performance to efficiently manage their energy resources.

State Health Index

NITI Aayog, in collaboration with MoHFW and with technical assistance from the World Bank, has been spearheading the health index initiative since 2017 to measure the annual performance of States and Union Territories on a variety of indicators: health outcomes, governance and processes. The index aims to nudge States towards transformative action in the health sector. NITI Aayog is committed to establishing the health index as an annual systematic tool to focus the attention of the States/UTs on achieving better health outcomes. The index report for round two was released in June 2019; round three is in the final stage of release.



Cooperative Federalism

INTRODUCTION

NITI Aayog has been constituted to actualize the important goal of cooperative federalism and enable good governance in India.

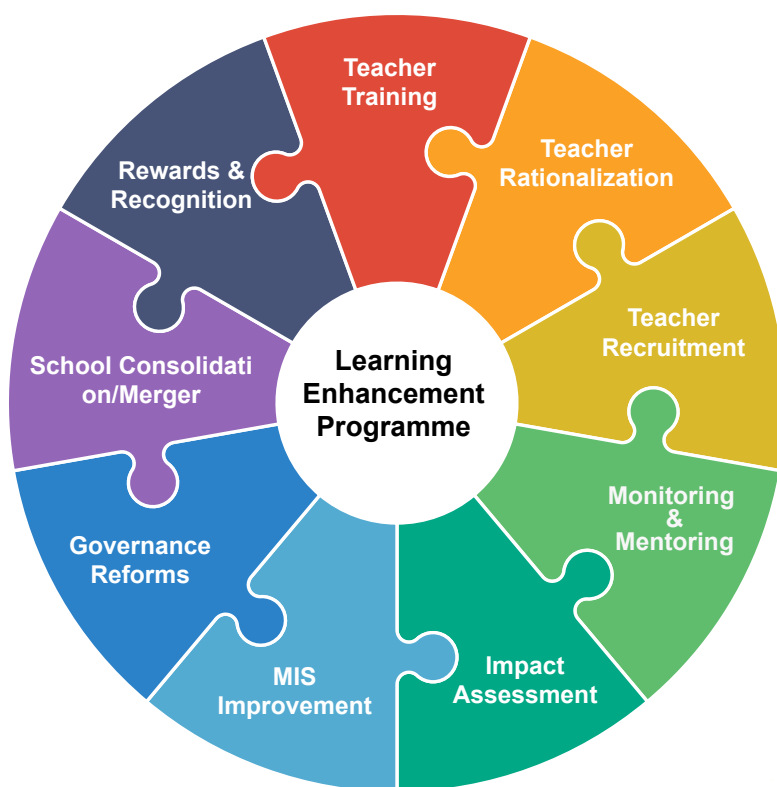
Two key features of cooperative federalism are (1) a joint focus on the National Development Agenda by the Centre and States and (2) advocacy of concerns and issues of States and Union Territories with Central Ministries.

NITI Aayog has also established models and programmes for the development of infrastructure and to reignite and establish public-private partnership, such as the Development Support Services to States and Union Territories, and the Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital programme.

Further, with the aim of correcting regional developmental imbalance, NITI Aayog has taken special steps for areas requiring special attention and support, such as those in the North-East, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands, and the Himalayas. NITI Aayog has constituted special forums to identify these areas' specific constraints and formulate special policies to ensure sustainable development while protecting the abundant natural resources in these regions.

SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR TRANSFORMING HUMAN CAPITAL IN EDUCATION

NITI Aayog launched the 'Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital (SATH)-Education' project in 2017, with three States, to initiate transformation in the education sector. The key objective of this project is to identify and build three future 'role model' States for this sector. After an elaborate selection process, Jharkhand, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh were selected through the challenge method.



Key Interventions

Under the project, a system-wide diagnosis was carried out in all the three States to identify the roadblocks in achieving grade-level competency for all students. Consequently, a three-year roadmap was prepared in collaboration with the respective State Governments. Targeted teaching at the level of the students, a tech-based monitoring system, data-backed review processes, customized teacher training and mentoring support, etc., were few of the interventions that led to considerable improvement in all the three States. Project SATH-E has achieved success in terms of access, equity and quality in education, with a focus on out-of-school children, dropouts and learning outcomes. In three years, SATH-E impacted 2.3 crore students and 4.5 lakh teachers in about 2.3 lakh Government schools of the three States. Phase-I of the project was completed in May 2020.



The education system in Government schools across the Aspirational Districts of Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Jharkhand has been streamlined and made more outcome-oriented, as a result of the SATH-E initiative

Key Achievements

- ▶ Learning enhancement programme/remedial teaching with workbook support for approximately 2.3 crore students implemented successfully under the project.
- ▶ In Madhya Pradesh, 30% of the students moved from lower-level foundational literacy, numeracy learning cohorts to the highest learning level for grades 3–8 in two years of the 'Dakshta Unnayan' learning enhancement programme.
- ▶ In Odisha, average improvement of 10–15% was observed in learning outcomes due to the 'Ujjwal-Utthan' learning enhancement programme.

- ▶ In Jharkhand, 12% improvement across most competencies was recorded through the 'Gyan Setu' learning enhancement programme.
- ▶ These States have also shown strong momentum in the improvement of the education indicator under ADP. The Aspirational Districts under Project SATH-E have consistently topped delta rankings in the education sector.
- ▶ As many as 35,000 same campus schools are being consolidated into 15,000 units under the 'Ek Parisar Ek Shala' initiative in Madhya Pradesh, 4600 sub-scale schools are being reorganized/merged/consolidated in Jharkhand, and 2000 sub-scale/same campus schools have been merged/consolidated in Odisha.
- ▶ Under the teacher rationalization intervention, 8000 teachers in Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand each have been rationalized.
- ▶ Multiple rounds of teacher training have been done under the project. Need assessments for teachers have also been implemented successfully.

Digi-SATH

During the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, Project SATH successfully transformed itself into the Digital-SATH initiative. Some key programmes that successfully helped in minimizing and bridging learning gaps during the pandemic have been mentioned below:

- ▶ Digital learning enhancement programme through over 50,000 WhatsApp groups and 'Hamara Ghar, Hamara Vidyalaya' initiative of Madhya Pradesh.
- ▶ Through its initiative 'Hamara Door-Darshan Hamara Vidyalaya', Jharkhand has been providing four hours of dedicated educational TV content for school students.
- ▶ Online learning for more than 8 lakh students through 30,000 WhatsApp groups in Jharkhand.
- ▶ One hundred percent textbook distribution to children at their doorsteps across the State of Odisha.
- ▶ Launching a syllabi-based e-learning app, 'Madhu', in Odia.
- ▶ Energized textbooks (classes 1–10) providing QR codes to each chapter uploaded on DIKSHA portal.
- ▶ Launching of 'Odisha Shiksha Sanjog', a digital learning programme through WhatsApp groups, to engage students in teaching-learning activities during the lockdown, which benefitted 33% of students in classes 1–8 across Odisha.



Phase-II of Project SATH-E

NITI Aayog has given concurrence for the extension of project SATH-E for two more years, based on the request received from all three partner State Governments. Phase-II of the project will likely be initiated in January 2021.

Report on Systemic Transformation of School Education: The SATH-E Experience

NITI Aayog will soon release a report on the learnings from the SATH-E experience in the form of some underlying fundamental principles, which are an inseparable part of a highly effective education system. The report will have two parts:

1. Principles and interventions for systemic transformation of school education
2. Twelve implementation toolkits

DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

NITI Aayog has been implementing a structured initiative for Development Support Services for States (DSSS) for infrastructure projects. DSSS aims to achieve transformational and sustained delivery of infrastructure projects with state-of-the-art capacity disseminated at all levels of governance. The key objective behind the initiative is creating Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and rebooting infrastructure project delivery models so that a sustainable infrastructure creation cycle can be established.

Most projects under the initiative have entered Phase-III, in which NITI Aayog, with the support of external consultants, assists the States in transaction structuring, strategy and bid-process management.

Currently, four projects are underway:

- ▶ Integrated Solid Waste Management in Roorkee cluster, Uttarakhand;
- ▶ Integrated Micro Irrigation, Haryana;
- ▶ Convention Centre, Uttarakhand; and
- ▶ Development of Smart Multi-Utility for Bhubaneswar Town Centre District, Odisha.

Further, the project preparation and planning, including pre-feasibility assessment, are underway for the following six projects:

- ▶ Aizawl cable car project, Mizoram;
- ▶ Gangtok cable car project, Sikkim;
- ▶ Preparation of vision document and identification of specific projects for the development of the Union Territory of Ladakh;
- ▶ Passenger cable car project for Itanagar-Naharlagun, Arunachal Pradesh;
- ▶ Leh 100 MW solar power project, Ladakh; and
- ▶ Cable car transport system in Guwahati, Assam.

NITI FORUM FOR NORTH-EAST

The NITI Forum for North-East was set up in February 2018 to address various challenges in the region and recommend requisite interventions to achieve sustainable economic growth. The forum is chaired by Shri Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Development of North-Eastern Region, and Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog. The first meeting was held on 10 April 2018 in Agartala, Tripura.

The second meeting was held in December 2018 in Guwahati, Assam. The focus areas identified were bamboo, dairy, pisciculture, tea, and tourism. These were discussed in five parallel sessions involving experts from Central and State Governments, academia and industry. To push the five sectors identified by the forum, action points were discussed by experts, and Line Ministries were asked to act on specific points. All the concerned Ministries were directed to prepare a roadmap for the implementation of the recommendations that emerged in the second meeting; they are being monitored.

Further, to push forward the implementation of the recommendations of the forum, a joint working group was constituted by NITI Aayog in September 2020 under the chairmanship of Special Secretary, Ministry of Development of North-Eastern Region. During the first meeting of the group, held on 18 September 2020, the Line Ministries were requested to put in more efforts to develop and promote the five focus areas as recommended.

Evaluating Proposals for Feasibility Study of Cable Cars in Gangtok and Aizawl

The development of cable cars as public transport in these two cities is to be done with support from the Centre and State Governments. Ernst and Young, LLP, has been engaged as a partner to conduct the study under DSSS. A meeting was held to review the progress of the projects on 26 August 2020 under the chairmanship of CEO, NITI Aayog.



Tourists enjoy a ropeway ride over Gangtok city during sunset

Subansiri Project

The North-East division has worked on rejuvenating the Subansiri HEP project. The matter was followed on a regular basis with the concerned authorities. As a result of this, and subsequent clearance from National Green Tribunal (NGT), the Assam Government signed an MoU with NHPC. The Arunachal Pradesh Government also signed a power purchase agreement with NHPC. Moreover, the Assam Government constituted a taskforce at the State level and another at a lower level. Consequently, work has begun on priority. In a meeting held on 24 August 2019, under Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, concerned authorities were instructed to complete the work related to this project within two and a half years.

Sivok-Rangpo and Agartala-Akhaura Rail Projects

These two rail projects are of national and strategic importance. The State Governments and concerned authorities have been instructed to expedite the implementation of these projects. Also, NITI Aayog has coordinated with all stakeholders in minimizing interstate and inter-ministerial issues faced in both these projects.

Special Plan Assistance

During 2020–21, Rs 219.15 crore was given to the Nagaland Government for completion of projects under Special Plan Assistance, based on NITI's recommendation.

HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF ISLANDS

NITI Aayog has been entrusted to ensure the holistic development of Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands.

A total of nine islands, four in Andaman and five in Lakshadweep, were identified for holistic development in the first phase. To replicate the success of the first phase, 11 more sites/islands in Andaman and Nicobar and five in Lakshadweep were selected for the second phase.

Another package for the Great Nicobar Island was recently launched.



NITI has taken special steps to ensure holistic development of the Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands

Promoting Private Investment

- ▶ Exemplary tourism projects, worth Rs 1500 crore investment, including island resorts, water villas (India's first), and luxury tents and tree houses, have been planned under the PPP mode. Bids are at the final stage of completion.
- ▶ To promote ease-of-doing business, the first-of-its-kind, fast-track regulatory clearance process was adopted, facilitating coastal regulation zone, environment, forest, and other clearances to developers upfront and along with the project award.

Enabling Connectivity

- ▶ The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are now digitally connected through submarine optical fibre cables with mainland India, facilitating the growth of information technology.
- ▶ Expansion of an international airport in Port Blair is nearing completion and will soon be able to offer international services. The proposed airports in the Great Nicobar Island of Andaman and Nicobar and Minicoy Island of Lakshadweep would further catalyse the development of the region.
- ▶ A joint-user airport has been constructed in Diglipur, North Andaman, and is ready for operation. As many as four islands were identified for seaplane operations in Andaman under UDAN-III, while a pan-island seaplane operation bid was floated by the Lakshadweep UT administration.
- ▶ Double-laning of the Andaman Trunk Road, NH 4 (stretching across 300 km), is near completion and will strengthen inter-island connectivity.

Developing Great Nicobar Island

- ▶ A holistic development plan is under preparation for the Great Nicobar Island. This is crucial for leveraging India's strategic presence in the busy international shipping line, Strait of Malacca.
- ▶ Techno-economic feasibility studies for a trans-shipment terminal and international airport to be undertaken.
- ▶ Environmental Impact Assessment studies are being conducted for freeing up more land on the island through the diversion of forest and de-reservation of tribal areas.

Responsible Development of Islands

- ▶ A holistic development plan was prepared, focusing on the creation of jobs for islanders through tourism promotion and sustainable extraction and processing of local resources such as seafood and coconut products.
- ▶ Scientific carrying capacity studies were conducted for all identified islands to define the limits for tourism development.
- ▶ The master plan also succeeded in resolving the long pending land rights issues of Pandaram land in Lakshadweep, opening wider avenues for tourism and infrastructure development in the islands.

- ▶ Taking forward the responsible island development flag, recently the World's first sea cucumber-protected area, and first marine birds-conservation reserve of the country were declared in the Lakshadweep Islands.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIAN HIMALAYAN REGION



NITI has constituted several working groups to ensure sustainable development in the Indian Himalayan Region

National Workshop on Spring Revival

A national workshop on spring revival will be organized in January 2021 to advance NITI Aayog's work on the development of the Indian Himalayan region.

Central Ministries, State Government agencies, research institutions, NGOs, and other stakeholders will be part of the workshop. It will provide a nationwide platform for sharing best practices on the science, governance, and field-work aspects of spring revival. The workshop will conclude with a roundtable discussion on the way ahead.

Study on Five Thematic Areas by Indian Himalayan Central University Consortium (IHCUC)

The IHCUC has started conducting five studies on the following thematic areas:

- ▶ Enumeration and valuation of the economic impact of female labour in the hills
- ▶ Agroecology in the Himalayan States, with special emphasis on marketing
- ▶ Development of eco-friendly and cost-effective tourism in the hills
- ▶ Opportunities of livelihood to check migration from the hills
- ▶ Water conservation and harvesting strategies

- ▶ The funds for the studies have been sanctioned by MoE and UGC. The studies are for a year and are expected to be completed in 2021. The natural resources and environment (NRE) vertical is constantly reviewing the progress in every thematic area.

Miscellaneous

Evaluation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes

The vertical is assisting DMEO in the preparation of a report on the evaluation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

Appraisal of Project Proposals

The following proposals were examined, and comments submitted to the concerned Ministries/Departments/Agencies:

1. The Preliminary Project Proposal on Rajasthan Forestry and Biodiversity Development: This project is aimed at the conservation of biological diversity and enhancement of deciduous forest resources in the eastern part of Rajasthan for combating climate change through community empowerment.
2. The Preliminary Project Proposal on Climate Adaptation and Finance in Rural India: The objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of NABARD to mobilize climate finance for needs-driven, gender-responsive climate adaptation-related measures.
3. A Preliminary Project Proposal Report, 'Scheme for Augmentation of Returns through High-Value Products and Key Interventions in Forests' (or Mission 'SARTHAK'), with an estimated cost Rs 1630.05 crore, to develop high-value forest products for creating a sustained flow of goods and services from forests in Tripura.
4. A Preliminary Project Proposal Report, 'Adaptive Forest Management for Water Security', to safeguard livelihoods, with an estimated cost of Rs 1650.62 crore, to improve water availability from forested areas in Himachal Pradesh.

Appraisal

A draft EFC memo for the establishment of a new National Museum of Natural History ('Panchjanya'), with an estimated cost of Rs 827.96 crore, submitted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) was examined, and comments sent to the Ministry.

Membership of Committees

Adviser, NRE vertical, has been nominated by NITI Aayog as the member of the Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and adjoining areas.

Specialist, Climate Change, has been nominated by NITI Aayog as the member of the inter-ministerial committee on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), constituted by MoEFCC to review the progress of ongoing schemes on land restoration to meet the country's LDN target.

Adviser (NRE) has been nominated by NITI Aayog as a member of the apex committee for implementation of the Paris Agreement.

SDG LOCALIZATION

Localization of SDGs is crucial to any strategy aimed at achieving the goals under the 2030 agenda. Essentially, localizing SDGs involves the process of understanding, adapting, planning, implementing, and monitoring the SDGs from national to local levels by relevant institutions.

Therefore, it begins with setting the national as well as the sub-national context of the 2030 agenda and moving forward to adapting the goals and targets, identifying indicators, designing the local means and structures of implementation and creating monitoring frameworks from national to local levels. In terms of engagement and collaboration with institutions, it is consequential how the Centre, State and local Governments work together to achieve the SDGs at the national level; and how SDGs provide a framework for sub-national and local policy, planning and action for the realization of the SDG targets at local levels.

Under the Seventh Schedule, the State List gives almost exclusive power to States with respect to 61 items, which include public health, education, agriculture, water, transport, communication, public order, local government, etc. This means that the States have the power and function to set up and execute policies in relation to almost all SDGs and their associated targets. It is the States who are institutionally empowered and positioned to achieve the SDGs with the support of the Central Government and allied institutions. Hence, the States are the key actors in the process of localization of SDGs with the Central Government playing an enabling role.

Therefore, NITI Aayog is naturally positioned to promote and facilitate the implementation of the multi-sectoral and poly-dimensional 2030 agenda for sustainable development in coordination with Central Ministries, State Governments and other stakeholders. As a quintessential federal institution, NITI Aayog progressively devised a strategy for the implementation of SDGs, which has been firmly ensconced in a participatory and bottom-up approach.

States and UTs have created discrete institutional structures for the implementation of SDGs in their own specific contexts. All States and UTs have identified and tasked nodal departments for the implementation of SDGs. Departments dealing with planning and finance have been given this nodal responsibility. Several States have also created nodal mechanisms within every department and at the District levels to make coordination, convergence and data management more precise and predictable.



Further, given that the SDGs are highly inter-linked, and implementation and assessment of results often need multi-sectoral focus, States have constituted working groups for each of the SDGs, headed by the senior-most officer of the nodal department. The groups include designated officers and resource persons from all concerned contributing departments.

High-level committees have been established at the State level to provide continuous guidance, oversee implementation and monitoring, and put in place mechanisms for ensuring coordinated action on SDGs. These committees are usually chaired by the Chief Secretary of the State, with all departmental heads as members. In some States, these committees are headed by the Chief Minister, which lends more thrust to the SDG reviews. Meetings of these high-level committees are held at high frequency (at least once a quarter), which further strengthens their catalytic efficiency. The fact that States and UTs are increasingly adopting such a structure, testifies to its effectiveness.

Some States have also created professional units on SDGs in the shape of an SDG cell. Key activities of the SDG cells/teams include:

- ▶ Preparing knowledge products and progress reports
- ▶ Organizing capacity-building programmes
- ▶ Providing inputs as required from time to time
- ▶ Playing a support-oriented role in interventions on SDGs



SDG localization at sub-national level

As many as six States (Assam, Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, and Haryana) have matured renditions of such units with full-fledged centres of excellence in collaboration with support organizations like UNDP, which have a wider outreach and mandate.

Workshops with State Governments

Workshops were conducted for senior State Government officials on accelerating the pace of SDG implementation and localization efforts in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Meghalaya, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, as well as for other States in the North-East. The workshops revolved around the creation and upgradation of the State indicator frameworks, statistical capacity augmentation, capacity assessment, and strategic guidance for the implementation of the SDGs.

In Meghalaya, the Chief Minister was briefed on the various State-specific actions identified to accelerate the progress of SDG implementation, while in Gujarat and Chhattisgarh, the Chief Secretaries were briefed on the same.



SDG team presenting a copy of the Voluntary National Review 2020 report to Meghalaya CM Conrad Sangma

North-East Conclave on SDGs

The North-East Sustainable Development Goals Conclave 2020 commenced on 24 February at the Assam Administrative Staff College, Guwahati, with the goal of identifying solutions as well as accelerators for the implementation of SDGs in the North-Eastern region. Organized by NITI Aayog, in partnership with the North-Eastern Council, Government of Assam, and Tata Trusts, the conclave was supported by UNDP and RIS.

The three-day event, from 24–26 February 2020, hinged on the premise of ‘Partnership, Cooperation and Development of North-Eastern States’, saw representations from the highest offices of all the State Governments of the North-East, Central Ministries, civil society organizations, academia, international development organizations and think tanks active in the North-Eastern region.



VC's address at NE Conclave

One of the key outcomes of the conclave was the release of the State Indicator Frameworks of all the North-Eastern States. Another key highlight was the release of reports on challenges, prospects and SDG best practices. The other reports released were: 'North-East and SDGs' by RIS and Tata Trusts; 'Stories of Change' by Tata Trusts; and 'Best Practices Portfolio on North-East' by UNDP.



CEO's address at NE Conclave



Think-Tank Activities

INTRODUCTION

In 2020–21, NITI Aayog undertook significant steps towards mainstreaming technology for achieving the development goals of the Government. It actively collaborated with the private sector to develop cutting-edge products to help the country address grave challenges in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, apart from continuing to explore the many economic and social potential of artificial intelligence and implementing various pilots to validate the technology of Blockchain and understand its usage in the Indian context.

This year also saw the development and continuance of several partnerships with various countries, international think tanks, and educational and policy research institutions to create a knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurial support system.

Finally, any discussion on NITI Aayog's contribution towards building a robust innovation ecosystem in the country is incomplete without the mention of its flagship programmes Atal Innovation Mission and Women Entrepreneurship Platform, as well as NILERD.

TECHNOLOGY COMMONS



Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addressing technology leaders at an interaction organized by NITI Aayog

In May 2020, the Hon'ble Prime Minister entrusted NITI Aayog with the task of working with the private sector to explore the role of technology in various areas. The idea was to identify and develop technological solutions that would enable the country to leapfrog in the post-Covid era, by effectively addressing major challenges in various priority sectors.

This led to the coming together of top Indian technology firms to develop seven cutting-edge products in the areas of virtual higher education; job matching; financial inclusion; DBT-based credit underwriting; logistics; contactless healthcare; and for boosting agricultural productivity.

The development of these products was reviewed by the Hon'ble Prime Minister over multiple rounds of discussions.

The products were firmly grounded in the principles of 'Technology Commons'. This entailed the development of the products in a pay-per-click model pro bono. The products have open architecture, with transparency, security, and ease of access as their core tenets. The data is stored in India and the products are available in not just English and Hindi but in all regional languages.

While some of these products have already been launched and are being scaled up, others are in final stages of completion.

ADOPTION OF FRONTIER TECHNOLOGIES

The National Strategy on Artificial Intelligence (NSAI) highlighted the economic and social potential of AI, with an expected boost to India's annual growth rate by 1.3% by 2035 and the possibility of large-scale adoption of AI in a number of social sectors.

Research and deployment of AI around the world have accelerated in the last decade, giving rise to the need for guidelines and principles to ensure the responsible use of this new technology.

Responsible Management of AI in India

The growth of AI has not been without challenges. Examples of bias, lack of clarity and privacy violations have raised concerns around the world and have inhibited the adoption and growth of AI in India. A two-part discussion paper on *Responsible AI for All* has been released for stakeholder consultation. The paper aims to create a foundation for an ecosystem of responsible AI in India and proposes principles as well as a mechanism to enforce the same. The paper is still at a draft stage and once the consultation process is complete, it would be reviewed internally before being released.

Responsible AI for Social Empowerment 2020



NITI Aayog and MeitY jointly organized a global summit on 'Responsible AI for Social Empowerment (RAISE) 2020'. The summit was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister and presented India's vision on AI. It focused on five distinct themes: responsible AI; data; collaboration; ecosystem development; and empowering a billion-plus. Global experts on AI and delegates participated in the summit and shared their insights into leveraging AI towards the betterment of the larger global population.

RAISE 2020 brought together different nationalities and stakeholders. The summit was attended by close to 80,000 people. Its deliberations will be informing India's national AI programme.

AI Pilots in Health Sector

NSAI has identified five key sectors that will benefit the most from AI. Consequently, NITI Aayog via its research scheme, Samavesh, and other channels initiated pilot projects that involve significant technological and research components primarily in healthcare, education and agriculture. Some of the currently operational projects have been mentioned below:

1. **Healthcare AI Catalyst Project:** The Health Artificial Intelligence Catalyst Programme, as part of the UK-India Tech Partnership, is anchored by NITI Aayog and sponsored by the UK Department for International Trade.

This programme makes use of the clinical decision support system that enables personalized care delivery at the patient and population levels. The technology supports the authoring and execution of clinical guidelines that are made computer-interpretable through declarative AI.

In the public health setting, this system can enable transformation of primary healthcare by implementing multiple guidelines of the National Health Programme to enable frontline health workers to deliver quality services.

The feasibility testing of the solution is being conducted in the Aspirational District of Bahraich, in collaboration with Lady Hardinge Medical College and Piramal Health Foundation.

2. **Diabetic Retinopathy:** NITI Aayog, in collaboration with PGIMER, is driving a pilot project on the integration of an AI platform for screening diabetic retinopathy (DR) in public health facilities.

The purpose of this pilot is to test an AI platform for screening and grading of diabetic retinopathy of adults. It aims to improve DR screening and health outcomes through appropriate referrals and treatment. The pilot study is scheduled to be conducted at primary health centres and community health centres in Mohali and at the District hospital in Moga, Punjab.

3. **Cancer Biobank:** NITI Aayog, in collaboration with Tata Memorial Centre/Tata Memorial Hospital, ACTREC, IIT Bombay, AIIMS (New Delhi), PGIMER (Chandigarh), Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre (a unit of Indraprastha Cancer Society, New Delhi), is driving the Cancer Imaging Biobank for head and neck, and lung cancers. The project is being funded by the Department of Biotechnology.

This project involves building a database of cancer-related radiology and pathology images, with a focus on major cancers prevalent in India. It would also include associated annotations and labels from clinical data, including but not restricted to, staging, diagnostic, treatment, response to therapy, genomic, outcomes, etc. The database will be open to researchers and substantially improve cancer diagnosis/prognosis, care and research.

The project also involves basic groundwork required in making the radiology and pathology images ready to be used in research studies, by involving deep neural networks, machine learning and other areas of AI.

Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture

The Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA) addresses key privacy and agency considerations with respect to data sharing. DEPA is designed to empower individuals by giving them control over their personal data, creating consent mechanisms that would allow individuals to choose with whom and when their data is shared. It will allow people to seamlessly and securely access data and share it with third parties. A draft document was released in the public domain for comments and inputs.

BLOCKCHAIN

NITI Aayog released the 'Blockchain: India Strategy' document in January 2020. The document presented blockchain's value in facilitating trust in Government and private sector interactions, established considerations when evaluating a blockchain use case for implementation, and highlighted possible challenges and lessons from NITI Aayog's experiences in blockchain implementation. The objective was to promote technology usage to improve ease-of-doing business, ease of governance, and ease of living.

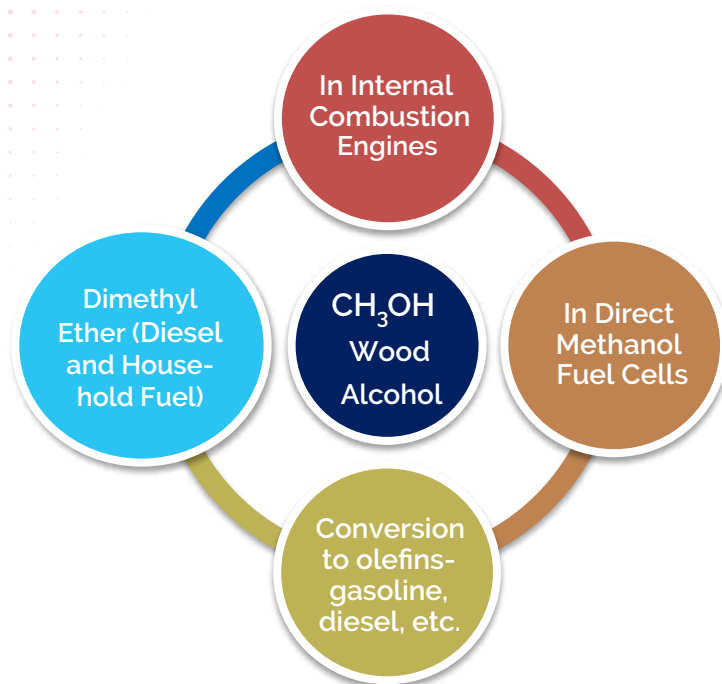
The following pilots were implemented to validate the technology and understand the challenges of usage of technology in the Indian context:

- ▶▶ **Supply Chain:** Usage of blockchain for 'track and trace' of drugs in the pharmaceutical supply chain.
- ▶▶ **Financial Reconciliation:** Usage of blockchain to improve claim verification and approval in fertilizer subsidy disbursement.
- ▶▶ **Document Verification:** Usage of blockchain for verification of university education certificates by recruiters and foreign universities.
- ▶▶ **Land Transfer:** Usage of blockchain for management of the land transfer process. Currently, steps are being taken to scale up some of these solutions.



METHANOL ECONOMY

The science and technology (S&T) vertical has been continuously working towards the adoption of a methanol economy in India. Methanol and dimethyl ether have emerged as substitutes for oil and natural gas across the world. The methanol economy will have a significant impact on the import substitution of crude oil for India and consequently reduce the carbon footprint.



Methanol Economy

So far:

- ▶ An apex committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of Member (S&T), NITI Aayog, which oversees the implementation of the methanol economy in the country.
- ▶ Based on the directions of this committee, an R&D team of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) prepared an M15 blend and studied the material compatibility and performance and durability tests of the blend.
- ▶ The Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) conducted a series of tests on emissions using M15 in two- and three-wheelers and passenger cars. In terms of efficiency and emissions, the performance was found to be better than that of pure gasoline.
- ▶ Based on these test results, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) notified the use of M15 as motor fuel and requested the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) to make suitable preparations for the distribution and dispensation of M15 blends for vehicular application.
- ▶ To take this initiative forward, a white paper on the implementation of the M15 programme was prepared by the S&T vertical and submitted to PMO for its intervention to start 15% blending of methanol in gasoline for transport application.

NILERD

The National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development (NILERD) seeks to further research, education, training, and consultancy in all aspects of human capital planning, human resource development, and monitoring and evaluation. Over the years it has evolved as a centre of excellence in the field of labour and development and gained worldwide recognition. In 2020–21, the institute expanded the scope of its research activities beyond labour economics to include development studies as well.

50th General Council Meeting of NILERD

Held on 31 August at NILERD's campus, the meeting was chaired by Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, and President, NILERD General Council, who released the report 'A Study of Socio-Economic and Working Conditions of Workers in Indian Gold Industry'. NITI Aayog Member Dr VK Saraswat; CEO Shri Amitabh Kant; Additional Secretary Dr K Rajeswara Rao; Senior Adviser and NILERD Director General Dr Yogesh Suri; IIPA Director Shri SN Tripathi; RIS Director General Dr Sachin Chaturvedi; representatives from Central Ministries, States and ICSSR were also present.



'A Study of Socio-Economic and Working Conditions of Workers in Indian Gold Industry' release during NILERD's 50th General Council Meeting

99th Executive Council Meeting of NILERD

Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, chaired the 99th meeting of the Executive Council on 5 June 2020. Representatives from the Ministries of Labour and Employment and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship were present in the meeting.

Training Programmes

The Covid-19 crisis severely impacted the training activities of the institute. Two programmes, one, a certificate course in monitoring and evaluation (which was to be conducted from 18 March–9 May); and two, an international training programme in human capabilities (which was to be conducted from 25 March–21 April), were postponed due to the pandemic. This affected the training income of the institute. Efforts were made to focus more on research activities. Consequently, the institute was able to bag several research studies from various Government Departments. The institute has submitted two proposals for online e-ITEC courses to MEA on the Manpower Information System and monitoring and evaluation.

Research Studies and Reports

Study of Socio-Economic and Working Conditions of Workers in Indian Gold Industry, Awarded by NITI Aayog

This study looked at the quality of jobs, in terms of satisfaction, social security and economic benefits, working conditions, women's safety, family well-being, and challenges faced by the industry, and examined future growth and employment prospects. The report was released during the 50th General Council Meeting.

Higher Education Statistics and Public Information System Scheme, Sponsored by Ministry of Education

A study was undertaken to evaluate the process of implementation and functioning of this scheme at various levels and its effectiveness and/or usefulness from the point of view of all stakeholders and recommend suitable measures. The draft report has been submitted.

Enhancing Skill Development Infrastructure in North-Eastern States, Sponsored by Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

With the aim of evaluating the implementation status of this Central Sector Scheme, a research study is underway to develop insights into the reasons for the success and failure of the scheme design, institutional arrangements, human resource and political economy considerations. It will also identify remedial measures and suggest action plans for each State.

Assistance to Persons with Disabilities (PwD) for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/Appliances, Scheme for Scholarship for Students with Disabilities, and Budgetary Support to National Trust, Sponsored by Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (EPwD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE)

Research on these three schemes seeks to examine:

- ▶ the implementation process, including availability, adequacy and timelines of funds earmarked
- ▶ the capability of the implementing agencies
- ▶ how far the main objectives of the schemes have been achieved in assisting PwDs by promoting their social and physiological rehabilitation
- ▶ the system to prevent duplication of beneficiaries and suggest suitable measures, including IT-based solutions
- ▶ the linkage of the scheme with educational and economic empowerment

The studies will also suggest ways to spread awareness about the schemes and discover bottlenecks, if any, and recommend remedial measures.

Scheme for Implementation of Persons with Disabilities Act, Sponsored by D/o EPwD, MoSJE

This study seeks to assess the coverage of this scheme in all States and Union Territories, apart from achieving the above-mentioned objectives.

Support for Establishment/Modernization/Capacity Augmentation of Braille Presses, Sponsored by D/o EPwD, MoSJE

Apart from examining the above-mentioned issues, this evaluation study also seeks to assess the quality and durability of the machines provided under this MoSJE scheme, and determine the capability of the implementing agencies, modernization, and capacity-augmentation of Braille presses.

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana, Sponsored by MoSJE

A draft report has been submitted. The study examined the outcome of this scheme in improving the quality of life of senior citizens of the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category and assessed the quality of aids/appliances provided and the capability of the implementing agency, apart from monitoring and suggesting suitable improvements. The report also suggested ways of spreading awareness about the scheme and studying the alternative option of providing aids and appliances to beneficiaries.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Collaboration with Countries

Australia

A Statement of Intent (Sol) was signed between NITI Aayog and the Australian Treasury to share insights into key economic policy questions; undertake joint research projects on topics of mutual interest; exchange visits of suitable personnel for enhancing mutual understanding; and organize an annual economic policy dialogue. The inaugural dialogue between the two organizations was held on 30 April 2019. Both sides exchanged views on federalism and productivity reforms, managing technological disruption and opportunities for bilateral cooperation. They agreed to explore collaborations in frontier technologies, regulatory sandbox consultations, capacity building and conduct regular exchanges. Under the secondment programme, James Hunter, Senior Policy Analyst, Health and Disability Unit, Social Policy Division of Australian Treasury, joined NITI Aayog on 24 February 2020. He assisted NITI in the paper 'Towards Financial Inclusion in 2035' and presented his work on 'Australia: Economic Snapshot, Fiscal Transparency and Long-Term Projections' in March 2020.

China

NITI Aayog–Development Research Centre (DRC) Dialogue: The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between NITI Aayog and DRC was signed on 15 May 2015 to establish a dialogue to deliberate on issues aimed at promoting bilateral economic cooperation, by way of undertaking joint research and visits, workshops, and seminars to facilitate exchange of best practices between the two sides. So far, five dialogues have taken place and a joint study to identify opportunities for Chinese investment in India has been published.



India–China Strategic Economic Dialogue: The MoU between the Planning Commission and the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) was signed in December 2010. Through this MoU, the India–China Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED) was established to discuss challenges and explore possibilities of cooperation between sectors that are strategically important for economic growth of the two countries. So far, six SEDs have taken place.

Russia

India–Russian Far East and Arctic: An MoU between NITI Aayog and the Ministry for the Development of Russian Far East and Arctic was signed to boost the strategic partnership of India and Russia by strengthening cooperation in the spheres of trade, economics, and investment in these two regions. As per the MoU, both sides would prepare a programme for the development of the Russian Far East and Arctic region for 2020–25. The programme would form the basis for interaction between the regions to increase bilateral cooperation in the implementation of investment projects and to increase trade. Both sides would organize an annual business dialogue, with business representatives of both the countries. An inter-ministerial consultation for the same was held on 15 May 2020.

India–Russia Strategic Economic Dialogue: An MoU between NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Economic Development, Russia, was signed to create a platform for enabling partnerships, share experiences in the field of economic policy, organize regular interactions and cooperation between subjects of the Russian Federation and India. The cooperation between the two sides includes conducting and executing joint research projects, exchange of information and research works, visits of specialists, organization of seminars, conferences, and other meetings. So far, two dialogues have taken place and a new economic corridor from Chennai to Vladivostok and an industrial park in Russia by Srei India have been proposed.



Singapore

Via two MoUs, NITI Aayog and Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE) seeks to leverage Singapore's expertise in the areas of urban sector planning and development to facilitate urban rejuvenation in India at the Central and State levels. The following areas were identified for collaboration:

1. Urban Planning
2. Wastewater Management
3. Solid Waste Management
4. Public Financing

NITI Aayog and SCE also intend to work towards developing technical assistance to facilitate and make available to the Centre, States, and municipalities in India, the expertise of Singapore by way of consulting and advisory services in planning and structuring projects. So far, two phases have been launched, five workshops have been organized, and several periodical reports published.

Saudi Arabia

Under the India–Saudi Arabia strategic partnership, NITI Aayog engaged with the Saudi Centre for International Strategic Partnership to identify priority areas for strategic investment. Concerned Ministries and Departments identified key areas for discussion, and specific investment plans in both the countries were taken up.

Switzerland

As per the Sol signed between NITI Aayog and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the following are the objectives of the engagement:

1. Technical cooperation for supporting the Springshed Management Programme.
2. Developing a document of best practices on spring revival based on the experiences in the Indian Himalayan region and neighbouring countries.
3. Organizing half-yearly or annual workshops for sensitization and dissemination of knowledge on springshed management.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the International Water Management Institute are working on the best practices for the revival of springs.

Collaboration with International Agencies

Adobe

The partnership between AIM and Adobe strives to achieve the adoption of ATLs and digital-creativity skills module for teachers and mentors. Adobe will work closely with AIM to instil digital-creativity skills in all AIM beneficiaries: ATLs, Atal Incubation Centres, Atal Community Innovation Centres. On 14 April 2020, AIM and Adobe launched the ATL Tinker-from-Home module on 'creativity and digital skills' for ATL teachers. More than 3500 teachers participated and earned their educator certificates. Adobe also provides Spark Premium Licence to all ATL beneficiaries.

Alive and Thrive

This SoI signed between NITI Aayog and Alive and Thrive on 30 July 2019 seeks to strengthen the monitoring and supervision of the quality of public health and nutrition services during the first 1000 days of a child's life. The objective of this engagement is to provide critical insights into the strengths, operational challenges, and opportunities of the POSHAN Abhiyaan at two levels. First, at the District convergent committees under POSHAN Abhiyaan, led by District Magistrates, for improving the programme's performance. Second, at the national level to NITI Aayog to aid the programme's improvement and timely decision-making.

Bernard van Leer Foundation

Recognizing the importance of ECCD to enable every child to have a healthy start and achieve their full potential, NITI Aayog has collaborated with Bernard van Leer Foundation (BVLF) to provide technical inputs on surveys on early childhood care and education. BVLF will gather primary evidence related to young children and their caregivers during and post Covid-19. NITI Aayog is also in the process of collaborating with the Aga Khan Foundation and BVLF to pilot a unique model in the Aspirational Districts that will focus on the first 1000 days of a child's life, with an emphasis on responsive parenting.

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

NITI Aayog has formed a Behavioural Insights Unit (BIU) in collaboration with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, Ashoka University, to incorporate the science of behavioural insights into public policy formulation. The initial focus of BIU is to design behavioural interventions to improve maternal and child health and nutrition outcomes, particularly in the Aspirational Districts. The BIU team has developed interventions for the SeVA Project. These interventions focus on improving the compliance of antenatal check-ups of pregnant women and complementary feeding practices for children between 6–23 months.



AIM has collaborated with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for designing a first-of-its-kind AIM iCrest Incubation Training Programme. The model is unique as the entire delivery is remote, with extensive support of local experts and mentors. The programme has been one more step towards making Atal Incubation Centres and Established Incubation Centres truly #WorldClassIncubators. Extended to all these centres, this programme provides toolkits to the incubators to make their start-ups investible. The programme also provides access to comprehensive digital platforms, workshops, online sessions, and a toolkit ebook. AIM is also conducting a global best practices' study to provide greater insights in the e-book.

Decarbonizing Transport Initiative

On 24 June 2020, the International Transport Forum (ITF), OECD, and NITI Aayog jointly launched the Decarbonizing Transport in Emerging Economies project, which was inaugurated by Shri Young Tae Kim, Secretary General, ITF, and Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, in the presence of Shri DS Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). The ambitious, five-year project will help India develop a pathway towards a low-carbon transport system through the development of modelling tools and policy scenarios.

Dell

The partnership between AIM and Dell aims for inculcating skill development among students and teachers, adoption of Atal Tinkering Lab schools, identifying and scaling-up promising innovations, and organizing innovation events and competitions. As part of the Tinker-from-Home campaign, the ATL Game Development Platform, developed in collaboration with Dell Technologies and Learning Links Foundation, was launched online on 6 April 2020. This self-learning tool aims at transforming students from game players to game makers. The platform has garnered over 16,000 registrations from students across the nation to date. Dell and AIM launched the Student Entrepreneurship Programme for the top innovators of ATL Marathon to take their prototypes to a product level. The SEP 1.0 commenced in January 2019 and concluded in May 2020.

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

An Sol has been signed between NITI Aayog and GIZ to sensitize States on energy action plans and institutionalize the process for developing such plans.

FAO

An MoU was signed between NITI Aayog and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for monitoring and analysing food and agricultural policies to assess the impact of the Food Security Policy in Bihar and Chhattisgarh and Agricultural Marketing Policy (eNAM) in Haryana and Odisha. Various Line Ministries, administrative departments of the Government of India and State departments are involved.

Florence School of Regulation

The MoU between NITI Aayog and Florence School of Regulation, signed on 20 May 2019, aims to facilitate regular exchanges of sectoral information on regulation data, seminars, online events, workshops, and conferences on various issues related to infrastructure policy and regulation, visits and exchanges of researchers for studies and capacity-building activities, and any other form of cooperation as the parties may agree in writing.

IBM

The partnership between AIM and IBM targets at driving student innovator and entrepreneurship programmes, and developing a mentoring portal. The MoU between the two organizations was signed on 10 October 2016. The Unbox Tinkering Teacher Training Programme commenced in June 2018.

International Energy Agency

India 2020: Energy Policy Review: NITI Aayog, in consultation with International Energy Agency (IEA), carried out an in-depth review of India's energy policies. For this purpose, a team of experts comprising representatives from IEA and member countries visited India in January 2019 for discussions with concerned stakeholders on policies on power, coal, renewable energy, oil and gas, and the environment sector. Thereafter, a draft report was shared by IEA for comments from various stakeholders, which was reshared after incorporating the comments received during the first round. The final report was launched in January 2020 in the presence of all Energy Ministers, Shri Pralhad Joshi, Minister of Coal; Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas; Shri RK Singh, Minister of Steel; NITI Aayog Vice Chairperson and CEO; key Energy Secretaries; Ambassadors; and think tanks.



Launch of In-Depth Review of India's Energy Policies

Power System Transformation Workshops 2020-21

Maharashtra: NITI Aayog, the PRAYAS Energy Group and IEA, with the sponsorship of British High Commission, organized a 'Maharashtra Power System Transformation Workshop'. The workshop provided a platform for local and international experts to share ideas and identify key recommendations for power system planning, operation, and flexibility for a successful integration of renewable energy in Maharashtra.

Gujarat: IEA and NITI Aayog, in partnership with the Centre for Energy Regulation (CER), virtually organized the 'Gujarat Power System Transformation Workshop' on 7 October 2020, with international, national, and state stakeholders to discuss a variety of issues faced by the State Government.

Karnataka: IEA and NITI Aayog, in partnership with the Centre for Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP), virtually organized the 'Karnataka Power System Transformation Workshop' on 19 January 2021. International, national and state stakeholders discussed issues faced by the Karnataka Government, such as the strengthening of the transmission network, and brainstormed solutions.



Launch of IEA Sustainable Recovery Plan

In response to the Covid-19 crisis, IEA and NITI Aayog released the 'World Energy Outlook Special Report on Sustainable Recovery', which sets out a series of actions that can be taken over the next three years to revitalize economies and boost employment, while making energy systems cleaner and more resilient. The India series of the report was launched on 18 September 2020. Key dignitaries present were Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways, and Commerce and Industry; Dr Krishnamurthy V Subramanian, Chief Economic Adviser of India; Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog; and Dr Faith Birol, Executive Director, IEA.

Infineon

The Letter of Intent (LoI) between Atal Innovation Mission and Infineon aims to facilitate start-ups by advising them on possible themes, focus areas or use cases; mentoring them; hosting seminars or workshops with select incubation centres and their incubated start-ups on technical- or business-related topics; and inviting relevant incubated start-ups to join venture events or forums in which Infineon organizes or participates.

International Food Policy Research Institute

An SoI between NITI Aayog and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) was signed on 24 April 2018. The broad mandate was to aid the technical support unit constituted within the women and child division of NITI Aayog. Specific activities are to be decided from time to time based on mutual consultation and agreement. IFPRI is involved in assisting the preparation of the POSHAN Abhiyaan Monitoring Report. Three reports have been prepared in close collaboration with IFPRI.

NITI Aayog co-hosted a virtual event from 15–18 September 2020 on 'Delivering for Nutrition in India: Insights from Implementation Research'. Coinciding with the POSHAN Maah, this event had experts discussing abstracts on research studies. The selected studies primarily examined aspects such as food supplementation, growth monitoring and micronutrient supplementation, with a focus on the impact of crises, like the Covid-19 pandemic, on nutrition interventions.



Shri Alok Kumar, Former Adviser (Health and Nutrition) signed Sol with IFPRI in 2018

INQ

The Lol between NITI Aayog and iNQ aims to:

- ▶ Facilitate and assist in curating a series of ongoing innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem exchange programmes to support and enrich start-ups and scale-ups between Australia and India.
- ▶ Facilitate and establish exchange programmes and delegations between India and Australia involving CEOs, senior leadership, influencers and executives of innovation hubs to foster collaboration and help ecosystem partnership between countries.
- ▶ Facilitate and support the establishment of programmes for soft-landing and start-up/innovation launchpads between India and Australia.
- ▶ Support and facilitate global investment funding programmes.
- ▶ Create awareness and demonstrate value-addition to Indian and Australian start-ups and innovation ecosystems through the 'Make in India' programme.

The consortium of implementing partners includes Deutsche (GIZ) GmbH, International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT), World Resources Institute (WRI), International Transport Forum, Agora Verkehrswende (AGORA), Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT), and Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21).

Lego Education

The MoU signed between AIM and LEGO Education, on 3 October 2019, aims to inculcate skill development among students and teachers, adoption of ATL schools, identification and scaling-up of promising innovations, and organization of innovation events and competitions.

Monshaat

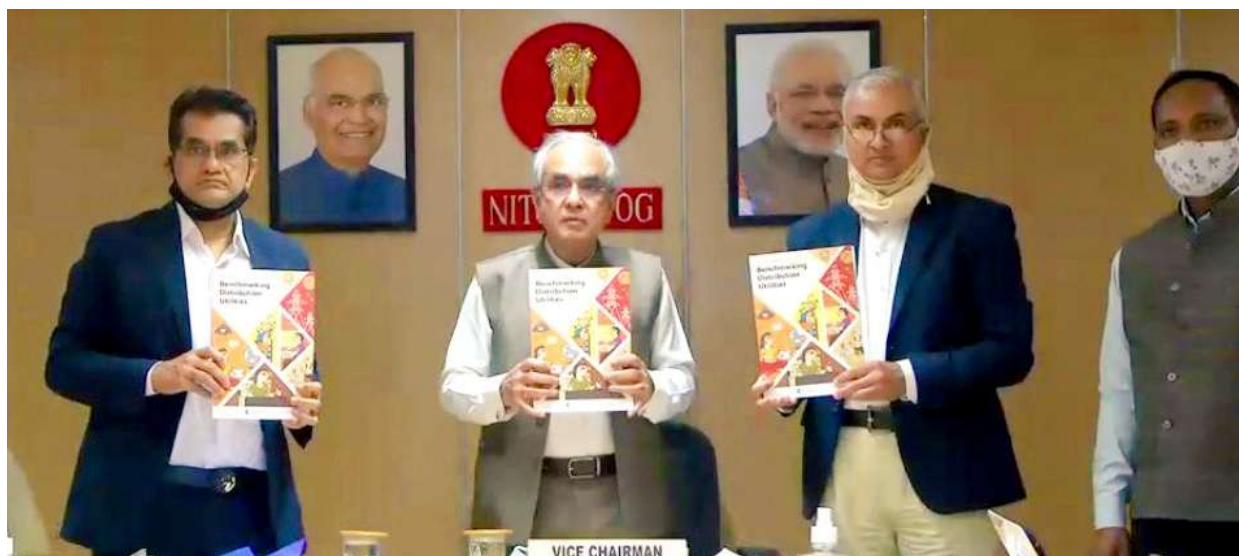
The Lol between NITI Aayog and Monshaat aims to:

- ▶ Exchange knowledge and experiences to improve institutional infrastructure and develop micro, small and medium enterprises in both countries.
- ▶ Exchange information on business opportunities associated with SMEs in both countries.
- ▶ Support the exchange of promotional activities for tradable opportunities.
- ▶ Support and develop the innovation, incubation, and start-up ecosystem between the countries, which includes suggesting start-up policies, implementing incubator, student exchange and start-up exchange programmes, and various other mechanisms.

Nationally Determined Contributions–Transport Initiative Asia (NDC–TIA)

NITI Aayog and the International Climate Initiative of the German Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety jointly launched the India component of the Nationally Determined Contributions-Transport Initiative for Asia on 27 August 2020. The India Component includes the establishment of a national multi-stakeholder dialogue platform for decarbonizing transport in India, strengthening GHG and transport modelling capacities backed by robust quantitative analysis, providing technical support on GHG emission-reduction measures, setting up dialogues on financing climate actions in transport, conducting studies for climate-friendly grid integration of electric mobility in the country, offering policy recommendations on EV demand and supply policies, evaluating business models through cost-benefit analyses, and so forth.

Rockefeller Foundation



NITI Aayog CEO, Vice Chairperson, Additional Secretary and Adviser (Energy) at the launch of the Report

NITI Aayog, Ministry of Power, Rockefeller Foundation USA, and Smart Power India launched the study report, 'Electricity Access in India and Benchmarking Distribution Utilities' in October 2020. The report is based on a primary survey aimed at capturing insights from both the demand as well as supply sides (discoms). The survey was conducted across 10 States

representing about 65% of the total rural population of India and with a sample size of more than 25,000, including households, agricultural and commercial enterprises, and institutions from rural and urban areas. The report covers an assessment of all the 25 distribution utilities across these States.

Rocky Mountain Institute

NITI Aayog in collaboration with Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) is examining the aspect of financial turnaround of select electricity distribution companies (discoms) in the States of Rajasthan and Haryana. The Lighthouse Discom Programme is designed to create replicable examples of discom pathways to financial stability. The programme will carry out a detailed study and the implementation of pilot projects, based on a process of sector mapping and needs assessment.

Sirius

The AIM-Sirius innovation bootcamp is a first-of-its-kind initiative, where high school students across two different countries, India and Russia, come together to innovate and identify solutions for global challenges. In 2020, 80 students, educators, mentors and teachers from India and Russia worked on eight focus areas of the post-Covid era.



Innovators from India and Russia during the AIM-Sirius Programme 2.0 at Sochi, Russia

UNDP

SDG: The MoU between NITI Aayog and UNDP seeks to partner on projects related to sustainable and equitable growth. Achim Steiner, Administrator, UNDP, on his first official visit to India met NITI Aayog Vice Chairperson Dr Rajiv Kumar and CEO Shri Amitabh Kant. Subsequently, a renewed partnership for fast-tracking global goals, transformation of Aspirational Districts and fostering innovations was initiated. Accordingly, UNDP has been extending technical support to NITI Aayog for the localization and integration of SDGs, transformation of Aspirational Districts and Atal Innovation Mission, to name a few.

A new technical partnership has been established between NITI Aayog and UNDP for the creation and subsequent monitoring of a national MPI measure. NITI Aayog will be also working closely with Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, the designer of MPI.

The development partnership will be for an initial period of three years (2020–23) focusing on specific outputs and activities. The ongoing partnership will be strengthened, and new activities will be taken up under broad objectives. The partnership will comprise extending experienced human resources and catalytic technical support to improve public service delivery and fast-tracking the development agenda.

Youth Co:Lab: AIM and UNDP have partnered to accelerate the steps required for meeting SDGs 2030. In 2019, AIM and UNDP created Youth Co:Lab in India, which has already been conducted in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region. Youth Co:Lab is an initiative that keeps the youth of the country at the centre of meeting SDGs, and asks them for innovative and disruptive solutions. Youth Co:Lab 1.0 was launched in October 2019 and garnered a lot of participation. In 2020–21, Youth Co:Lab was launched in an online mode, thereby increasing its reach. It provided young social entrepreneurs support in the form of networking, mentorship and financial aid. The country winners also got an opportunity to pitch in front of global impact investors, besides mentoring and support from UNDP APAC regional mentors.



UNICEF

NITI Aayog and UNICEF aim to build integrated social protection for India through micro-simulation of social-protection schemes implemented for different social groups. The study is being carried out by the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI), Cape Town, South Africa, a technical partner of UNICEF. EPRI has initiated secondary and field research. NITI Aayog's role is to provide technical support through an advisory group and technical group. The advisory group constituted under the chairmanship of Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, seeks to provide expert and independent views on the micro-simulation study from technical, contextual, and methodological perspectives and consists of members from six States, eight Central Ministries

and the World Bank, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, and three academic experts from LKYSPP, IEG, JNU. The technical group constituted under the chairmanship of Adviser (SJE) and Prof. Santosh Mehrotra, JNU, seeks to provide expert guidance to the study. The groups will also work as a standing forum to review the existing approach, strategies, policies and priorities of ongoing policies, programmes, and their implementation or any other issues related to social protection in India.

The partnership between Atal Innovation Mission and UNICEF, with a Memorandum of Understanding signed on 24 July 2019, aims to inculcate skill development among students and teachers, identifying and scaling-up promising innovations, and organizing innovation events and competitions. AIM and UNICEF, in association with MyGov as the technology partner, jointly organized the first Gandhian Challenge to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary on 2 October 2019. The challenge focused on creating solutions for problems faced by India and the world, using Gandhiji's principles. It garnered participation from over 4000 students across the country.

United Nations

NITI Aayog presented India's second Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the United Nations' High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development 2020. The HLPF is the foremost international platform for follow-up and review of progress on the 17 SDGs.

The India VNR 2020 report, titled 'Decade of Action: Taking SDGs from Global to Local', was released by NITI Aayog Vice Chairperson Dr Rajiv Kumar, Member (Health) Dr VK Paul, CEO Shri Amitabh Kant and Adviser Smt. Sanyukta Samaddar.

The VNRs presented by member states at the HLPF are a critical component of the review of progress and implementation of the 2030 agenda and the SDGs. The reviews are voluntary and state-led and aimed at facilitating the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned. The process of preparation of a country's VNR provides a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of various relevant stakeholders. NITI Aayog prepared and presented India's first VNR in 2017.



Vice Chairperson's address at HLPF 2020

In 2020–21, India's VNR undertook a paradigm shift in terms of embodying a 'whole-of-society' approach in letter and spirit. NITI Aayog engaged with sub-national and local Governments, civil society organizations, local communities, and the private sector during the VNR preparation process. As part of this process, NITI Aayog partnered with the UN in India and civil society organizations to curate a consultative process, which saw more than 50 national and sub-national consultations with over 1000 CSOs from fourteen population groups, including women, children, senior citizens, PwDs, and People Living with HIV, among others.



Stakeholder Consultations: Process

Process of Stakeholder Consultation for VNR: In line with the theme of 'Taking SDGs from Global to Local', the goal-wise account of progress on the SDGs has been emphasized with a range of diverse best practices and success stories of interventions from the States, especially the Aspirational Districts. The India VNR 2020 represents NITI Aayog's efforts in embodying the whole-of-society approach and its commitment towards the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

United States Agency for International Development

Under the US-India Strategic Energy Partnership, NITI Aayog and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) lead the Sustainable Growth pillar. Both USAID and NITI jointly launched the India Energy Modelling Forum on 2 July 2020. The India Energy Modelling Forum (IEMF) has two levels: one, a steering committee at the working level, and two, an inter-ministerial committee at the CEO level, which will provide direction to the steering group on key research areas. The steering committee will identify research topics and coordinate with relevant groups and oversee funding. The governing structure of IEMF has been finalized. The PRAYAS Energy Group has been nominated as the convener of the first steering committee for a period of two years. The first meeting was held on 6 November 2020 to discuss potential research topics and areas of study and steps forward.

UK Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy

NITI Aayog had developed India's Energy Calculator, IESS 2047, in consultation with the UK Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (UKBEIS) in 2014. During a visit by a UK delegation in September 2019, discussions took place on strengthening the calculator community in India by carrying out capacity-building exercises, and increasing engagement with States to enable better energy planning, amongst other activities.

NITI Aayog and UKBEIS have partnered to update India's national calculator IESS (India Energy Security Scenario) 2047. The proposal is in the final stages of approval. IIT Bombay has been selected as the lead downstream partner from India, and would be leading the project. A consortium has been formed with stakeholders from 10–15 institutes/organizations (industry, academia, Government and think tanks/policy research organizations), who would also be involved in updating the calculator. This tool will provide energy data for the country on a yearly basis and develop in-house capabilities for diverting the energy mix for India. As of now, we remain dependent on IEA and BP statistics.

World Bank

NITI Aayog and the World Bank organized a one-day workshop on 'Energy–Water–Agriculture Nexus: Grow Solar, Save Water, Double the Farm Income' in Delhi. The workshop brought together States, policymakers, technical experts, farmer representatives, and the private sector to share their experiences and explore the possibilities of leveraging the full potential of the recently announced Central Scheme, Kusum. It was concluded that grid-connected solar irrigation for agriculture and rural electricity supply hold immense potential to achieve the goals of saving water and electricity, and doubling farmers' income. As many as 90 participants attended the workshop.

PROMOTING INNOVATION

Atal Innovation Mission

Atal Innovation Mission is the Government of India's flagship initiative to create and promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country. AIM's objective is to develop new programmes and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy, provide platforms and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders, and create an umbrella structure to oversee the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem of the country. AIM's initiatives have played an important role in the advancement of India from a position of 81 in the Global Innovation Index in 2015 to a position of 48 in 2020.

AIM has adopted a holistic approach encompassing schools, universities, research institutions, industry, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), NGOs, and Ministries to achieve its objectives.

Major initiatives undertaken by AIM are:

- ▶ Establishment of ATLs in schools to create a problem-solving mindset in students between classes 6–12.
- ▶ Establishment of Atal Incubation Centres (AICs) in universities, institutions, and the private sector to foster world-class start-ups, as well as adding new dimensions of outcome-based scale-up and monitoring of existing incubator models.

- ▶ Launch of Atal New India Challenges (ANICs) to foster product and service innovations in the country with national socio-economic impact and aligning them to the sectoral needs of various Ministries/industry and with the Sustainable Development Goals.
- ▶ Establishment of Atal Community Innovation Centres (ACICs) in the unserved/underserved regions of the country, including tier-2 and tier-3 cities and in the hinterland, to stimulate community-centric innovations and create local hubs of innovation and job creation.
- ▶ Launch of Applied Research and Innovation Challenges for Small Enterprises (ARISE) to stimulate Make in India research and innovations in the MSME industry.
- ▶ Establish a nationwide voluntary Mentors of Change network to support all the initiatives of AIM.
- ▶ Building strategic innovation partnerships with the public and private sectors and multinationals, and country-to-country partnerships to promote collaborations and cross-border innovation exchanges.

Atal Tinkering Labs

With AIM, innovation and entrepreneurship have become an integral part of our national mission. Thanks to ATLs, children as young as 12 are being introduced to the world of technology innovation. ATL is a flagship initiative of AIM to nurture an innovative mindset amongst high school students in India.

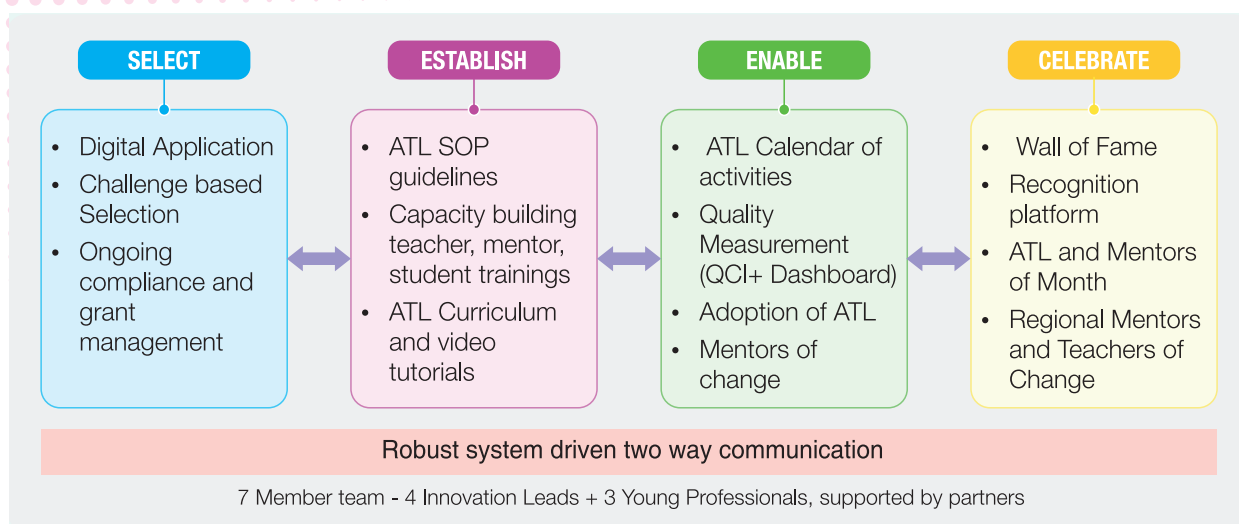


ATL innovators with the President of India on 14 November 2019

In ATLs, students are free to think and explore, try and fail, and come up with out-of-the-box ideas. The programme is designed to equip students with twenty-first century skills, such as design thinking, critical thinking, computational thinking, digital fabrication, and so on.

Under the ATL scheme, grant-in-aid of up to Rs 20,00,000 is provided to schools selected for setting up these labs.

The ATL programme can be broadly classified into four major phases:



The processes for applying, establishing, and operationalizing an ATL, promoting innovative thinking among students, and monitoring the same through real-time digital dashboards for continuous improvement are captured in detail in the 'ATL Tinkering Lab Handbook 2.0', which is available on the AIM website.

Selection of ATLs

Till November 2020, 14,916 schools had been selected for the establishment of ATLs. Further, 6,500 ATLs were sanctioned, covering more than 90% of all Districts, including 110 Aspirational ones. These labs, established in both Government and private schools, are serving as community hubs of innovation. As per the *Strategy for New India*, over 10,000 ATLs will be established by FY21.

Establish and Operationalize ATLs

AIM has established well-defined processes, platforms, standards and digital systems for the establishment and operationalization of ATLs. These include:

→ Teacher and student training on the usage of ATLs

- Unbox Tinkering:** AIM, along with its partners, envisaged and conceptualized 'Unbox Tinkering', a unique ATL teacher-training programme. To date, more than 2000 teachers have been trained.
- Intellectual Property Rights Training:** An immersive training, with four batches of three days each, was conducted for teachers in collaboration with CIPAM.
- App Development Training:** Two batches of teacher training were conducted and over 3000 teachers trained on the ATL app development module.
- ATL Game Development Training:** A series of orientation training sessions were organized by LLF to train over 1000 teachers on the ATL Game Development Module.
- Ethics and Leadership in Innovation Training:** A workshop on ethical leadership in tech and innovation was organized for over 200 teachers in five batches in collaboration with tGELF.
- Design-Thinking Training with IIT Delhi:** A design-thinking course was launched by the Department of Design, IIT Delhi, for ATL in-charges. As many as 120 ATL teachers across the country participated in a month-long programme, during which mentors

from the industry and academia, along with the IIT Delhi design team, underwent a full cycle of the design-thinking journey.

- g. **Python Teacher-Training Sessions:** Teacher-training sessions on Python learning and coding were conducted in collaboration with Coding Elements. Over 500 teachers attended the session with hands-on assignments.
 - h. **Webinars on Digital Literacy and Creativity:** This series on digital literacy and creativity tools and Adobe Spark was done in collaboration with Adobe for more than 500 ATL in-charges.
- ➔ **Transparent procurement processes of ATL equipment through GeM digital platform:** AIM has devised a robust process for a transparent and fair system of procurement through GeM. Each sanctioned ATL school has a GeM ID to avail services.
 - ➔ **Sharing of best practices through Regional Teacher of Change (RToC) network:** To build a hub-and-spoke model on ground, AIM invited applications for RToCs. As many as 101 RToCs from 30 States were selected after a rigorous application process. RToCs are responsible for their ATLs and must mentor and guide 25 other ATLs in their region. RToCs bring the ATL community together, hold sessions, meet and share new ideas, discuss solutions, identify opportunities for students, and build a family that nurtures innovation and the spirit of ATL.
 - ➔ **Proactive communication channels between AIM and ATLs**
 - 1. *Query resolution:* Over 13,000 queries have been resolved via the ATL Query Resolution Portal.
 - 2. *Social media and messenger groups:* Regular communication with schools is established via dedicated State-wise WhatsApp groups, emails and official social media handles.

Enabling Creativity and Innovation in ATLs

- 1. **Launched new online training modules**
 - ▶ ATL Artificial Intelligence Base Module
 - ▶ ATL Artificial Intelligence Step-Up Module
 - ▶ ATL Gaming Module: Beginner in Hindi
 - ▶ ATL Gaming Module: Intermediate
 - ▶ ATL Gaming Module: Advanced (with 7,63,000 registrations)
 - ▶ ATL CollabCAD with NIC: Over 600 registrations
 - ▶ ATL App Development Module: Over 50,000 registrations
 - ▶ ATL Python-Learning Module: Over 8000 registrations
- 2. **Created a calendar of innovation activities**
 - ▶ Tinker-from-Home webinars
 - ◆ Over 100 webinars conducted for students and teachers
 - ◆ More than 10,000 students engaged
 - ◆ Over 3500 teachers engaged

► Innovation Challenges

- ◆ ATL Marathon 2019 launched: With over 1100 participants, the top 150 teams from 29 States and Union Territories underwent a Student Innovator Programme, following which the first 20 teams were announced.
- ◆ ATL community day challenge on Ambedkar Jayanti: This challenge centred around three themes: AI, game design, and CollabCAD.
- ◆ Constitution and citizens' duties quiz: An online quiz competition on the 'Constitution of India and Fundamental Duties' was conducted to raise awareness on the Constitution of India and Fundamental Duties. Over 50,000 entries were received.
- ◆ ATL App Innovation Challenge 2020: The ATL App Innovation Challenge 2020 was launched in collaboration with Nasscom to enable young innovators to learn the concepts of app development and develop an app. Over 900 entries were submitted to AIM.
- ◆ On National Science Day, Aspirational District Visakhapatnam witnessed the participation of over 200 students from ATLs. The celebration commemorated the work done by CV Raman and motivated students to discover the mysteries of the world through science.

3. International collaborations and events

- **Nauka, Russia:** The Embassy of India in Moscow and AIM facilitated more than 200 Indian participants for the All-Russian Science Festival Nauka 0+. As many as nine Indian students won awards.
- **Bricsmath+, Russia:** AIM is the Indian partner for the organizing agency in Russia for the mathematics Olympiad for students from seven countries.
- **Tekla, Sweden:** In collaboration with the Embassy of Sweden, AIM organized three workshops for 45 girl students from underprivileged backgrounds to pique their interest in STEM.



ATL innovators with the King and Queen of Sweden

4. Voluntary nationwide network of Mentors of Change

An important aspect of the successful implementation of ATLs is the robust partnerships that have been forged with different stakeholders, including mentors, industry professionals and alumni, to leverage their expertise towards guiding students. Sustainable institutional frameworks that draw upon the capacity, resources, technical know-how of different partners are the key to ensuring the success of the programme. Moreover, since tinkering as a concept is still new in our country, advancing the idea requires sustained handholding from mentors. Given that ATLs are non-prescriptive by nature, mentors are expected to be enablers rather than instructors. Technical know-how, innovation and design, business and entrepreneurship are some of the areas of contribution from the mentors. Partners could also help expand the technical horizons of the students by providing internship opportunities and organizing other programmes, especially tailored for ATL students.

- a. Number of mentors: over 5000
- b. Regional Mentors of Change: 40
- c. Number of schools with mentors: 2005
- d. Knowledge-hub sessions conducted: 20
- e. New mentor handbook launched

Partnerships with leading Indian corporates, MNCs and institutions such as Nasscom, Dell Technologies, IBM, Microsoft, Tata Trusts, Intel, KPIT, Learning Links Foundation, Coal India, Plezmo, Agastya Foundation, were also established.

Recognizing and Celebrating ATL Innovations

AIM has created various platforms for celebrating and recognizing student innovations. These include:

- ▶ **Wall of fame:** AIM encourages all students, teachers, and mentors to post their innovation stories, which are then shared by AIM. Moreover, every quarter, three special innovation stories are posted of students, teachers, and mentors.
- ▶ **Exemplary Teachers of Change:** To share and celebrate the exceptional work done by ATL in-charges and to recognize their efforts, an 'Exemplary Teachers of Change' book was published. As many as 86 teachers across 34 States and Union Territories were recognized using this platform.
- ▶ **GeM book:** To share and celebrate the exceptional work done by the Mentors of Change and to recognize their efforts, a 'Gems of Mentor India' was published. As many as 33 mentors from 10 States were recognized using this platform.
- ▶ **Mentor roundtable:** Every six months, NITI Aayog organizes a 'Mentor India' roundtable with CEO, NITI Aayog, to honour the work done by 'Exemplary Mentors of Change'. More than 40 such mentors attended the roundtable in February 2020.
- ▶ **ATLs of the month:** To recognize a school's effort and engagement with ATLs via the MyATL dashboard, AIM announces a list of 'ATLs of the Month' from each State of India. More than 300 schools were announced as 'ATLs of the Month' in 2020.
- ▶ **SIP:** The AIM Student Innovator Programme (SIP) is an initiative to build confidence in young innovators to pursue the dream of becoming student entrepreneurs. The top 150 teams across 29 States from ATL Marathon 2019 participated in SIP in 2020.

- ▶ **Student internship programme:** AIM organizes an annual student internship programme with its corporate partners. This year, Adobe India, Dell Technologies, and IBM India adopted the top teams of ATL Marathon 2019. More than 200 students and 70 teachers received exposure to the corporate culture and were mentored by experts and researchers from various organizations.



IBM internships

- ▶ **SEP:** AIM has designed the Student Entrepreneurship Programme (SEP), an effort to institutionalize a mechanism where top teams of SIP (one from each focus area) can work with corporate and industry partners and receive further mentorship, funding for IPR, product design, and product deployment in market. The top 10 teams of ATL Marathon 2018 are undergoing SEP this year.

Atal Incubation Centres

Atal Incubation Centres aim to foster the entrepreneurial spirit while creating a supportive ecosystem for start-ups and entrepreneurs in India. AIM has been tasked with establishing and supporting world-class incubators.

Under this initiative, AIM supports two kinds of incubators: (1) Atal Incubation Centres (AICs), which are greenfield incubators, and (2) Established Incubation Centres (EICs), which provide scale-up support to existing incubators.

AICs and EICs are provided a grant-in-aid of up to Rs 10 crore, disbursed in three to five tranches or over a period of three to five years, covering capital expenditure, core team, seed capital, and incubation activity expenses.

Journey So Far

Till November 2020, AIM had successfully established 68 incubators in 23 States. Of the 68 incubators, 59 are AICs and 9 EICs. More than 1600 start-ups have so far been fostered, including over 500 led by women.



1600+ start-ups incubated
Of the 1600, 500+ women-led



AIM has provided over Rs 7.25 crore of seed fund and start-ups registered/graduated at the AICs/EICs have leveraged over Rs 70 crore of funding



2,900+ events conducted and 700+ training conducted.



1200+ mentors on-boarded by the AICs/EICs to guide the start-ups.



700+ collaborations established for the development of the ecosystem.

Real-Time Monitoring

- ▶ As a digital initiative, AIM continues to strengthen its unique data and KPI-driven approach to evaluate the performance of its incubators using an online dashboard.
- ▶ The dashboard captures over 10 critical parameters, which helps AIM to take corrective actions and support AICs/EICs in a timely manner.
- ▶ The dashboard also enables AIM to conduct regular monitoring and support the OOMF initiative.



AIM team at the AIC hub in Hyderabad

AIM is determined to make all its AICs and EICs #WorldClassIncubators and is implementing a structured approach to support both the incubators and the start-ups.

AIM conducts regular capacity-building workshops of AICs and EICs to support them with toolkits. The workshops are facilitated by industry thought leaders and experts and are a thriving ground for various new ideas and collaborative projects, apart from providing an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning.

AIM, along with the PFMS department, conducts regular meetings and workshops for AICs/ EICs to support them in their PFMS queries.

AIM also runs a weekly knowledge-sharing session with experts, thought leaders, incubator CEOs/managers and mentors. To date, AIM has conducted over 20 sessions on various topics. These sessions have helped incubators and budding start-ups immensely. AIM shall continue similar knowledge-sharing sessions and will be focusing on driving deeper insights from the ecosystem to its beneficiaries.

Linking Atal Tinkering Marathon Winners to Atal Incubators

AIM has been running the Atal Tinkering Marathon for the last three years. To provide the best student teams of the Marathon an opportunity to accelerate their entrepreneurial journey, it conducts the Student Innovator Programme.

SIP is an opportunity given to the top 100 teams of the ATL Marathon, whereby they work with AICs for a period of three months to build a working prototype. The AICs also mentor students in building sustainable business models, finding target customers, etc. SIP has been well received by AICs and EICs, and over 100 student teams have been supported in the last two years. SIP provides next-generation start-up founders a flavour of building sustainable business plans whilst they are still in school.

Strategic Collaboration and Partnerships

- ▶ To garner support from the local start-up ecosystem, AIM entered into a strategic partnership with the Headstart Network Foundation. The partnership provides AICs and EICs access to local chapters of the network and gives them new opportunities to grow and collaborate. In turn, the Foundation is associated with over 15 AICs and EICs and can chalk out strategic models of collaboration and growth. This partnership is also envisioned to create local chapters across India and provide an impetus to the growth of a grassroots entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- ▶ To provide its AICs, EICs and incubated start-ups access to the digital ecosystem present in the country, AIM entered into an association with Freshworks, a customer-engagement software company. The association provides AIM beneficiaries access to functional training, resources, and mentorship in areas such as sales, marketing, and customer support.

Start-Up Challenges

Entrepreneurship World Cup (EWC): AIM in partnership with tGelf conducted EWC in 2020 and received an overwhelming response. EWC provides start-ups the opportunity to win up to \$1 million in cash prizes, along with support for the top 100 global finalists. The start-ups are also provided an opportunity to network with some renowned venture capitalists and industry leaders.

Proactive Initiatives during Covid-19

1. To mitigate the impact of Covid-19, AIM facilitated an inter-ministerial working group for identifying solutions that could address the ongoing pandemic.
2. Around 1100 start-ups from across the country were examined and the top 70 were asked to present their prototypes in a series of demo days.
3. There were nine demo days showcasing over 50 start-ups.
4. AIM facilitated over 350 connections between the participating start-ups and interested investors and organizations.



Atal Community Innovation Centres



ACIC launch event held on 31 July 2019

Atal Community Innovation Centres (ACICs) aim to serve the start-up and innovation ecosystem in the unserved/underserved regions of the country. ACICs are a crucial step in building the budding start-up ecosystem. They not only support up-and-coming entrepreneurs but also provide them with linkages to the developed start-up ecosystem, thus expediting their learning curve and stimulating faster growth. ACICs are the drivers of frugal and sustainable solutions, supported by the PPP model. This initiative offers an opportunity to explore unique and incentivized solutions to encourage students, researchers, or any individual/group to ideate and design novel solutions for the benefit of society at large.

Journey So Far

The ACIC programme was launched in 2019 with a call for applications. In 2020, 24 applicants were shortlisted for establishing ACICs after five rounds of evaluation. Those shortlisted represented 16 States and UTs, three different categories of locations and comprised 20 UGC/AICTE institutions, and four belonged to NGOs/Section 8 companies. The second round of applications was completed, and 389 applications received. These efforts were carried out to establish over 50 ACICs by the end of 2021.

Outreach and Awareness

For building a robust and inclusive innovation ecosystem, ACICs must take various measures to create awareness about innovation and SDGs in the community. This year ACICs,

- ▶ held a four-hour-long interactive workshop on SDGs and entrepreneurship awareness, which was led by UNDP volunteers;
- ▶ held sensitization workshops focusing on innovation, inclusion, and job creation;
- ▶ organized roundtables between CSOs, corporate and District authorities to align them towards a common goal;
- ▶ carried out community-based participatory research to find inter-linkages that exist between SDGs;
- ▶ established local strategic partnerships with CSOs to support the mapping of existing challenges and for supporting plausible potential solutions; and
- ▶ adopted, drove and promoted an affirmative action policy for inclusion and diversity among community innovators and fellows, thus ensuring equitable access and fair representation.

Knowledge and Capacity-Building

- ▶ Regular capacity-building workshops and training of ACICs' core teams have been conducted by ecosystem stalwarts and experts. These workshops enable community innovation centres to develop new models for engaging with communities and spurring local community-centric innovations and livelihood/job creation in the communities surrounding ACICs.
- ▶ Digital dashboards for monitoring and evaluation of AICs/ACICs have been designed.
- ▶ An operational manual enlisting the various measures and steps to guide ACICs in building a vibrant ACIC ecosystem has been developed.

- ▶ Impactful collaborations and partnerships with private and public sector organizations have been developed.

Collaborations

- ▶ To provide an impetus to the PPP model of the ACICs, a Statement of Intent has been signed with Coal India, which will support young entrepreneurs and provide ACICs with experts and mentors.
- ▶ A digital learning platform with curated content on SDGs, social entrepreneurship, sector-specific innovations and more has been conceptualized and is being developed. This platform aims to provide democratic access to learning material and tools for an aspiring community innovator.

Atal New India Challenge

Atal New India Challenge (ANIC) aims at supporting innovators in creating products based on advanced technologies in areas of national importance and social relevance, through a grant-based mechanism.

The vision of ANIC is twofold: help create products from existing technologies relevant for national and social causes (productization); and help new deep-tech products find markets and early customers (commercialization).

The grant entails funding of up to Rs 1 crore for product development and early-stage commercialization of deep-tech products. The ANIC programme was launched with 24 challenges from five partner Ministries: Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Drinking Water and Sanitation, Housing and Urban Affairs, Railways, and Road and Highways.

The applications for ANIC are invited from MSMEs, start-ups, researchers, and innovators through the AIM-ANIC portal. The first call saw a total of 951 applications, of which 519 were shortlisted. The 519 applicants were then evaluated by multiple AIM partner incubators; subsequently, 143 were shortlisted for presentation to the screening-cum-selection committee. The committee, under the chairmanship of Prof. Prabuddha Ganguli, met on 11–12 March 2019. A total of 102 applicants (out of 143) were presented before the committee, and based on its recommendations, 26 were selected for immediate ANIC grant-in-aid support (Type A), and 26 for handholding support (Type B), requiring further evaluation before being considered for the grant. The result, post internal approvals, was announced on 9 October 2019 and published on the AIM website.

The 52 applicants shortlisted thereafter were subjected to documentary compliance and due diligence checks. The ANIC guideline meanwhile was updated to accommodate situations arising due to the Covid-induced lockdown—the need for matching contribution was made non-mandatory, third-party surety bonds for grantees were exempted, and the compliance process was simplified.

The grant amount and the goals and deliverables for every grantee have been reviewed and approved by the ANIC working committee. The grant amount is distributed across three tranches of respective share, 30%, 40% and 30%, in which, the release of any tranche is subjected to verifiable compliance to stated goals and deliverables by the grantee. The distribution of grant across tranches is done to mitigate risk generally associated with funding innovations and allows for multiple levels of checks.

Aatmanirbhar Bharat ARISE Atal New India Challenges

The Aatmanirbhar Bharat ARISE Atal New India Challenges is a national initiative to promote applied research and innovation and increase the competitiveness of Indian start-ups and MSMEs. The objective of Aatmanirbhar Bharat ARISE Atal New India Challenges programme is to proactively collaborate with Ministries and associated industries to catalyse research, innovation and facilitate innovative solutions to sectoral problems. It aims to provide a steady stream of innovative products and solutions, where Central Ministries/Departments become the potential first buyers.

The Aatmanirbhar Bharat ARISE Atal New India Challenges programme is in line with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's mandate of 'Make in India', 'Start-up India', and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' to fast-track the growth of the Indian MSME sector.

Any Indian company incorporated under the Companies Act, which is a micro or small or medium enterprise, as defined in the MSME Act, or any company registered as a start-up, as defined and recognized by DPIIT, is eligible to participate in these challenges.

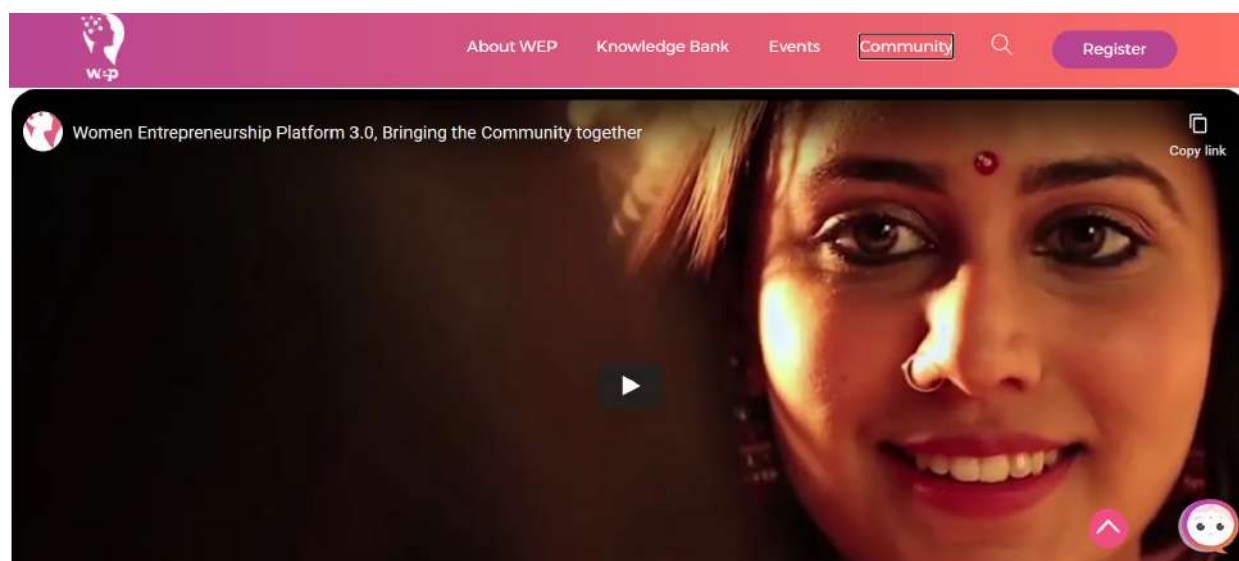
Selected winners will be awarded a grant-in-aid support of up to a maximum of Rs 50 lakh for developing a field-deployable Minimum Viable Product in 9–12 months.

AIM has identified a total of 15 nation-critical challenge statements with five Ministries/Departments (three per Ministry), namely:

1. Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)
2. Ministry of Defence
3. Ministry of Food Processing Industries
4. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
5. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

The AIM team has also actively organized multiple informative webinars in collaboration with experts from public and private institutions, the industry and academia.

Women Entrepreneurship Platform



On 11 January 2021, NITI Aayog and Flipkart launched the revamped Women Entrepreneurship Platform

The Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) is a first-of-its-kind unified-access portal to enable women across India to realize their entrepreneurial aspirations. The concept of the platform was first mooted by Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, who announced its establishment at the conclusion of the eighth Global Entrepreneurship Summit, held in Hyderabad in 2017.

As an enabling platform, WEP is built on three pillars:

- ▶ *Ichha Shakti*, which represents motivating aspiring entrepreneurs to start their businesses.
- ▶ *Gyaan Shakti*, which represents providing knowledge and ecosystem support to women entrepreneurs to help them foster entrepreneurship.
- ▶ *Karma Shakti*, which represents providing hands-on support to entrepreneurs in setting-up and scaling-up businesses.

The platform fulfils these objectives by serving as an aggregator of information resources and services, with a focus on enabling women entrepreneurship, and works closely with partner organizations to realize various forms of integration to offer a seamless experience to aspiring or established women entrepreneurs.

WEP Partners

Through its partners, WEP offers services to its members under various support areas:

- ▶ **Incubation and Acceleration:** Connect entrepreneurs to incubation centres to help them set up their businesses and streamline their operations.
- ▶ **Entrepreneurship Skilling:** Offer fellowship programmes through its partners; conduct online-learning sessions with experts.
- ▶ **Marketing Assistance:** It provides this assistance through courses on effectively utilizing digital-marketing mediums.
- ▶ **Funding and Financial Assistance:** Creating access to funding avenues through its investment council, investor consortium and partners.
- ▶ **Compliance Support:** Providing support in licencing and tax filing.
- ▶ **Social Entrepreneurship:** Creating access to networks, funding opportunities and mentorship.

WEP has more than 35 partners from various industries and sectors who have committed specific resources for WEP users. These partners include PayPal, Facebook, Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, Association of Lady Entrepreneurs of India, Atal Innovation Mission, CRISIL, Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Nasscom, Google, Institute of Company Secretaries of India, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Women's Entrepreneurship and Empowerment Foundation, Nexus Incubator, Mann Deshi Foundation, ShopClues, and SEWA Bank, among others.

WEP Initiatives

WEP conducted a series of webinars to provide an opportunity to aspiring women entrepreneurs to learn from the experiences of their established counterparts. Various programmes were held with the support of partner organizations. A few of them are mentioned below:

- ▶ **WEP-UN Investor Consortium:** The second WEP-UN Investor Consortium cohort is currently active. Women entrepreneurs receive critical handholding and mentorship support, following which they get an opportunity to pitch to investors.
- ▶ **ALEAP:** ALEAP is a virtual entrepreneurship development programme to upskill aspiring women entrepreneurs in essential entrepreneurial and management skills.
- ▶ **Indigram Labs Foundation:** This is a business incubation programme for women entrepreneurs in agri-tech, food-tech and clean-tech.
- ▶ **Sedibus:** Mentorship and networking support is provided to early-stage women-led B2B start-ups in the technology space.
- ▶ **CExpert:** Help is offered with simplifying taxation, accounting and compliance through interactive learning sessions and other resources. A helpline for women entrepreneurs to obtain one-on-one support for compliance and taxation issues has been set up.
- ▶ **deAsra Foundation:** Development of resources and tools for evaluation, business-assessment, compliance, and business management, which have been uploaded on WEP's knowledge bank. Providing one-on-one support on digital-marketing-related queries through WEP.
- ▶ **Nudge Centre for Social Innovation:** A workshop was conducted on breaking down and demystifying fundraising for women-led non-profit organizations into tangible action points.

Covid-19 Response

A series of initiatives was undertaken to help women entrepreneurs during the pandemic:

- ▶ **Masking It Up with WEP:** Facilitating connections between home-based workers (involved in mask-making) and potential buyers, and partnership with organizations such as SEWA Bharat, artisan clusters part of Dastkari Haat Samiti, and others. As many as two lakh reusable cloth masks sold, benefitting more than 215 women.
- ▶ **Government e-Marketplace (GeM):** Facilitating the creation of a dedicated category for cloth masks on GeM for home-based workers and other entrepreneurs. GeM's training team conducted a workshop exclusively for WEP users on leveraging the GeM platform as a sales channel and walked them through the registration and tendering processes.
- ▶ **Covid-19 Resource Bank:** Curated a section in the knowledge bank featuring resources relevant to entrepreneurs facing challenges during the pandemic. The bank contains written and video content on relief schemes launched by the Government and financial institutions as well as third-party content to support entrepreneurs during the Covid-19 outbreak.



The Masking It Up campaign helped 215 women during the Covid-19 pandemic

- ▶ **Webinar Series on 'Business in Time of Covid':** The series provided insights on responding to the impact of the pandemic.

Women Transforming India Awards 2019

WEP received an overwhelming number of nominations, more than 2300, for the fourth edition of the Women Transforming India (WTI) Awards through its website. The Women Transforming India Awards is a flagship event of NITI Aayog, organized in partnership with the United Nations. The idea behind the awards is to showcase exceptional women entrepreneurs who have broken the glass ceiling and challenged stereotypes through businesses, enterprises, and initiatives that provide innovative solutions to address key developmental challenges and/or impact communities.

The top 15 nominees, selected through a transparent and objective process of screening and evaluation through expert organization and eminent jury members, were awarded in a formal ceremony held in March 2020.

The official ceremony for the fourth edition of WTI Awards was hosted on 8 March 2020 with Shri Rajnath Singh, Minister of Defence, as the Chief Guest. During the event, the WTI Coffee Table Book showcasing stories of grit from the top 30 candidates was launched. Tech Mahindra has offered to provide mentorship and business support to the WTI award-winners to help scale their solutions to other markets.



Covid-19 Management

INTRODUCTION

NITI Aayog has been playing a crucial role during the Covid-19 pandemic by providing timely updates on relevant issues, and thereby enabling multiple stakeholders to take important decisions.

Dr VK Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog, is co-chair of the National Taskforce for Covid Response, which has systematically advised a scientific and technical response to the pandemic. The taskforce has issued guidelines on testing, prevention, treatment and surveillance of the virus.

Member (Health) NITI Aayog is also chair of the Taskforce on Covid-19 Vaccine. This taskforce facilitated the rapid development of diagnostics, therapeutics and protocols for sample movement; provided ethical clearances; expedited the regulatory process; facilitated the manufacture of ancillary products such as masks, ventilators, etc.; and directed the appropriate care required for many patients.

Dr VK Paul is also chair of the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19, which guided the Government on:

1. The selection of Covid-19 vaccine candidates for the country.
2. Procurement of vaccine/s.
3. Prioritization of population groups for vaccination in India. A report was submitted to PMO.
4. Financial resources for procurement of vaccines.
5. Conceptualization and implementation mechanisms for the creation of the digital infrastructure, CoWIN.
6. Precise strategy for vaccine roll-out and follow-up action on all possible scenarios due to Covid, and the development of operational guidelines.
7. Building blocks for vaccination—adequacy of cold chain equipment, consumables such as syringes, vials, needles, needle cutters, training and capacity-building of vaccinating teams.
8. Engagement with immunization teams from States and Districts for effective planning of immunization sessions.
9. Guidance on adverse events following immunization.
10. Awareness and dissemination of correct information—communication and IEC strategy for Covid vaccination.
11. Leveraging domestic vaccine manufacturing capacity for meeting national and international need for Covid vaccines.
12. Engaging with international teams under the aegis of MEA to address the concerns and requirements regarding Covid vaccinations of neighbouring and friendly countries.
13. Consultation with community-based and civil society organizations regarding Covid vaccines.

EMPOWERED GROUPS

1. **Empowered Group 1:** Medical infrastructure and Covid-management plan, chaired by Dr VK Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog.
2. **Empowered Group 3:** Coordinating with private sector, NGOs, and international organizations for response-related activities, chaired by CEO, NITI Aayog.
3. **Empowered Group 6:** Strategic issues related to Covid-19 management and facilitating supply chain and logistics management, chaired by Secretary, MoHFW. Member (Health), NITI Aayog, is a member of this group.

EMPOWERED GROUP 1

Empowered Group 1, under the chairmanship of Member (Health), NITI Aayog, was mandated to develop a medical infrastructure and Covid-management plan for India. The group provided inputs for Covid-19 preparedness in terms of ICUs; ventilators; oxygen, isolation and Covid care centre beds; manpower; equipment; and supplies.

Three reports were submitted on pandemic projections and preparedness needs in April, June, and September 2020. These provided overarching guidance to various stakeholders.

Apart from these, the following activities were carried out:

- ▶ District Readiness Assessment Tool for managing Covid-19 response shared with MoHFW.
- ▶ Report on 'Covid Cases and Deaths, August 2020', which contributed to prioritization of beneficiaries for Covid vaccination.
- ▶ Projections for testing requirements for Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).
- ▶ Requirements and norms for Covid care centres in India.
- ▶ Setting up Covid hospitals in India, including the use of railway coaches and temporary establishments of treatment centres.
- ▶ Population- and State-wise estimates for levels two and three Covid hospital beds in India.
- ▶ Facilitating the availability of ventilators, masks, sanitizers and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits in the country.
- ▶ Science and technology reports on:
 1. 'Roadmap to Combat Covid-19 Pandemic', which provided guidelines on virus testing, treatment, and prevention.
 2. To develop R&D capability, NITI Aayog released the guidelines on 'Sharing of Biospecimen and Data for Research Related to Covid-19' in April 2020. NITI Aayog collaborated with DBT to set up multiple biorepositories to share patient samples, viral genetic material and positive and negative control panels with researchers. Sixteen biorepositories have been jointly established by ICMR, DBT and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

Delhi-NCR Covid-19 Pandemic Control

NITI Aayog provided regular reports regarding the trends of the pandemic in the Delhi-NCR region—comprising Gurugram, Faridabad, Rohtak, Jhajjar, Sonipat, Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddh Nagar, Meerut and Baghpat—to the Home Ministry. These were used to assess and develop optimal strategies. NITI Aayog leveraged multiple stakeholder consultations, involving the Ministry of Home Affairs, MoHFW, Government of Delhi, AIIMS New Delhi and the private sector. Technical inputs for strategies to escalate the availability of Covid ICU and hospital beds, optimal contact tracing and surveillance, capping of rates for hospital care and testing, were also provided from time to time. Field visits were conducted and standalone virtual meetings with the administration of various NCR regions were conducted regularly to monitor the situation and give relevant technical guidance. These efforts resulted in rapid de-escalation of the pandemic trends in Delhi-NCR, especially when there was a surge.



Site visit to Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, during the peak of the pandemic in Delhi-NCR

Other Covid-Related Activities

NITI Aayog also facilitated engagement with industry bodies and private providers, including diagnostic labs, for participation in Covid-related works. A web portal for the registration of volunteers, medical doctors, was also facilitated. Data has been handed over and is now being managed at <https://covidwarriors.gov.in/>. NITI Aayog also facilitated the Indian SARS-COV2 Genomic Consortium, which will be used for regional genomic surveillance for SAARC countries.

Also, during March–April 2020, NITI supported MoHFW to coordinate interstate transportation and delivery of essentials such as medicines, medical devices and Covid-19-related emergency supplies (sanitizers, PPE kits, oxygen cylinders). To avoid disruption in the supply chain, NITI worked with private manufacturers, Invest India, and HLL, to evaluate the availability of ventilators, masks, sanitizers and PPE kits in the country.

To streamline the validation and approval process of diagnostic test kits for Covid-19, NITI Aayog initiated the broad-basing of Government labs other than those under ICMR. This initiative was aimed at reducing bottlenecks in the validation process and expedite the availability of innovative diagnostic products in the market to diagnose Covid-19. Apart from ICMR's National Institute of Virology, Pune, and National AIDS Research Institute, Pune, 15 CSIR institutes, six

DBT institutes and six Department of Science and Technology (DST) institutes were permitted to validate investigational products like repurposed drugs, nanoparticles, AYUSH-based formulations, diagnostic devices, PPE kits, AI health tools and mobile applications.

NITI Aayog also published a compendium of Covid-19 preventive practices in November 2020. The practices in the compendium have been disaggregated under six sections: (i) public health and clinical response governance mechanisms (iii) digital health (iv) integrated model (v) welfare of migrants and other vulnerable groups (vi) other practices. A summary of the relevant Government guidelines has been included for the aforementioned categories, wherever applicable.

Practices adopted by States/UTs in the fight against Covid-19 range from preparation of comprehensive route maps for contact tracing to operationalization of mobile vans for testing and providing essential health services at the doorsteps of people.

EMPOWERED GROUP 3

The mandate of Empowered Group 3, under the chairmanship of CEO, NITI Aayog, was to coordinate with the private sector, NGOs, and international organizations for Covid-19-response-related activities. The group conducted 20 meetings with a range of stakeholders in these sectors to understand their issues and coordinate response management initiatives.

The group focused on conceptualizing issues, organizing solutions, focusing on concerns it stumbled upon and resolving some key issues.

The first natural step after the group was formed was to organize each group of stakeholders into sub-groups. From the private sector, key sub-sectors were identified, such as technology, start-ups, manufacturing, e-commerce, retail, healthcare, airlines, and tourism and hospitality. Industry associations such as CII, FICCI, and Nasscom were identified as key stakeholders as they provide platforms that identify, analyse, organize, and present issues and solutions. The international organizations were categorized into those working on health and non-health response, and donor agencies.

The organization of different stakeholders into multiple sub-groups allowed for deep diving into the issues and possible solutions, which were different for each sub-group. This classification resulted in making the process more action oriented. With multiple rounds of meetings with each stakeholder, Empowered Group 3 effectively narrowed down the stakeholder base to focus more on those that were able to contribute most to the response initiatives. For instance, while the first meeting with the UN system in India was attended by eight UN agencies, the subsequent meetings were attended by three agencies that played the most significant role, namely the UNICEF, WHO, and UNDP, and the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office. The multiple rounds of meetings also resulted in the stakeholders channelling continuous feedback to the group so that the process of conceptualizing issues and organizing solutions could be made more effective.



Over 50% of COVID19 deaths are of senior citizens



The Abhiyaan is committed to ensuring the well-being of 13.3 million senior citizens across 112 Aspirational Districts



#ApnoKaDhyaan



Surakshit Dada-Dadi, Nana-Nani Abhiyaan is a collaborative effort between NITI Aayog, Piramal Foundation, and Administration of Aspirational Districts to ensure the well-being of Senior Citizens during the pandemic

The engagement with NGOs called for a different approach. As there are thousands of NGOs working across the country, the first step was to identify the subset of NGOs, especially NGO networks with pan-India presence, with whom meaningful engagement could be established. This was accomplished by identifying over 92,000 NGOs registered on the Darpan portal of NITI Aayog as the subset. The second step taken was mobilizing them and connecting them to State and District officials. Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, and Chairman, Empowered Group 3, wrote to all Chief Secretaries, urging the States to involve NGOs in response activities and make use of their grassroots outreach. The group recommended appointment of State and District-level nodal officers to coordinate the engagement with NGOs. This approach of partnering with the States and Districts contributed to effectively involving the wide and deep network of NGOs.

The group was able to resolve an array of issues raised by the private sector, NGOs, and international organizations.

Snapshots from the Aspirational Districts during the World's Largest Vaccination Drive



AD Bhairamgarh, Chhattisgarh



AD Chatra, Jharkhand



AD Haridwar, Uttarakhand



AD Narayanpur, Chhattisgarh



AD Bastar, Chhattisgarh



AD Mamit, Mizoram



AD Bastar, Chhattisgarh



AD Jaisalmer, Rajasthan



AD West Singhbhum, Jharkhand



AD Sukma, Chhattisgarh



AD Gadchiroli, Maharashtra



AD Khagaria, Bihar



Sectoral Objectives and Achievements

ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT UNITS

The administration in NITI Aayog functions in accordance with the service rules and Government of India instructions issued by DoPT. The administration is concerned with all aspects of service conditions of officers and staff, recruitments, promotions, postings, transfers, retirements, deputations, court cases related to service matters, and provides information under the RTI Act on these matters as well. It is also entrusted with the responsibilities related to an internship scheme for undergraduate/postgraduate students and research scholars enrolled in any recognized university/institution in India or abroad.

During 2020–21, the NITI administration completed all requisite selection formalities and made appointments for the posts of Senior Adviser (Agriculture) and Adviser (PAMD). Further, the department advertised four posts of Senior Adviser/Adviser (Senior Lead/Lead) in flexi-pool. A screening committee for shortlisting candidates has been constituted for the posts of Senior Lead/Lead (Senior Adviser/Adviser) in the areas of health, energy, trade and commerce and HR. NITI Aayog also advertised one post each of Chief Economist (flexi-pool) and Mission Director, Atal Innovation Mission. The respective selection committees selected one candidate each for these two posts and the process is underway for soliciting necessary approvals, including that of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.

The NITI administration also carried out the recruitment process for 44 posts of Senior Specialist, Specialist, Senior Associate, and Associate in flexi-pool and successfully selected 38 candidates.

Further, five posts of Deputy Adviser/Joint Adviser of the Knowledge and Innovation Hub were advertised by the composite method of deputation/promotion. The proposal for filling up four posts of Deputy Adviser (KIH) and one post of Joint Adviser (KIH) has been submitted to UPSC through the single-window system for making the selection. Additionally, action for filling up 11 posts of Senior Research Officer/Research Officer/Economic Officer of KIH is in the process. Out of 11 vacancies, one post has been filled up as Economic Officer. For the remaining 10 posts of Senior Research Officer/Research Officer, the process of obtaining documents/certificates/APARs from parent departments of the candidates is being carried out.

The administration also took timely action in filling up various other vacancies in posts encadred with other departments and under the Central Staffing Scheme.

Keeping in view the mandate of NITI Aayog to function as a think tank, which requires greater flexibility in the hiring of professionals, it is essential to have Young Professionals (YPs), Consultants and Senior Consultants who possess the requisite expertise. These Young Professionals, Consultants, and Senior Consultants are expected to deliver in areas such as communications, developmental policy, economics, finance, education, social sciences, engineering, urban planning, infrastructure, etc. In this regard, the following activities have been carried out:

1. NITI Aayog has completed the process of engagement for the positions of one Monitoring and Evaluation Expert (Senior Consultant), two Monitoring and Evaluation Specialists (Consultant Grade-II) and six Monitoring and Evaluation Leads in DMEO.
2. The process of engagement has been completed for one Monitoring and Evaluation Expert (Senior Consultant), two Consultants (Public Policy) Grade-I, and two Young Professionals in DMEO; 10 Young Professionals in AIM; and six Consultants (Public Policy) Grades I and II and 20 Young Professionals in NITI.

3. Currently, the process for hiring one Monitoring and Evaluation Expert (Senior Consultant), two Monitoring and Evaluation Specialists (Consultant Grade-II) and three Monitoring and Evaluation Leads (Consultant Grade-I) and five YPs in DMEO; five Innovation Leads (Consultant Grade-I) in AIM; one Senior Consultant, three Consultants Grade-II, seven Consultants Grade-I, and 10 YPs in NITI Aayog is underway.

To hire these experts, under the guidelines for engagement of Senior Consultants/Consultants/YPs, the administration invites online applications, which are then screened, and eligible candidates shortlisted for interviews in a timebound manner.

Consequent upon the recommendations of the taskforce report and restructuring of NITI Aayog, the amendment of recruitment rules for GCS posts has been carried out. During the current year, the recruitment rules for various posts were notified in the Gazette of India. Apart from this, the revised guidelines for flexi-pool positions were also issued in 2019.

The internship scheme initiated by NITI Aayog in 2016 continued in 2020–21, in accordance with the revised NITI internship guidelines dated 22 November 2018. Further, in pursuance of the guidelines, a comprehensive internship portal was set up, which enabled decentralization and streamlining of this scheme, leading to efficiency and effectiveness. The scheme seeks to engage students pursuing undergraduate/postgraduate degrees or research scholars enrolled in any recognized university/institute within India or abroad as interns. These interns are given exposure to various verticals/divisions/units of NITI Aayog.

Launched in 2016, the NITI Fellowship Programme is a flagship initiative of NITI Aayog to tap into the best minds from across the world. It continued in 2020–21 in accordance with the fellowship guidelines dated 29 December 2016. The NITI fellowship allows the involvement of senior and mid-career professionals of high calibre in policy initiatives to gain from their expertise in a particular domain.

AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED SERVICES

Developmental Initiatives



National-Level Consultation on 'Principles and Practices of Bharatiya Prakritik Krishi Padhati (BPKP) or Natural Farming'

Held from 29–30 September 2020, the consultation was organized to sensitize and popularize natural farming. Four technical sessions were held on 'Natural Farming: National and Global Perspectives'; 'Pan-India Adoption and Success Stories'; 'Adoption and Impact Evaluation'; and 'Experiences and Challenges'. More than 600 participants, including key officials from Central and State Agriculture Ministries and Departments; Vice Chancellors and Agriculture Scientists from State Agricultural Universities; subject-matter experts from ICAR; faculty of agriculture universities and institutions; Krishi Vigyan Kendras; ATARI centres; organizations and trusts/NGOs associated with BPKP; farmers' associations; progressive farmers; and agri-entrepreneurs, attended the virtual consultation. The stakeholders applauded the efforts of NITI Aayog and the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare (DACFW) in publicizing the beneficial aspects of natural farming. It was felt there was a need to make a careful move for further popularization of the practice, including the collection of empirical evidence and its collation with scientific inputs. Currently, the acceptance and adoption of natural farming are still at the transition stage. India intends to look forward to the implementation of BPKP as *jan andolan* to emerge as a net agriculture exporter.

Economic Use of Crop Residue

A stakeholders' meeting was held on 24 August 2020 under the chairmanship of Dr Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog, to discuss the 'Economic Use of Crop Residue'. NITI Aayog has been directed by the Government to suggest possible interventions in this pursuit. As the way forward, NITI Aayog requested FAO India to evaluate the issue and come up with feasible solutions, in terms of both short- and long-term measures. NITI Aayog is also seeking FAO's expertise on biomass utilization as mass manure. In the meeting, the stakeholders were apprised of FAO's initial work and efforts being undertaken by DACFW, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The following action points emerged from the meeting:

1. Punjab Farmers' Commission to depute its representatives to study the operation of a biomass-based power plant in the State and to look at the functioning of the plant for methane production from paddy straw. Thereafter, it will share the report with NITI Aayog.
2. Multiple approaches to address the problem related to the economic use of agricultural biomass should also look into positive and negative externalities, which are relevant to this challenge.
3. To develop suitable mechanisms for addressing unemployment and raising farmers' income. There is a need to find out appropriate modalities for the economic usage of paddy straw, essentially targeting ex-situ management. The in-situ approach related to soil fertility may be achieved by using wheat straw.
4. There is a need to undertake a deeper analysis of residue value-chain management by the States, especially Punjab and Haryana, for considering optimum allocation of different end-uses.
5. FAO may need to work with other Line Ministries to explore the possibility of leveraging funding support from the Green Climate Fund to develop integrated green value chains for sustainable crop residue management and reducing carbon emissions.

Creation of Unified India Organic Certification Body

A virtual meeting was held under Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, on 27 July 2020 to discuss the possibility of introducing a unified organic certification body by replacing the existing process of multiple sources of organic certification systems. In his concluding remarks, the CEO mentioned that instead of creating a statutory body under DACFW to initiate such a certification process, a single administrative body for organic farming and produces could be formed under the ambit of the Department at this stage. He suggested the constitution of a committee involving DACFW (Joint Secretary); NITI Aayog (Adviser Agriculture); Department of Fertilizers; Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority; QCI; Food Safety and Standards Authority of India; and Boston Consulting Group to look at the possibilities of creation of such a body. DACFW will drive this expeditiously.

(For more on agricultural reforms, see Section B: Policy and Programme.)

CULTURE

The culture vertical has been entrusted to suggest recommendations to improve heritage management in India.

The working group on 'Improving Heritage Management in India', constituted by PMO under CEO, NITI Aayog, released the report, 'Improving Heritage Management in India', in May 2020.

A research study on 'Challenges Faced in Heritage Management in India and Policy Imperatives' has been commissioned to the Development and Research Organization for Nature, Arts and Heritage. Field work is underway.

CAREER MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Between April and October 2020, in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, international travel for official purposes was temporarily suspended by the Government of India. Hence, no officer/official of NITI Aayog was deputed to represent NITI Aayog/Government of India in international workshops or seminars or meetings or conferences or to participate in training programmes organized by agencies such as the World Bank, ADB, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and International Labour Organization (ILO).

During this period, seven officers/staff belonging to CSS, CSCS and CSSS were nominated for various mandatory online training programmes conducted by the Institute of Secretariat Training and Management, New Delhi. All other training programmes sponsored or conducted by DoPT, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Indian Maritime University, Administrative Staff College of India, etc., were suspended due to the pandemic.

As many as 14 officers/officials of NITI Aayog and DMEO were nominated for the International Growth Centre-Summer School, which was conducted online in separate sessions in July and August 2020.

COMMUNICATIONS CELL

The communications vertical comprises the charts, maps and equipment and photostat units, and the editorial and social media cell.

The charts, maps and equipment unit is a centralized designing and technical support unit of NITI Aayog. It provides logistical, technical and equipment support to all verticals and divisions of NITI Aayog. It also looks after work related to the procurement and maintenance of audio and video equipment installed in the committee rooms and arranges for PowerPoint presentations. The unit plays a significant role in meetings, conferences, and seminars both within and outside NITI Aayog. During FY 2020–21, the unit provided support for PM-level meetings as well as for various other virtual meetings and seminars.

The photostat unit extends its services to all the verticals by providing printouts of various official documents, executing bulk photocopying/duplicating works, and executing document-binding work.

The editorial and social media cell is currently being managed by two full-time functionaries, who regularly interact and liaise with all verticals, attached bodies, and senior officers of NITI Aayog, the creative and digital media amplification agencies, and Press Information Bureau to provide editorial, news, social media and PR-related support.

DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS (DMA)

The data management and analysis vertical deals with issues related to data management, leveraging technology for improved statistical systems and promoting research and adoption of frontier technologies. The vertical is also responsible for managing the Women Entrepreneurship Platform. In the area of data management, two major initiatives were launched, namely the National Data Analytics Platform (NDAP) and DEPA. Both these initiatives have very significant impact potential. DEPA is revolutionary in that it will give people direct control over their data, bestowing the ability to choose specific entities with whom the data is shared and even the timing of it. It will completely change the existing personal data landscape through the introduction of these consent mechanisms. NDAP on the other hand is designed for policymakers and researchers. It standardizes data across geographies and timescales, enabling more meaningful inter-sectoral analysis. It will make public Government data available in a standardized fashion and facilitate easy analytics in formats conducive for research or decision-making.

In the area of promoting frontier technologies, the vertical has adopted a dual approach of undertaking seminal research and release of various strategy documents in key areas as well as demonstrating the efficacy of solutions through pilot projects. These pilot initiatives allow for understanding intricate challenges, specific governance issues, regulatory hurdles as well as the ‘human element’ pertaining to any potential wide-scale implementation. A framework is under development, which will enable the potential pilots to be scaled up further. These applications encompass a wide range of sectors, including health, agriculture, education, etc.

Some of the sectoral and strategic interventions include the work on responsible AI, the AI-based Clinical Decision Support System, the screening of diabetic retinopathy, the Cancer Biobank, tracking and tracing of pharmaceuticals, disbursement claim verification, document verification, transfer of land titles and quality assaying of vegetable produce.

Some of the key initiatives of the vertical have been summarized below:

National Data Analytics Platform

NITI Aayog is currently developing a user-friendly data and analytics platform to democratize data-driven decision-making called NDAP. The platform will serve as a key policy tool and include features such as a user-friendly search option, flexible API access to data, extensive meta-data, and interactive visualization. It is being supervised by a committee of data, sector and technology experts and supported by a multi-departmental committee.

The Vision Document for NDAP was launched during a workshop on 23 January 2020.

National Strategy on Artificial Intelligence

The Government of India in its Budget of 2018–19 had prioritized building our technology capabilities and mandated NITI Aayog to initiate a national programme to direct the efforts of the Government in the area of artificial intelligence. Consequently, NITI Aayog released India's National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence (NSAI) in June 2018. The strategy, called #AI for All, combines the economic potential of AI with social development and inclusive growth, and positions India as the 'AI Garage of the World'. With it, India joined an elite list of countries with a well-defined AI strategy.

As a follow-up to NSAI, the vertical is pursuing a series of strategy and implementation documents. AIRAWAT, which lays down India's approach for the development of AI-specific cloud-computing infrastructure, was released in January 2020. The development of AIRAWAT will democratize access to critical hardware that is important to drive AI research and development.

Digital Realities in India

Digital realities refer to a range of technologies, including Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR), that has been around for a while, but which saw a major growth in use cases and adoption in the last decade. They have a high growth potential—growing globally at 76% CAGR (Source: Nasscom), with a projected \$128 billion global market size by 2023 (Source: IDC). To identify the economic and social potential of these technologies and develop a strategy for their adoption in India, NITI Aayog conducted a series of industry consultations with Nasscom. A discussion document in this regard is currently under development.

Digital Capability Centre for IR 4.0

NITI Aayog is presently collaborating with industry partners, CII and McKinsey, to put together a plan for an Industry 4.0 hub. It is envisioned that the Digital Capability Centre (DCC) will have a hub-and-spoke model and play a key role in bringing together Industry 4.0 initiatives, which are being carried out in silos, by various Ministries, States and the academia. The DCC initiative will also help cultivate and develop a vibrant ecosystem of innovation, bringing together various industries, academia, start-ups and technology-solution providers. A workshop to lay out a roadmap for operationalizing the DCC concept was conducted on 23 January 2020. Subsequently, working groups were constituted with representation from various corporations who volunteered to support the initiative. It is envisioned that going forward, industry will be leading this initiative and the Government will be supporting it as a facilitator.

Development of Drone Ecosystem

As part of its mandate to address policy issues in emerging technologies, the DMA vertical was tasked with understanding the drone ecosystem in India, its challenges, and provide policy suggestions to increase ease-of-doing business for this industry in the country.

A series of consultations was held with relevant stakeholders to understand the regulatory challenges faced by the industry with regard to manufacturing, registration and operation of drones and steps taken by the Government to promote the industry and adoption of drones.

As part of policy inputs to promote ease-of-doing business, the vertical has been tasked with formulating recommendations to address the challenges identified in the drone industry through a white paper, the drafting of which is under progress.

Women Entrepreneurship Platform

The Women Entrepreneurship Platform is a first-of-its-kind unified-access portal to enable women across India to realize their entrepreneurial aspirations. On 11 January 2021, NITI Aayog and Flipkart came together to launch the revamped Women Entrepreneurship Platform. The revamped version includes an additional feature to offer mentorship to women mentees through a dedicated online mechanism facilitated under FICCI-FLO's 'Empowering the Greater 50%' mission.

[For more details on WEP, see Section E: Promoting Innovation.]

DECENTRALIZED PLANNING

The decentralized planning division in NITI Aayog has been assigned the work related to the Ministries of Panchayati Raj and Law and Justice. The division also examines and furnishes comments on draft Cabinet Notes, draft notes for the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, SFC and EFC memoranda, PIB and DIB proposals, Action-Taken Reports (ATRs), Action Plans and other miscellaneous matters received from these two Ministries.

Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyaan under Ministry of Panchayati Raj

To leverage the pivotal role of Panchayati Raj institutions, an expert committee constituted under the chairmanship of Dr Arvind Panagariya, former Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, had recommended the restructuring of the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyaan (RGSA). Based on the recommendations of the committee, RGSA has been converted into a Centrally Sponsored Scheme under the administrative control of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj from 2018 to 2022.

Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary, Including Gram Nyayalayas, under Ministry of Law and Justice

The development of infrastructure facilities for the judiciary, including gram nyayalayas, is under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, which is being implemented by the Department of Justice.

Evaluation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes

- ▶ The consultancy for evaluation of the scheme for development of infrastructure facilities for the judiciary, including gram nyayalayas, has been awarded to KPMG Advisory Services through open tender. The agreement was signed on 26 September 2019.
- ▶ The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been implementing the restructured CSS of RGSA since 2018–19. The draft terms of reference for third-party evaluation of the scheme for vetting were submitted for comments. The vertical has examined and submitted its views.

Reports

- ▶ The final report on 'Measures to Augment the Resources of Panchayati Raj Institutions' has been submitted by the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, in consultation with the vertical.

Appraisal

- ▶ The vertical appraised the draft SFC memorandum for implementing the central sector pilot scheme 'Drone Survey of Rural Habitations to Enable Property Validation', with an estimated cost of Rs 80 crore. The proposed pilot scheme will operate in Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
- ▶ The vertical appraised the draft PIB memorandum for the procurement of EVMs and VVPAT units, purchase of 10,42,2000 ballot units, 6,97,000 control units, and 6,46,000 voter-verifiable paper-audit trail for the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections for administrative approval.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

The digital communications vertical is tasked with the responsibility of appraisal and evaluation of schemes and projects in sectors related to telecommunications and postal services. The vertical provides inputs to concerned Line Ministries and undertakes policy formulation and evaluation with the aim of promoting the development of the digital communications sector to ensure availability of ubiquitous, reliable and secure modes of digital connectivity to citizens across the country. The work undertaken by the vertical has been highlighted below.

Draft Satellite Communications Policy

The vertical has formulated a draft 'Satellite Communications Policy' after extensive consultation with Government and industry stakeholders. The policy aims to liberalize and revitalize the satellite communications sector to reap the benefits of affordable satellite connectivity and promote universalization of broadband. It focuses on creating a conducive regulatory environment to encourage greater investment and private sector participation in the Indian satellite communications ecosystem and increase innovation and technological self-reliance.

Draft Right of Way Guidelines

Right of Way for laying of fibre and telecom installations has been identified as one of the major obstacles in the expansion of telecommunications infrastructure in the country. The

vertical has taken the initiative of addressing the issue and formulated the draft 'Right of Way (RoW) Guidelines 2020'. These guidelines are in full compliance with the Department of Telecommunications' RoW Rules 2016. The guidelines would aid State Governments in notifying their RoW policies in a manner that addresses the requirements of all stakeholders involved, namely, industry, States and local authorities, and citizens.

Monitoring of Projects

1. *BharatNet*

BharatNet aims to provide broadband connectivity to all gram panchayats in the country. The vertical is constantly monitoring the progress of the project by collaborating with the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). It has stressed upon the importance of expediting the project and its early implementation in gram panchayats, including those that are to be connected via a PPP mode.

2. *Connectivity in Aspirational Districts*

The vertical has been regularly monitoring and following up with the progress of uncovered villages in the Aspirational Districts and writing to the Department of Telecommunications for providing connectivity in these areas. Consequently, two new schemes were approved for providing connectivity in all 7789 uncovered villages.

Working Paper on Communications and Digital Technologies for Vision Document 2035

As a part of NITI Aayog's Vision Document 2035, the vertical has drafted a working paper on the vision for communications and digital technologies. The working paper was drafted after several rounds of consultations and deliberations with key stakeholders. The document lays down the vision for the sector in 2035 and suggests policy and regulatory reforms to achieve the mentioned targets.

Development of Knowledge Products

1. *Toolkit on Consumer Protection in Digital Age*

- ▶ Increasing the adoption of digital technologies will have a significant impact on the digital consumer and will give rise to a host of new consumer protection issues that are neither comprehensively understood nor addressed. Hence, the vertical has undertaken a project on the development of a 'toolkit on consumer protection in the digital age'.
- ▶ The project is being implemented in collaboration with the International Innovation Corps, University of Chicago.
- ▶ The toolkit would act as a guiding document for regulators, policymakers, industry, and consumers to understand and address consumer protection challenges. It would enhance the use of digital technologies in India based on consumer trust and global competitiveness of the Indian digital industry.

2. Toolkit on Advanced Digital Communications for India

- ▶ Advanced digital communication technologies will play a pivotal role in transforming India into a digitally empowered nation and support the country's economic growth, even more so after the fundamental changes triggered by the Covid-19 crisis.
- ▶ The vertical is supporting a project for the development of an advanced digital communications technologies' toolkit in partnership with the European Commission's DG Connect.
- ▶ The toolkit would identify issues and challenges related to rolling out of such technologies and provide guidance for the selection of measures, which should be prioritized in national strategies, to support India's digital transformation into a country with robust and secure connectivity infrastructure.

Group on Technologies to Ensure Connectedness in a Physically Distant World

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, a group was established to provide recommendations on technologies to ensure connectedness in a physically distant world. Several senior executives from technology/telecommunications/consulting firms were part of the group. The vertical facilitated the working of the group and the deliberations resulted in:

- ▶ Ideation of Unnati, a job platform for blue- and grey-collar workers
- ▶ Recommendations on policy and regulatory changes to support remote working

Appraisal

During 2020–21, the vertical examined a total of 6 Cabinet Notes, 1 SFC memorandum and 1 Draft Policy.

The following list highlights some of the documents analysed by the vertical:

- ▶ Provision of submarine optical fibre cable connectivity between mainland Kochi and Lakshadweep Islands (KLI Project)
- ▶ Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) scheme for provision of mobile services in uncovered villages of Aspirational Districts in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, and Odisha
- ▶ USOF scheme for providing mobile coverage in Arunachal Pradesh and two Districts of Assam, under the Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for the North-Eastern Region
- ▶ Spreading the coverage of broadband through public Wi-Fi hotspots
- ▶ Decisions on issues related to the auction of spectrum in 700/800/900/1800/2100 1/23001/2500 MHz frequency bands, such as quantum of spectrum, reserve price, spectrum usage charges, eligibility conditions, etc.
- ▶ Proposal for reduction of licence fees for fixed line broadband services to encourage proliferation of fixed line broadband.
- ▶ Draft Spacecom Policy 2020

Representation in Various Committees

The vertical has prepared the background material for high-level meetings and represented NITI Aayog in the following bodies:

1. Committee of Secretaries on Spectrum Allocation
2. Governing Council for Broadband, under National Broadband Mission
3. Digital Communications Commission
4. Broadband Steering Committee, under National Broadband Mission
5. Steering Committee on IT modernization of the Department of Post

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE CELL

In 2020–21, the economics and finance team worked on improving the competitiveness of the Indian economy, enhancing public financial performance, accelerating economic recovery in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, and stimulating optimal development of the financial sector.

Hon'ble Prime Minister's Interaction with Economists

On 8 January 2021, the Hon'ble Prime Minister met with various senior economists and industry leaders, in a meeting organized by NITI Aayog, to discuss priorities for India in a post-Covid world, which would be instructive in key policy considerations for the Union Budget 2021-22.



Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi met with top economists on 9 January 2020

Presentation to Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance

A presentation was made on 6 January 2021 to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance on the long-term impact of Covid-19 on the global economy, trade flows, and financial markets.

Presentation on Financing MSMEs to Secretary, Ministry of MSME

A presentation on financing MSMEs was made to Secretary, Ministry of MSME, on 4 September 2020, with an analysis of MSME-financing models of Bangladesh (Grameen Bank and BRAC Bank) and South Korea (Industrial Bank of Korea).

Inputs on Key Priorities for India under G20 Finance Track

Recommendations were made to the Ministry of Finance in September 2020 on key priority areas for India under the G20 Finance Track. The agenda comprised ten priority areas focused on financing for sustainable, inclusive, and resilient post-pandemic global growth.

Presentation to Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh

A presentation was made in August 2020 on the economic diagnosis and prognosis of Madhya Pradesh, along with recommendations in the form of sector-agnostic actionable areas and sector-specific action plans.

Presentation to Hon'ble Prime Minister

On 10 July 2020, a presentation was made to the Hon'ble Prime Minister on the Indian economy in the global context and the way ahead.

Presentation on China and India: Strategies and Potential Countermeasures

At the senior officers' meeting on 29 June 2020, an assessment was presented on the strategic position of China in the global economy and recommendations on policy priorities for India.

Presentation on Subsuming Energy into GST

An internal presentation was made on 28 May 2020 on subsuming energy into GST under three scenarios. The meeting was chaired by Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog.

Interaction on Impact of Covid-19 on Global Economy and Implications for India

An interaction was held on 11 May 2020 with senior economists on the impact of Covid-19 on the global economy and its implications for India. The meeting was headed by Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog.

Presentation to Finance Minister

A presentation was made to the Finance Minister and senior officers of the Ministry of Finance in April 2020 on the impact of Covid-19 and possible policy responses for the Government.

Centre for Advancement of Digital Financial Inclusion

NITI Aayog worked towards setting up the Centre for Advancement of Digital Financial Inclusion (CADFI) to accelerate progress in this area. CADFI will be the go-to place for knowledge, technology, training, and advisory services to present India's digital financial inclusion journey as a global public good.

Also, several virtual meetings and discussions on the state of the economy were held with senior economists and experts from banks and other financial institutions, industry, academia and think tanks, soliciting their inputs.

ArthNITI

Published since 2019, 'ArthNITI' is NITI Aayog's in-house bimonthly newsletter. It provides a snapshot of global trends relevant to India, analysis of India's recent macroeconomic performance, and shines a spotlight on the Government's flagship schemes, with the goal of providing insights into the progress being made towards building New India.

In FY 2020-21, two issues of 'ArthNITI' were released with special features on NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (Vol. 4, July 2020), and Indian Agriculture (Vol. 5, September 2020).

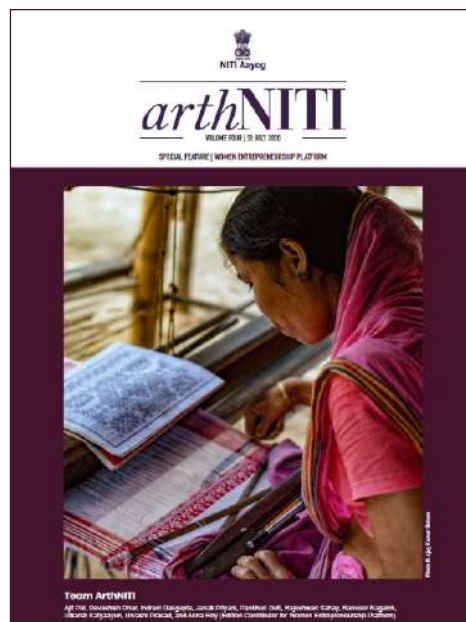
ENERGY

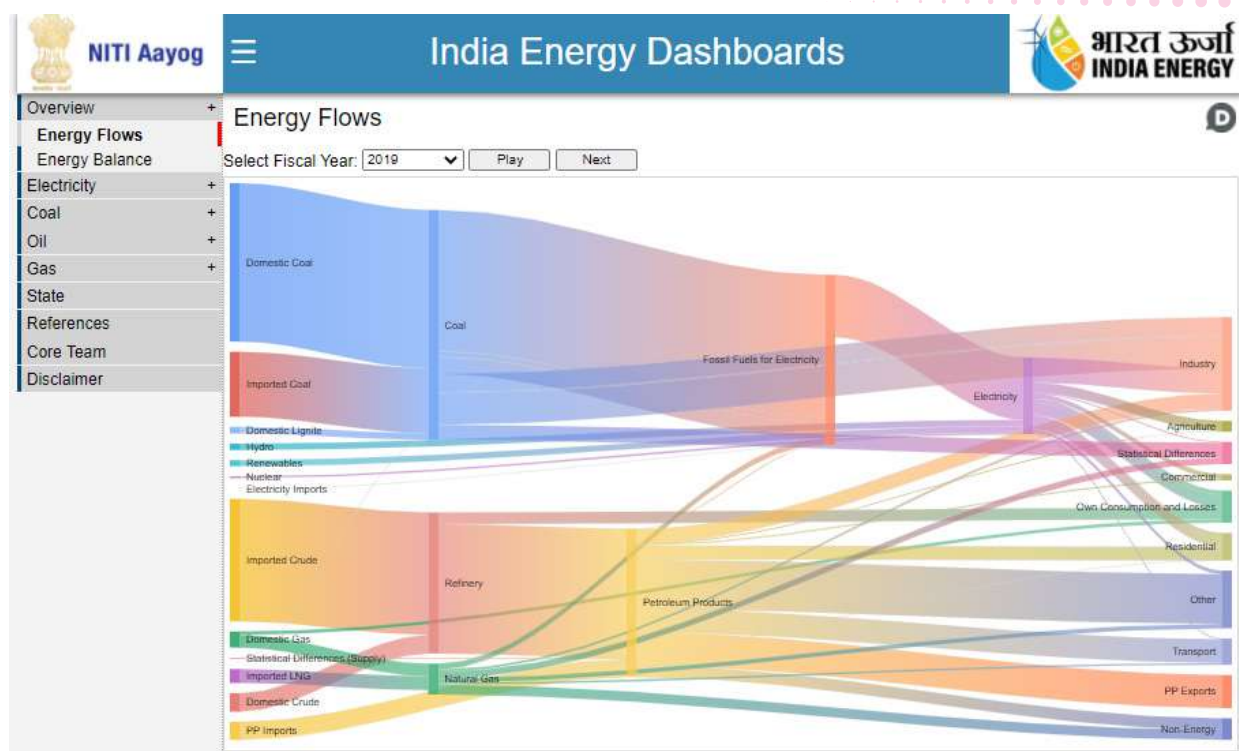
Energy Data Management

NITI Aayog is working towards energy data management to create an efficient system for improved data collection, management, and dissemination. Eight sub-groups, four on the supply side (coal, electricity, oil and gas, and renewables) and four on the demand side (agriculture, industry, building and transport), have submitted their final reports. The supply side reports have been utilized to devise new formats for integration with the India Energy Dashboard, which will be launched soon. The demand side reports will be utilized to create a new format for compiling data in the India Energy Dashboard.

India Energy Dashboard

A new version of the India Energy Dashboard, to present data on demand and supply sectors at one place, will soon be made public. The enhanced features include data download in a cleaner and more intuitive manner, and data visualization at sub-yearly frequencies. Live data from Saubhagya, Ujala, Praapti and Vidyut Pravah portals has also been integrated with the dashboard. Other features include semi-automated workflow/issue-tracking system for managing periodic updates, and addition of regulatory data for the area served by the State-owned distribution utility MSEDCL. As the next step, Version 3.0 will have data and charts on the demand side prepared by NITI Aayog in consultation with various Ministries.





GIS-Based Energy Map of India

NITI Aayog has undertaken steps towards developing an integrated and dynamic GIS-based energy map of India. An MoU was signed between NITI Aayog and ISRO in June 2017 for developing the geospatial energy portal for India.

The proposed map presents data for each of the energy sectors—oil and gas, coal, renewables, and electricity. Energy Ministries have vetted the data and provided their final consent. The tool will be used for geospatial planning by the respective Ministries and State-level authorities. This will also help investors in taking decisions in the energy space.

Functionality testing, application testing, vulnerability assessment and penetration testing have been completed. The tool will be first made available to all the related Ministries and Departments and the States.

Giga-Scale Battery Manufacturing Programme

NITI Aayog is in the process of finalizing the Giga-Scale Battery Manufacturing Programme of India. For creating energy storage demand and supporting giga-scale manufacturing, NITI Aayog has been provided \$1 million as technical assistance. It will prepare a grid-level policy and regulations framework for energy storage demand, a demand study at the inter-state transmission system level and another at the distribution level (in the State) for energy storage requirement of all kinds. Four States, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, have been selected for this purpose. The testing standards have been framed, which will be used by labs to test manufactured battery in India and provide testing certificates that will be the basis for subsidy disbursement. NITI Aayog and the World Bank have initiated work on the creation of a testbed proposal for which agencies such as CPRS, Electrical Research and Development Association, Vadodara, have been engaged.

Prime Minister's Interaction with CEOs of Global Oil and Gas Companies



NITI Aayog, in consultation with MoPNG, organized the fifth annual interaction of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India with the CEOs and experts of global oil and gas companies. An annual event since 2016, the objective of the interaction is to create a global platform to understand best practices, discuss reforms, and plan strategies for accelerating investments into the Indian oil and gas value chain. Key stakeholders such as Dr Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, CEO, Abu Dhabi National Oil Company and Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, UAE; Saad Sherida al-Kaabi, Deputy Chairperson, President and CEO and Qatar Minister of State for Energy Affairs; Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo, OPEC Secretary General; Dr Faith Birol, IEA Executive Director; Yury Sentyurin, GECF; and Dr Daniel Yergin, Vice Chairman IHS Markit, UK, shared their inputs on the sector. CEOs of major oil and gas companies, including Rosneft, BP, Total, Lyondell Basell, Tellurian, Schlumberger, Baker Hughes, JERA, Emerson and X-Coal, participated in the meeting.

Vision Document 2035

As a part of NITI Aayog's Vision Document 2035, the energy vertical will provide a broad roadmap for addressing the concerns of energy access, affordability, reliability rational pricing and energy security.

Energy Modelling

India Energy Security Scenario (IESS) 2047: NITI Aayog has undertaken the updation of IESS 2047 Version 3 with the UK Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The tool is being updated to incorporate the yearly figures of demand and supply and will represent a complete picture of the Indian Energy System.

In-house Modelling capabilities: To develop an in-house capacity for energy modelling, NITI Aayog has taken steps to encourage capacity building in developing such models. It has set up an energy model, MESSAGEix, for India. The tool has a full-fledged integrated model, covering multiple nexus. NITI Aayog is looking at developing a decision-simulator tool to simplify the use of such technically heavy tools for policymakers and other stakeholders to enable more informed policymaking.

Projects, Reports and Analysis

India PV Edge 2020 Symposium



On 6 October 2020, a global symposium, 'India PV Edge 2020', was organized by NITI Aayog, MNRE, and Invest India. The event brought together cutting-edge technology providers, equipment makers, and champion PV companies to present their technologies to the Indian industry. Around 60 prominent Indian and global CEOs attended the event.

Report on Coal Washing

On the direction of PMO to examine the environmental benefits and economics of using washed coal, a comprehensive report was submitted to the Prime Minister's Office in March 2019.

Analysis of ONGC Videsh's Overseas Investments in Oil and Gas Assets

NITI Aayog has been directed by PMO to undertake a detailed analysis of the investments made by ONGC Videsh in overseas oil and gas assets. Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University has been engaged to carry out the analysis. The vertical provided all necessary support for the evaluation. The study has been completed and findings shared with MoPNG. The final report has been submitted to PMO.

Testing Framework for Advance Chemistry Cells

The framework was formulated in consultation with Deloitte, DST, BIS and other stakeholders. It lays down the guidelines for testing of advance chemistry cells to avail subsidy to be provided under the National Programme on Advance Chemistry Cell Battery Storage.

Coal to Chemical

A coal gasification committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Dr VK Saraswat, Member, NITI Aayog, to prioritize coal gasification projects in consultation with the Ministry of Coal. A technical standing committee has also been created under his chairmanship.

Policy Inputs

Infrastructure Review by Hon'ble Prime Minister

Various policies and programmes of coal, oil and gas, renewable energy, power, atomic energy have been critically examined and policy suggestions provided for an infrastructure review meeting chaired by the Hon'ble Prime Minister.

Based on a high-level committee on coal under the chairmanship of Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, the Ministry of Coal brought out a commercial coal mining policy in June 2020. Under this policy, 38 coal blocks were offered for commercial mining.

Solar Manufacturing

NITI Aayog, along with MNRE, formulated a solar-manufacturing scheme, specifically for cutting-edge technologies in the form of production-linked incentives.

Coal Diversification

NITI Aayog provided inputs to PMO for diversification of CIL/NLC projects into areas such as solar manufacturing and aluminium.

Mine Developer and Operators (MDOs)

NITI Aayog, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Ministries of Mines, Coal, Steel and Finance, has provided its input to the Cabinet Secretariat for the appointment of MDOs.

Other Tasks Undertaken by Energy Vertical

1. Work related to energy sector schemes' monitoring in collaboration with the DMEO team. The key parameters for monitoring were developed by the energy vertical.
2. The vertical was represented in various committees constituted by M/o Power: (i) optimal energy mix in power generation; (ii) formulation of a long-term strategy for giving concessional power for value addition of new materials; (iii) encouraging competition in the development of transmission projects. With respect to M/o PNG, the vertical was represented in: (i) codification of international petroleum industry practices; (ii) joint working group on biofuels. With respect to MNRE, the vertical was represented in: (i) commercialization of hydrogen fuel for transportation. With respect to M/o Coal, the vertical was represented in: (i) Standing Scientific Research

- Committee; (ii) inter-ministerial group on allotment of coal blocks; (iii) standing linkage committee (long-term) for coal supply to power stations, cement plants, etc.
3. Examination of various energy-sector-related SFCs, EFCs, DPRs, PIBs, Cabinet Notes, CCEA notes, ECS, CoS notes, etc. related to the Ministries of Power, Petroleum and Natural Gas, New and Renewable Energy, Coal and Atomic Energy.
 4. Examination of VIP references/Parliament questions/Parliament assurances and other inter-sectoral policy issues related to the development of coal and lignite sector.

GOVERNANCE AND RESEARCH

In line with NITI's mandate to position itself as a knowledge and innovation hub, NITI Aayog had operationalized a new set of guidelines, viz. 'Research Scheme of NITI Aayog 2018'. The revamped guidelines are aimed at broad-basing research work, besides aiding reputed institutions for organizing seminars, workshops and conferences, and providing non-financial support through the use of the NITI Aayog logo for various events.

Through this scheme, NITI Aayog endeavours to get high-quality research done through reputed institutions for timely fulfilment of the National Development Agenda. Proposals for funding of 10 new research studies (Table 5) were approved during the period April–November 2020, while 10 ongoing studies were completed (Table 6). Besides, logo support was provided to 18 institutions for events across a range of subjects and sectors. A total of 33 studies are underway. A total amount of Rs 330.07 lakh was released to institutions conducting these studies during the period April–November 2020.

Study reports, received both in hard and soft copies, are uploaded on the NITI Aayog website. Copies of these reports and proceedings are also circulated to the concerned verticals, who examine them and share them with concerned Ministries/Departments for further action.

(Lists of research studies approved and completed, seminars approved, and logo support provided are given in Annexure II.)

Policy Inputs

Taskforce on Sugarcane and Sugar Industry

A taskforce was constituted under the chairmanship of Dr Ramesh Chand, Member (Agriculture), NITI Aayog, to find long-term solutions for the sugarcane and sugar industry, to rationalize its dependence on State assistance and encourage farm diversification. The technical support to the taskforce was provided by the Department of Food and Public Distribution. The taskforce held stakeholder consultations with relevant Ministries, industry bodies and farmer groups to take a comprehensive overview of the sector. The final report was submitted in June 2020.

Decriminalization of Minor Offences

Decriminalization of minor offences is one of the thrust areas of the Government. NITI Aayog undertook an exercise to identify specific provisions under different Acts where decriminalization could be attempted. Criminal penalties, including imprisonment for minor offences, act as deterrents, and is one of the major reasons impacting business sentiments and hindering both domestic and foreign investments. NITI Aayog held discussions with several stakeholders on the most impactful aspects of decriminalization that would augment investor comfort without

compromising public interest. As a result of this exercise, more than 30 Ministries/Departments initiated a review process, and some sought public feedback on identified provisions for decriminalization. Actions taken on these aspects would go a long way in improving ease-of-doing business and help unclog the court system.

Review of Population Coverage Criteria under National Food Security Act, 2013

The existing decadal system of updating beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013 is based on the population coverage ratios of the sixty-eighth Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (Census, 2011), which has resulted in the freezing of beneficiaries for each State/UT. Given the increase in population since then, there are demands from States/UTs to update the beneficiary list by ensuring an annual updation system under NFSA. In this context, the Department of Food and Public Distribution requested NITI Aayog to suggest an alternative methodology for covering beneficiaries under NFSA, including prospective beneficiaries. Two meetings have been held so far under the chairmanship of Prof. Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog, to review the coverage of population criteria under NFSA.

Revival of Closed Urea Units

An inter-ministerial committee under the chairmanship of CEO, NITI Aayog, has been actively monitoring the setting up of five new urea plants at Ramagundam, Talcher, Gorakhpur, Sindri and Barauni, and resolving various issues encountered during the process. These include three closed urea units of the Fertilizer Corporation India Limited and two closed units of the Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation Limited, which are being set up by a consortium of public sector undertakings. Several meetings of the inter-ministerial committee were held during the year. These five plants will produce 6.35 million metric ton per annum urea. It is expected that once these projects go on stream, India's reliance on imported urea would go down significantly. The Ramagundam plant is expected to start operations by January 2021, while the Gorakhpur, Barauni and Sindri ones are expected to be operationalized in the second quarter of 2021–22. The Talcher unit, India's first plant based on coal gasification, is expected to be on stream by September 2023.

Restructuring Samavesh

NITI Aayog had launched a major initiative, Samavesh, aimed at networking and partnership with knowledge and research institutions using a hub-and-spoke model. Under Samavesh, NITI entered into MoUs with 37 reputed institutes/think tanks across different sectors. Samavesh helps NITI evolve as an apex think tank of the Government, while enabling partner institutions to develop as centres of excellence and further reach out to and mentor similar institutions. In a high-level meeting held in October 2020 under the chairmanship of Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, it was decided that Samavesh will be restructured to overcome bottlenecks and enable it to emerge as a more potent fora for the think-tank role of NITI Aayog.

Review of Autonomous Bodies

NITI Aayog had earlier constituted a committee for the in-depth review of the Autonomous Bodies (ABs) of the Union Government. Two reports were submitted, covering a total of 287 such bodies across 28 Ministries/Departments. Further action is being taken by the Department of Expenditure for the rationalization of ABs based on multi-stakeholder consultations undertaken during 2020–21.

Study on Prices of Essential Commodities

The Government keeps a close track on the prices of essential commodities through two main sources: the Price Monitoring Division of the Department of Consumer Affairs and the Consumer Price Index of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. Amidst sharp fluctuations being observed in the prices of essential commodities and recent amendments in the Essential Commodities Act, a need was felt to not only compare the trends in prices of essential commodities being captured by the two sources, but to also analyse the synergy between the two data sources. Consequently, a study was undertaken by NITI Aayog to compare the prices as well as changes in prices over time (*i.e.* inflation rates) of essential commodities captured by these sources for the last five years (2015–20). The study has helped understand the correlation and identified areas for improved price monitoring mechanisms for essential commodities.

Study on Economic Freedom of World Index 2020

The Economic Freedom of the World Index 2020 was published by Fraser Institute in September 2020. This report ranks countries on the degree to which their policies and institutions are supportive of economic freedom. The 2020 report was based on 2018 data and ranked India at the 105th position among 162 economies. To identify reasons and steps required to improve India's ranking, a detailed analysis was undertaken by the vertical during the year.

Report on Chemical Sector in India

The Indian chemical industry is the sixth largest in the world, and the third largest in Asia. It currently stands at USD 180 billion (2019) and with the right technology, investments and policy, the industry could potentially grow to USD 300 billion by 2025. With the aim to unleash this potential, a study was undertaken by the vertical in collaboration with the Gujarat State Fertilizers and Chemicals Limited to ascertain measures to augment India's manufacturing capacities in the chemicals and petrochemicals industry.

Meetings and Events

First Meeting of SAARC Planning Ministers

The first meeting of the SAARC Planning Ministers was held on 25 November 2020 with the Indian delegation led by CEO, NITI Aayog. The meeting focused on assessing the impact of Covid-19 on economies and societies of the SAARC countries to articulate a South Asian vision on strategies to be adopted to achieve Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. It also sought to identify emerging areas of regional cooperation. This meeting was preceded by the meeting of the Planning Secretaries on 23 November 2020, which was led by Additional Secretary, NITI Aayog.

Online Dispute Resolution

The present dispute resolution ecosystem in the country is insufficient to cater to the increasing demands for efficient and effective dispute resolution systems. World over, the potential of dispute resolution mechanisms, especially through technology, is being recognized. Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) has received impetus to tide over the constraints, especially due to Covid-19. Against this backdrop, NITI Aayog organized meetings on catalysing ODR in

June and August 2020. The meetings generated broad consensus amongst judges of the Supreme Court, industry representatives, dispute resolution professionals, start-ups, technology experts and global ODR pioneers. Subsequently, NITI Aayog constituted a committee under the chairmanship of Shri AK Sikri, former Justice, Supreme Court, to formulate an action plan on ODR in India. The committee comprises CEO, NITI Aayog, and Secretaries of six Ministries/ Departments to facilitate the adoption, integration and broad-basing of ODR. More than 20 consultations have been held with domestic and international stakeholders. The draft report was released in the public domain in November 2020 and has received an overall positive feedback from the entire ecosystem. Based on the feedback, the report will be finalized.

GOVERNING COUNCIL SECRETARIAT (GCS)

The governing council secretariat coordinates the activities of all the verticals, divisions and units of NITI Aayog. It also circulates correspondence received from different Ministries, Departments, States and Union Territories to the concerned verticals. The major activities carried out by the secretariat in 2020–21 were:

1. As a coordination focal point, GCS organized weekly senior officers' meetings under the chairmanship of Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog.
2. Organized meetings of the senior management committee and facilitated discussion on research proposals/projects/studies received for funding by NITI Aayog.
3. Coordinated, compiled monthly DO letters sent to the Cabinet Secretariat and Council of Ministers.
4. Implemented the scheme 'Plan Formulation, Appraisal and Review' in NITI Aayog and processed audit replies during 2020–21.
5. Printed the NITI Aayog Annual Report 2020–21 and circulated it to the Parliament Standing Committee during the Budget session 2021.
6. Finalized Action Taken Report on the decisions taken in the Fifth Governing Council meeting of NITI Aayog.
7. Cleared applications received under RTI.
8. Processed the grievances received on CPGRAMS portal with respect to GCS for necessary redressal.
9. Processed and prepared replies to Parliament questions.
10. Other important works handled include general coordination and those related to Parliament.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

The health and nutrition vertical represents NITI Aayog in various committees and EFC/SFC of MoHFW, Ministry of AYUSH, Department of Health Research and Department of Pharmaceuticals. It is also part of the scientific advisory groups of ICMR, National Institute of Health and Family Welfare and Public Health Foundation of India, among others.

Major responsibilities of the vertical include:

- ▶ To evolve a shared vision of national development priorities and strategies in the sector of health and family welfare, with the active involvement of States.
- ▶ To provide advice and encourage partnerships between key stakeholders and national and international like-minded think tanks as well as educational and policy-research institutions.
- ▶ To maintain a state-of-the-art resource centre, be a repository of research on good governance and best practices as well as help in their dissemination to stakeholders.

Major achievements/contributions of the division are as follows:

Reforms in Homeopathy Central Council Act and Indian Medicine Central Council Act

A committee under the chairmanship of Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, and comprising Additional Principal Secretary to the Hon'ble Prime Minister; CEO, NITI Aayog; and Secretary, AYUSH, was constituted with the mandate to examine the legal provisions and modalities of the Homeopathy Central Council Act and the Indian Medicine Central Council Act, and suggest necessary reforms. After extensive deliberations, the committee finalized the draft National Commission for Homoeopathy Bill 2017 and National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Bill, 2017, both of which were enacted by Parliament.

Evaluation of Population Research Centres

MoHFW established a network of population research centres with the mandate to provide, inter alia, critical, research-based inputs related to health and family welfare programmes and policies at the Central and State levels. These centres undertook research projects related to family planning, demographic research, biological studies and the qualitative aspect of population control. The objective was to gainfully utilize the feedback from these research studies for plan formulation, strategies, and modifications of ongoing schemes. While reviewing the umbrella scheme 'Family Welfare and Other Interventions', by PMO, it was mandated that a committee, comprising NITI Aayog Vice Chairperson and Member (Health); and Secretary, Department of Health and Family Welfare, will examine the real outcome of the scheme, its impact on policy adoption and the need for course correction. The committee recommended evaluation of the



centres by a third party, Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), Hyderabad. ASCI has made recommendations for reviving these centres. NITI Aayog is working on restructuring and reinventing the role of these centres.

Study on National Health Mission: Impact and Learnings for Future

The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) was launched in 2005 by the Government, with special focus on 18 States. In 2013, the Government of India launched the National Health Mission (NHM), which subsumed NRHM and the National Urban Health Mission. The mission was extended in 2018 to continue till 2020. Three studies on the impact of NHM on health outcomes; healthcare and finances; and health systems, governance, and HRH have been completed, besides evaluation reports on Centrally Sponsored Schemes by DMEO. The reports bring out in quantifiable terms what has worked and what has not. They focus on financing, human resources and governance, and suggest areas of improvements and actionable recommendations in the context of Ayushman Bharat and India's commitment to SDGs, universal health coverage and health equity.

Public Health Approach to Address Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease

Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is a major health problem, which falls in the spectrum of non-communicable diseases. This is often considered a precursor to various typical metabolic anomalies that precede the development of diseases such as coronary heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, etc. Besides, progression of NAFLD often leads to hepatic fibrosis, eventually cirrhosis and hepatic cancer. Unfortunately, NAFLD has not received its due attention as a public health issue and is currently not integrated with the National Programme for Prevention of Cancer, Diabetes, CVD, and Stroke (NPCDCS).

NITI Aayog in consultation with all relevant stakeholders proposed the way forward to address this important health issue. The Ministry has acknowledged the importance of NAFLD and approved its integration with NPCDCS.

(For more on health and nutrition reforms, see Section B: Policy and Programme.)

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The HRD vertical deals with issues related to education, sports and youth affairs. The Line Ministries of the vertical are MoE, and its two departments, Department of School Education and Literacy and Department of Higher Education; and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, and its two departments, Department of Sports and Department of Youth Affairs. Education related to agriculture and allied sectors, public health, and medical are not the domain areas of the vertical. The HRD vertical covers:

1. Pre-primary, elementary, secondary, higher-secondary, higher, technical and teacher education
2. Formal and non-formal education, including adult literacy
3. Areas of special focus, such as education of girls, Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), minorities, and children with special needs, and youth affairs and sports.

Contribution in Policy and Governance Issues

During the year 2020–21, the vertical participated in various meetings as member and representative of MoE project approval boards, such as Samagra Shiksha, Midday Meal in Schools, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching, Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyaan, National Initiative for Design Innovation, NCERT, and National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, among others. The vertical also represented NITI Aayog in various meetings of the Department of Higher Education regarding the Higher Education Funding Agency (HEFA) and provided valuable inputs. The officers of the vertical represented NITI Aayog in various meetings organized by institutions such as NCERT, National Council of Teacher Education, National Institute of Educational Planning Administration, etc.

The vertical took various initiatives on policy issues during the year, including analysing the progress of major flagship programmes (like Samagra Shiksha, among others) and deliberating on outstanding issues in school and higher education for preparation of folders for the PM's domestic visits.

High-Power Committee on Teacher Education

Based on the issues highlighted by NITI Aayog in teacher education and training, the Government of India constituted a 'High-Power Committee on Teacher Education' under the chairmanship of Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, on 21 February 2020. Other members of the committee include Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, MoE; Chairperson, National Council of Teacher Education; Prof. Manjul Bhargava; Indu Prasad; Dr RP Shukla; Prof. RC Patel; Prof. (Retd) Chand Kiran Salija; and Joint Secretary (Samagra Shiksha) as Member Secretary.

Two meetings of the committee were held on 6 March and 30 July 2020. Various bold and reform-oriented decisions were taken in the meetings. The same is being implemented by MoE/ National Council of Teacher Education. Also, the tenure of the committee has been extended and its recommendations will soon be available in the public domain.

Strategy Paper on Improving Quality of Public-School Education in India

The learning outcome crisis as reported by various Governmental and non-governmental reports is the harsh reality of the current school education system in India. These reports have rightfully pushed various State Governments and the Central Government to undertake systemic reforms to mitigate the alarming learning crisis. There have been encouraging results from different parts of India. This, however, is also an opportunity to step back and reflect what quality education means and how we translate that in our public-school education system.

In this regard, NITI Aayog conducted a series of workshops where academicians, grassroot organizations and officials from various State Governments (State Project Directors, Directors of SCERT, DEOs, HMs, teachers), who are working on field and have an exemplary record, were brought together to resolve the challenges of school education at the systemic and sub-component levels.

NITI Aayog is working on a strategy paper that will unpack the conceptual ideas of quality education and provide a framework/implementation roadmap to inform various State Governments of tools to consider when they design interventions suited to their own contexts.

Collaborations

The vertical has reviewed the performances of the Department of School Education and Literacy and Department of Sports against the indicators on OOMF, under the chairmanship of Member (Education) and Member (Sports), in collaboration with DMEO. Reviews of the Department of Higher Education and Department of Youth Affairs will be done soon.

The vertical also participated actively in the evaluation study of UCSS for the HRD sector and provided terms of reference and critical observations at various levels. The vertical also provided terms of reference and critical comments at all levels on all research studies pertaining to the education sector under RSNA, conducted by the governance and research vertical.

Appraisal

During the year 2020–21, the vertical examined various proposals, including SFCs, EFCs, DIBs, PIBs, Cabinet Notes and PPRs from various multilateral institutions, such as the World Bank, ADB, JICA, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), etc., with respect to the schemes of the two Ministries.

Some of the key appraisals were: Cabinet Notes on National Education Policy 2020, World Bank-supported STARS project, expansion of Sainik schools, MoU between India and Norway on higher education; SFC on adult education and construction of Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan at Devaprayag, Garli, Agartala and Mumbai; DIB on HEFA loan of Rs 388.61 crore, Rs 455.02 crore and Rs 423 crore to IIT Bombay, JNU and Jamia Millia Islamia, respectively; and EFC on National Sports University.

The summary of various appraisals done by the vertical has been tabulated below.

S. No.	Appraisals	Numbers
1.	Cabinet Note	5
2.	EFC	9
3.	SFC	4
4.	DIB	4
5.	PIB	2
6.	PPR	5

Miscellaneous Activities

The vertical also examined (i) proposals sent by NGOs and trusts for funding research/evaluation studies, (ii) reports on education submitted by various researchers to the governance and research vertical, and (iii) issues raised by Chief Ministers. State issues in education and sports and youth affairs have been taken up with the Line Ministries. The vertical also handled VIP/PMO references, public grievances, RTI-related matters, preparation of outcome budget and provided material for inclusion in the President's Budget speech and for various budget-related issues. Under the NITI internship programme, interns from various leading institutions were provided training.

Youth Affairs and Sports

The youth represent the most dynamic and vibrant segment of the population. India is one of the youngest nations in the world, with about 65% of its population under the age of 35. The youth in the age group of 15–29 years comprise 27.5% of India's population. To harness this *yuva shakti* in nation-building, various programmes and schemes are being implemented by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. A flagship programme launched in 2017 by the Department of Sports for improvement in performance of sportspersons in international games is 'Khelo India'. The Khelo India programme has been introduced to revive the sports culture in India at the grassroots level by building a strong framework for all sports played in our country. Another flagship programme launched by the Department in August 2019 was the 'Fit India Movement', to take the nation on a path of fitness and wellness. It provides a unique and exciting opportunity to work towards a healthier India.

During 2020–21, officials of the vertical represented NITI Aayog in various meetings: project appraisal committee meetings, departmental project approval committee of Khelo India meetings, PAC meetings for financial assistance to voluntary organizations institutions, and meetings of Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan under National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development of the Ministry.

(For more on HRD reforms, see Section B: Policy and Programme.)

INDUSTRY

The industry vertical works on the formulation of policies and measures for the growth of the industrial sector in India. The vertical liaises with multiple administrative Ministries and Departments for the various sectors under the broad manufacturing umbrella. Keeping in view national priorities and socio-economic objectives, the vertical constantly focuses on enhancing the quality and quantity of engagements of various industry stakeholders with the different arms of the Government, including the Central and State Governments. The vertical also coordinates with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Department of Commerce, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Ministry of MSME, and Ministry of Mines.

The vertical also regularly engages with apex industry associations such as FICCI, CII, ASSOCHAM, in their activities related to the promotion of industrial cooperation and to stimulate Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into India.

In 2020–21, the vertical contributed to the following areas:

Studies and Reports

Study on 'Preparation of Roadmap for Creating Global Champions in Automotive Industry in India'

The Indian automotive sector is a USD 100+ billion industry, of which exports comprises USD 27 billion (2019). Auto OEM exports stand at USD 11.7 billion. The auto-component industry's exports amounted to USD 15 billion in FY19 and exports have been growing at a CAGR of 11.6% between FY16 and FY19. India's share of exports in the global automotive trade is less than 2% in value terms; this indicates that there is a significant opportunity for growth of the Indian automotive sector.

In view of the above, the vertical has undertaken a research study on 'Preparation of a Roadmap for Creating Global Champions in the Automotive Industry in India'. The final report has been submitted and shared with the Department of Heavy Industry.

Study on 'Integration of MSMEs on e-Commerce Platforms'

Universal e-commerce access can be achieved by creating a digital infrastructure platform, which would connect small sellers and traders to existing nationwide marketplaces. Given the availability of existing soft and hard infrastructure with Central and State Governments, aggregation of these sellers can be achieved, and the data so created can be leveraged for onboarding in the e-commerce space. The vertical has undertaken a study on the 'Integration of MSMEs on e-Commerce Platforms' to facilitate onboarding of Indian MSMEs in different e-commerce marketplaces. The study was commissioned in October 2020 and research work is underway.

Attracting Japanese Investments

In the changing geo-political situation arising due to the Covid-19 pandemic, when countries are looking for alternative supply chains and companies are exploring strategic relocation of their industries, India provides an attractive option. In this context, Japan announced an economic stimulus package of USD 2.2 billion to help Japanese manufacturing units shift production back to Japan and other countries. NITI Aayog, in partnership with DPIIT, Invest India and the Indian Mission in Tokyo, has engaged proactively with select Japanese investors and companies, like Nidec Corporation, Yazaki Corporation, Daikin Global, Kobe Steel and Panasonic Corporation, to facilitate their investments and expansion plans in India. Issues highlighted by investors were taken up with the concerned Ministries/Departments and State Governments to provide early resolutions and much-needed comfort to international investors.

Aatmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh Roadmap 2023

The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh envisioned Aatmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh– AtmaN@2023, a roadmap to outline strategies and for drawing up concrete actionable and deliverable initiatives and programmes in different sectors to achieve significant growth in the next three years. He invited NITI Aayog's participation and technical cooperation.

This was a unique initiative by a State Government in engaging with NITI Aayog for the preparation of a roadmap. The consultation process was initiated in the first week of August 2020. The initiative was led by CEO, NITI Aayog, and involved eight verticals.

Extensive deliberations involving experts, and seamless structuring and commitment at the highest level, that is of the Chief Minister and his colleagues, resulted in a high degree of ownership for the roadmap.

NITI Aayog will be also sharing its expertise with the State Government in the preparation of a dashboard for ranking the performance of Districts and monitoring the progress of key projects for achieving better outcomes.

The Aatmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh Roadmap was released on 12 November 2020.

Initiatives for Improving Competitiveness of Textile and Apparel Sector

1. The inter-ministerial group constituted to examine the issues and suggestions related to GST rates, inverted duty structure and import duty on Man-Made Fibre, finalized the report 'Unleashing Potential of Man-Made Value Chain' in January 2020. The recommendations of the report are at different stages of implementation.
2. A study on 'Impact Assessment Technology Upgradation Funds Scheme' conducted via M/s Technopak was finalized.
3. A study on the assessment of mega textile parks and PPP structuring options was awarded to E&Y. The study will also support the structuring of the proposal for mega textile parks by the Ministry of Textiles.
4. A meeting with the Clothing Manufacturers Association of India in June 2020 on issues regarding additional Covid line of credit and stressed assets in the textile sector at the level of Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, was convened, and the recommendations sent to the Ministry of Finance and Reserve Bank of India.
5. The views of NITI Aayog on the draft textile policy were shared with the Ministry of Textiles.

Other Initiatives

The vertical is taking forward the work carried out by NITI Aayog in the maritime domain, with the National Security Council Secretariat, through meetings with stakeholders to shape the vision of 'Security and Growth for All in the Region-Maritime Sector'.

Promoting lean manufacturing in Indian SMEs: Three meetings have been held to review the impact of the existing scheme. This initiative is being undertaken jointly with M/o MSME.

INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

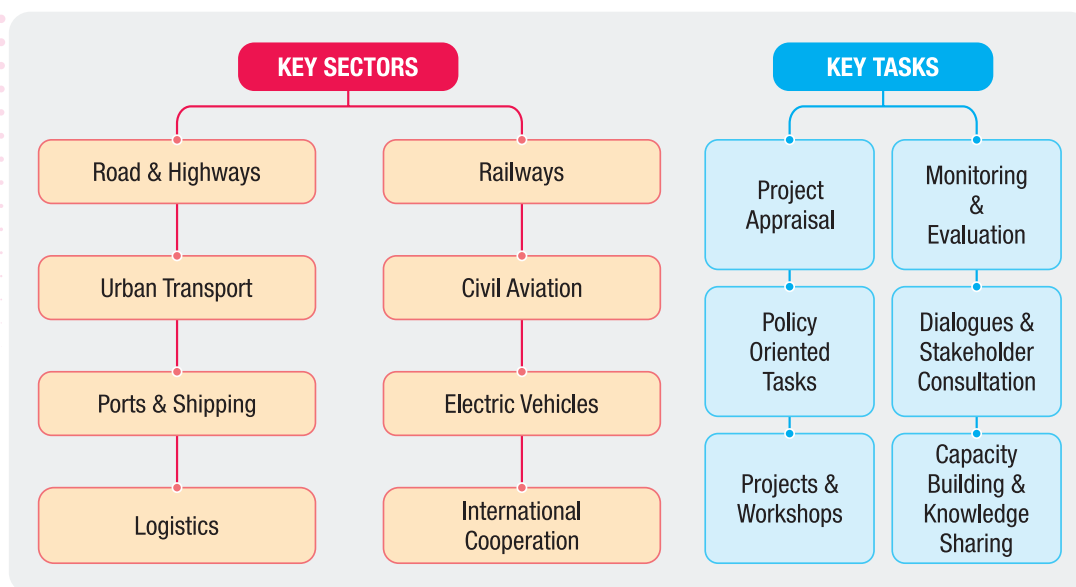
The information and broadcasting division examines and reviews policy issues concerning the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The vertical has examined and provided comments on Cabinet Notes listed below:

- ▶ Merger of five film media units of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting into a company through the rationalization of infrastructure, manpower, and other resources.
- ▶ Draft Cabinet Note for amendment in policy guidelines for uplinking and downlinking of private satellite TV channels was supported by the vertical, subject to incorporation of a set timeline for getting a licence and single-window clearance.

INFRASTRUCTURE CONNECTIVITY

The infrastructure connectivity vertical has been entrusted with the task of monitoring, appraisal and evaluation of transport sector projects. It also deals with the policy-related aspects of the transport sector. The vertical works across various transport sub-sectors: roads, highways, urban transport (including electric vehicles), civil aviation, ports, shipping, inland waterways and railways. In addition, the vertical works with many domestic and international institutions and is driving key transport-related projects. The vertical strives to facilitate the sustained and holistic

development of clean and connected transportation systems and strengthen the foundations for transformative mobility of both people and goods.



Railways

Committee for Monitoring of Railway Safety Fund

An independent committee was formed under the chairmanship of CEO, NITI Aayog, in 2017–18 to monitor the Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh (RRSK). The RRSK is a corpus fund of Rs 1 lakh crore over a five-year period, the principal aim of which is to improve the standards of railway safety through periodic monitoring of railway safety works. The members of the committee include Additional Member Planning, Railway Board, and Joint Secretary (PFC-II), Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance. Adviser (Infrastructure-Connectivity) is the convener of this committee.

In the meetings held on 23 July and 18 August 2020, the committee discussed improvements in railway safety that had been undertaken and deliberated further on technical reforms that are required. The installation of Communication-Based Train Control (CBTC), Train Collision Avoidance Systems (TCAS), automated doors for suburban railways as well as the need to focus on system-wide reforms were discussed. It was observed that there was a reduction in train accidents and number of fatalities since the inception of the fund. The committee recommended extension of the scheme for another five years.

Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC)

The vertical is responsible for monitoring the progress of the economically significant Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) project. To this effect, quarterly review meetings are conducted. To ensure the speedy implementation of the project, CEO, NITI Aayog, reviewed its progress on 20 June 2020. The vertical made a detailed presentation on key issues and laid out actionable recommendations. Subsequently, the progress of the project was reviewed by the Chief Secretaries of the concerned States on 24 September 2020. Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, also reviewed the project's progress on 27 October 2020 and recommended that project-related updates should be regularly shared with NITI.



Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, and Shri VK Yadav, Chairman, Railway Board, inspected the Khurja-Dadri section of the Dedicated Freight Corridor in July 2020

Output-Outcome Monitoring Framework

Dr VK Saraswat, Member, NITI Aayog, reviewed the Output-Outcome Monitoring Framework of the Ministry of Railways (MoR) on 24 August 2020. NITI Aayog suggested various improvements in the monitoring framework of MoR on projects and schemes, such as business restructuring of production units (PUs) of rolling stock and station redevelopment. The indicators were further fine-tuned during the meeting.

Appraisal

The vertical undertook detailed appraisal of various railway projects, which were received as Expanded Board of Railways (EBR) memorandum and/or Preliminary Project Reports (PPRs). These projects include line-doubling, capacity augmentation, laying of new lines, development of suburban railway networks and elimination of manned level crossings. The vertical also appraised projects related to the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS).

The key projects which were appraised include:

1. Doubling between Mahesana–Palanpur of Western Railway
2. Doubling between Nimach–Ratlam
3. New Broad-Gauge line between Dharwad–Belgaum via Kittur
4. Haryana Orbital Railway Project
5. Semi High-Speed Rail Project from Thiruvananthapuram to Kasaragod in Kerala
6. Delhi–Gurugram–SNB Regional Rail Transit System Corridor

Cabinet Note

A draft Cabinet Note on conversion of the National Rail and Transportation Institute from a ‘deemed to be university’ to a Central university (National Rail Transportation University) was examined and comments subsequently conveyed.

Value Capture Finance and Transit-Oriented Development

The vertical has prepared a draft policy framework on value capture finance and transit-oriented development for public transport projects. The aim of the policy framework is to encourage public transport agencies to raise alternative revenues to support self-sustainability and promote the development of dense, mixed-use, mixed-income neighbourhoods along the route of an upcoming public transport project.

Roads and Highways

Appraisal

The vertical undertakes appraisal of road and highway projects and represents NITI Aayog in the meetings pertaining to SFCs, EFCs and high-powered committees (HPCs). In the current financial year, the vertical evaluated 45 SFCs, and 5 EFC packages. The vertical has also appraised 20 PPRs and represented the view of NITI Aayog in the screening committee meetings organized by DEA.

The vertical is also part of the Project Appraisal and Technical Scrutiny Committee (PATSC) of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). The purpose of PATSC is to appraise the techno-economic as well as socio-environmental and commercial feasibility of a project prior to its sanctioning. As part of the PATSC appraisal mechanism, the vertical has appraised over 50 project packages and provided detailed comments and suggestions on ways to improve the viability of such projects.

Further, as part of the Accelerated Road Development Programme for North-East (SARDP-NE) scheme, the vertical undertakes the appraisal of projects aimed at enhancing connectivity in the difficult terrains of the North-Eastern States of India. Notably, the vertical undertook inspection site visits to Tripura to determine the feasibility of an alternative to the only existing National Highway in the State.

Board Meetings of NHAI: CEO, NITI Aayog, is a part-time member of the board of NHAI. NHAI undertakes quarterly board meetings wherein CEO, NITI Aayog, plays an important role. As part of the preparation of the quarterly meetings, the vertical examines the detailed agenda prepared by NHAI thoroughly and provides necessary inputs and suggestions through CEO, NITI. Many important issues, including alternative revenue sources, implementation modes of road construction, monetization of assets, etc., are discussed and deliberated upon.

Cabinet Notes

The vertical has been playing an important role in policy formulation by examining Cabinet Notes pertaining to roads and highways. Cabinet Notes examined include:

- ▶ Infrastructure investment trusts
- ▶ North-East Sector Road Development Scheme
- ▶ Inter-ministerial committee on road sector schemes and programmes in the North-Eastern region
- ▶ Challenges and opportunities of transport integration in Eastern South Asia
- ▶ Request for exemption from allocating funds under Development Action Plan for Scheduled Castes for linear projects

Policy Research

The vertical is a part of the research and advisory committee of MoHUA for guiding, evaluating and appraising research projects pertaining to new policies, guidelines, project concepts, technology adoptions, etc., related to the urban transportation sector. Such projects include impact of e-mobility on other modes of transport, impetus for shared mobility, ropeways, urban logistics, parking management, etc.

A detailed note, based on projects appraised, was prepared by the vertical on key learnings and subsequently shared with MoRTH. The note emphasizes the learnings and recommendations related to normative costs of road projects, compliances related to NHAI circulars, improving project due diligence related to traffic forecasting, economic and financial feasibility, value sharing and value capture financing mechanisms, and project packaging.

Logistics

Improving efficiency and reducing costs in the logistics sector are fundamental to boosting economic growth, boosting exports, generating employment, and improving environmental sustainability. The work undertaken by the vertical in the logistics sector has been highlighted below.

Efficiency Improvement and Cost Reduction

- ▶ To improve efficiency and reduce logistics costs from 14% of the GDP, the vertical has been enhancing the initiatives of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry by exploring and developing an overarching framework for the logistics sector. The framework aims at creating a convergence of data, information, research, best practices and decisions, along with envisaged challenges and related interventions and solutions. Collaborations are currently being explored to facilitate the same.
- ▶ The vertical is also supporting a pro-bono research study pilot for optimizing the logistics supply chain of agriculture produce in the Indore region. The study is being undertaken by 18 students of the School of Planning and Architecture (Bhopal) and led by a team of five professors.

Decision Support Systems

The vertical is supporting and facilitating a GIS-based digital platform for informed decision-making. It is developing an overarching framework to ensure convergence and minimal repetition of work related to the transport and logistics sectors. A draft framework for setting up a decision-support system is being prepared and an MoU with ISRO (NRSC-Bhuvan team) envisaged. The decision-support system will enable better and more accurate investment decisions and, thereby, ensure smoother execution of infrastructure projects.

Goods and People Movement Pattern: The vertical is actively exploring the creation of an automated GIS-based system that converges necessary multi-sectoral information (related to goods and people movements' trends and forecasts) together. This is likely to facilitate the creation of a database that can be updated regularly and automatically.

Ports and Shipping

Promotion of Cruise Tourism in India: The vertical facilitated a discussion on the proposal for promotion of cruise tourism in India with the Ministry of Shipping and Ministry of Tourism. A meeting in this regard was chaired by CEO, NITI Aayog, during which it was decided that India should be developed as a new destination for international cruise tourism. It was highlighted that India has so far not been able to fully tap into the potential of tourism despite its vast coastline of over 7500 km, serene landscapes, and other places of historic importance around the coastlines.

Appraisal

SFC proposals were examined by the vertical and detailed suggestions and comments were provided. Some of the important proposals examined include:

- ▶ Setting up of the National Maritime Heritage Complex in Lothal
- ▶ Development of a marina at Prince Dock, Mumbai Port Trust
- ▶ Kolkata Port Trust's proposal on mechanization of Berth No. 3 at Haldia Dock Complex
- ▶ Proposal of Paradip Port Trust for establishing a 400-bed super specialty hospital, with an option to further develop a medical college and expansion on PPP basis.

Civil Aviation

Infrastructure Development of Airports

Pursuant to PMO's record of discussion, dated 3 February 2017, the vertical monitors the development of infrastructure in airports by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and prepares quarterly progress reports. Accordingly, the quarterly progress report of infrastructure development in airports has been prepared and submitted to PMO.

Appraisal

An EFC memo to provide funds to the Regional Air Connectivity Funds Trust (RACFT) in order to meet the annual deficit under the UDAN regional connectivity scheme was examined and inputs provided. The UDAN scheme enables air operations on unserved routes with the objective of letting people fly at affordable rates, connecting regional areas and promoting balanced growth. Of 706 such routes, 688 have so far been initiated, of which 212 have become operational.

Electric Vehicles



The National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage was set up in March 2019 to drive strategies on transformative mobility and phased manufacturing programmes for electric vehicles (EVs), EV components and batteries for mobility and storage purposes.

Policy initiatives implemented thus far have been highlighted as follows:

- ▶ A direct fiscal incentives scheme, FAME-II, was launched with a focus on electrifying public and shared transport across the country. Around 5595 electric buses to be deployed in 64 cities through the OPEX model have been approved. Responses to the Expression of Intent (EoI) for subsidy were received from 91 applicants; of these nearly 1050 charging stations to be set up by 22 Government/PSUs in 65 cities have been approved.
- ▶ A public charging station has been declared as a de-licensed activity under notified EV Charging Infrastructure Guidelines and Standards. EESL has already set up 65 charging stations in Delhi and is planning another 800 across the country. Model building bylaws were amended to make provisions for EV charging points in private and public buildings.
- ▶ NITI Aayog had prepared a scheme for setting up 'giga-scale' battery storage plants in India to unlock the rising energy storage opportunity and to facilitate the clean movement of people and goods. The same has been proposed to the Cabinet.
- ▶ Consultations were done, including with the Ministry of Steel and MoRTH, to finalize the Steel Scrap Recycling Policy and Vehicle Scrapping Policy. These two policies seek to encourage circular economy, increase scrap utilization, reduce India's dependence on imports and ensure only safe vehicles on roads.
- ▶ A pilot project on e-highways was envisaged and a technical feasibility report is to be submitted by identified experts.

- ▶ The States of Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh have formulated their EV policies. More than 40 EV promotional events were supported by the mission and stakeholder consultations with around 100 think tanks, academia, non-profits, industry, start-ups, multilateral and bilateral institutions, etc., were held since its inception.

Consultations

The following consultations pertaining to the adoption of electric vehicles were held:

- ▶ Consultation to finalize the parameters for EoI for deployment of electric buses on the OPEX model.
- ▶ Consultations to finalize the parameters for EoI for deployment of EV charging infrastructure in cities.
- ▶ A consultation on frontier cutting-edge charging technologies for India was held in January 2020 under the chairmanship of CEO, NITI Aayog.
- ▶ Consultations were held with the States of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka in December 2019. It was decided that the States should finalize EV policies and explore the GeM portal to tender for procurement of e-buses. Necessary policy regulations should be made by the States to discourage plying of lead-acid battery vehicles.
- ▶ Discussions were held with the Department of Science and Technology, during which it was decided that a committee would be formed for developing the Indian charging standards.

Current Projects

- ▶ The vertical is working with ADB on a project report on EV and component localization.
- ▶ RMI and NITI Aayog are working on a State EV Policy Accelerator Programme and Zero-Emission Delivery Campaign.
- ▶ The vertical is working with the World Bank on solving the commercial and retail financing hurdles in the uptake of electric vehicles.

Inter-ministerial Consultations

- ▶ Consultations held to finalize the parameters for EoI for deployment of electric buses on the operational cost model basis.
- ▶ Consultations held to finalize the parameters for EoI for deployment of EV charging infrastructure in cities.
- ▶ Fifth inter-ministerial steering committee of the National Mission for Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage chaired by CEO, NITI Aayog, was held on 15 October 2019.
- ▶ A consultation on frontier cutting-edge charging technologies for India was held in January 2020 under the chairmanship of CEO, NITI Aayog.
- ▶ Consultations were held with MoRTH and the Ministry of Steel to finalize mechanisms for vehicle scrapping policy.

Collaborations with Other countries

Dialogue with the UK Government on EVs in July 2019:

- ▶ India to develop e-mobility accelerator awareness campaign in collaboration with NITI Aayog and the UK Government

Policy Dialogue with Japan was held in October 2019:

- ▶ India and Japan to set up a working group on battery recycling.
- ▶ A workshop on hybrid electric vehicle technologies to be organized.
- ▶ Renault Nissan Technology to share strategies to adopt EV as energy infrastructure.
- ▶ Skill development workshops for organized and unorganized workforces in the auto sector.

Bringing in International Experience

- ▶ Working with ADB on a project report on EV and component localization.
- ▶ Working with RMI on a State EV Policy Accelerator Programme and Zero-Emission Delivery Campaign.
- ▶ Working with the World Bank on solving the commercial and retail financing hurdles in the uptake of electric vehicles.

Workshops and Stakeholder Consultations

- ▶ 'India Moves Together' workshop with States was held in August 2019 to take stock of EV initiatives; a follow-up workshop was held on 27 February 2020.
- ▶ Regional workshop of NE States at Guwahati was held in October 2019 to discuss mobility challenges in the region.
- ▶ Advisory to States to exempt road tax for EVs. (July 2019/MoRTH.)
- ▶ Consultations with States, MP, UP and Karnataka, in December 2019:
 1. States to finalize EV policies and explore the GeM portal to tender for procurement of e-buses.
 2. Necessary policy regulations to be made to discourage plying of lead-acid battery vehicles.
- ▶ *E-highway*: Three meetings were organized in September and October 2019 under the chairmanship of Dr VK Saraswat, Member, NITI Aayog, to identify a feasible stretch for implementation of the project.

Programmes and Incentives

- ▶ The FAME-II scheme was launched with an outlay of Rs 10,000 crore as direct fiscal incentives for a period of three years (April 2019/Department of Heavy Industry).
- ▶ Production-linked incentives of Rs 18,100 crore for five years sanctioned for the manufacturing of advance chemistry cell battery storage (November 2020/NITI).

LAND AND WATER RESOURCES

The land and water resources vertical provides directional and policy inputs in these two sectors. It imparts water-and-land-related knowledge and skills to States, provides strategic policy vision to the Government and deals with contingent issues.

The objective of the vertical is to facilitate water and land security to ensure adequate availability of water for life, and agriculture and economic development by 2024. This broader vision is to be attained by achieving the following goals:

Water Resources

- ▶ Provide adequate and safe drinking water (piped) and water for sanitation for citizens and livestock.
- ▶ Provide irrigation to all farms (*har khet ko pani*) with improved on-farm water-use efficiency (more crop per drop).
- ▶ Provide water to industries, encourage them to utilize recycled/treated water and ensure zero discharge of untreated effluents from industrial units.
- ▶ Ensure long-term sustainability of finite groundwater resources.
- ▶ Operation and maintenance of water infrastructure with active participation of farmers and/or consumers.
- ▶ Promote R&D to facilitate adoption of the latest technologies in the water sector.
- ▶ Provide water to water-scarce agrarian Districts that are rainfed and experience extreme weather shocks, almost twice as high as in irrigated areas.
- ▶ Bridge the gap between the irrigation potential created and irrigation potential utilized of such projects.
- ▶ Promote the revitalization of rivers for the integrated development of river basins and the protection of vanishing rivers.
- ▶ To check the degrading quality of water in various regions of the country.

Land Resources

- ▶ Transition from presumptive to conclusive land titling.
- ▶ Consolidate fragmented plots of farmers to enhance efficiency and equity.
- ▶ Create a digitized and integrated land records system that is easily accessible in all States.
- ▶ Increase efficiency in the management of land.
- ▶ Convert waste and fallow land to productive uses.

Achievements of Water Resources

The vertical is involved in the formulation of policies, development of strategies and appraisal of programmes for the sustainable management of water resources in the country. A brief on the important works undertaken in 2020–21 is given below:

Model Concession Agreements on Solid and Liquid Waste Management

On the direction of NGT, the vertical prepared model concession agreements and model request for proposals for integrated solid waste management (including bioremediation of legacy waste) and integrated liquid waste management (including faecal sludge management) on the hybrid annuity model of PPP. The documents are being uploaded on the GeM portal for wider adoption by urban and rural local bodies.

Arth-Ganga

To develop a sustainable economic development model based on the Ganga, called 'Arth-Ganga', and a comprehensive database and digital dashboard, a group was constituted under Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Minister of Jal Shakti, and Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog. So far, the vertical has conducted two meetings of the group and is reviewing the action plans developed by IIMs, IIT Roorkee and other Ministries to realize the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister to harness 3% of the GDP from Arth-Ganga.

Committee to Frame Strategy on Flood Management Works and River Management Activities and Works in Border Areas for 2020–23

Consequent upon a decision taken in PMO, a committee was constituted under Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, to formulate a strategy on flood management works and river management activities and works in border areas between 2020–23. Thereafter, the vertical prepared a report, which covers structural and non-structural measures, including anti-erosion and coastal area protection measures, a national water model for India along the lines of a similar model from the US, details of flood management plans, case study of major flood events of India, technologies that can be used for flood management, and some solutions from international best practices. The report also contains timebound targeted action points for every stakeholder. The report will be submitted in January 2021 to PMO.

Framing of National Water Policy and Policy on Safe Reuse of Treated Wastewater

The vertical has participated in the framing of the National Water Policy 2020 and the Policy on Safe Reuse of Treated Wastewater, by providing detailed inputs, comments and suggestions to the Ministry of Jal Shakti and National Mission for Clean Ganga.

Framing of Guidelines on Convergence of Sourcing of Earth for National Highways, State Roads, Railway Construction, and Desilting/Deepening of Waterbodies

The vertical has prepared draft guidelines for countrywide convergence of sourcing of earth for the improvement and construction of National Highways, State roads and railways, and desilting/deepening of waterbodies. The guidelines were circulated to all concerned Ministries for adoption.

Evaluation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes

The vertical is assisting DMEO in the preparation of a report on the evaluation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

Achievements of Land Resources

The vertical strives to ensure the provision of secure property rights and titles, and clear and consistent regulations around operations, leasing, and sale of land. A brief on the important works undertaken is given below:

Model Act for Conclusive Land Titling and Rules

In pursuance of the decision held in a meeting of the Cabinet Secretary, a committee was constituted to draft the Model Act and Rules on Conclusive Land Titling. The committee had several meetings and extensive discussions, and considered various documents, before finalizing the Model Act and Rules on Conclusive Land Titling, which has been circulated to the States for wider adoption.

Appraisal

During the year, the vertical examined 14 Cabinet Notes, 8 EFCs and 15 PPRs.

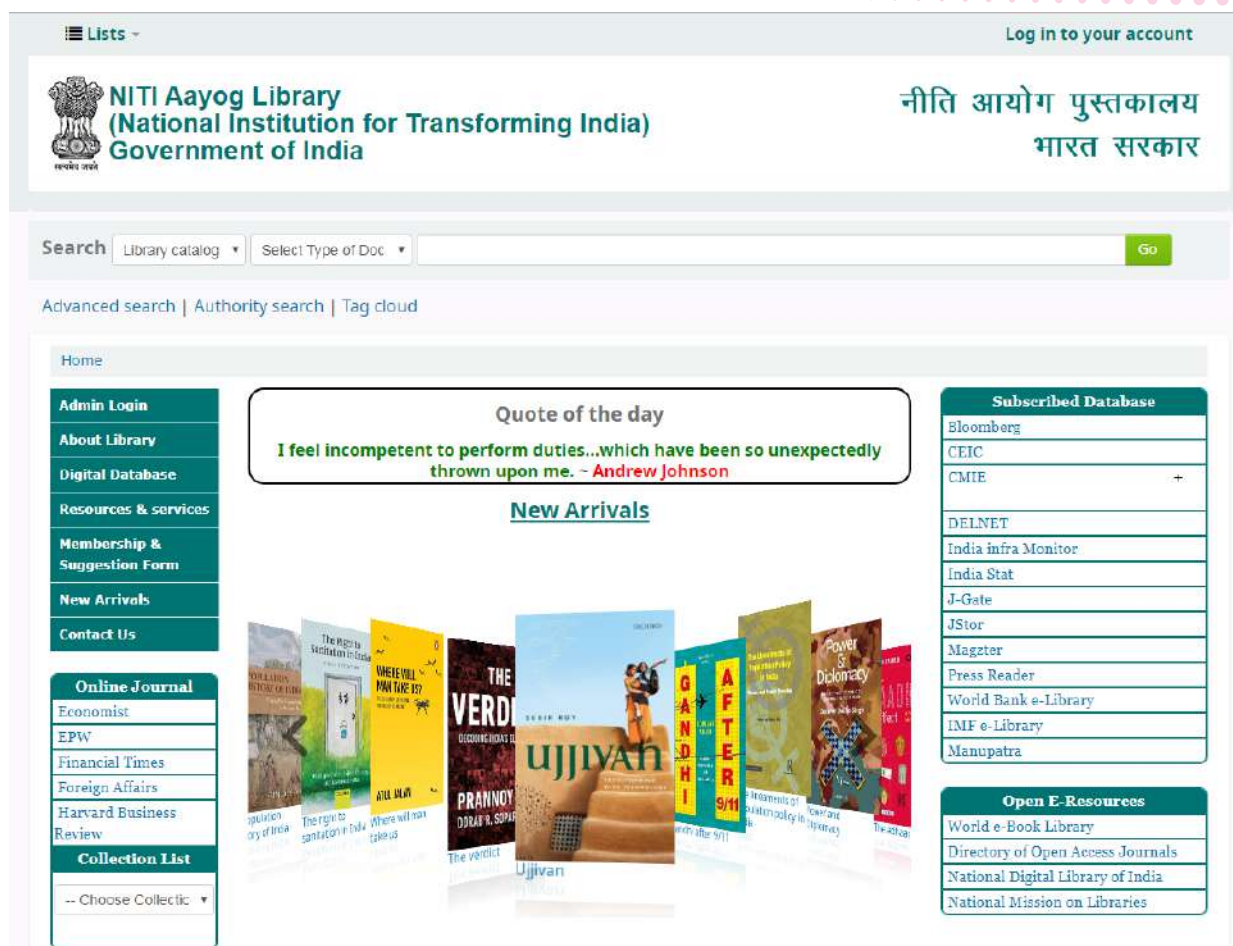
LIBRARY AND DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

The library and documentation centre provides comprehensive access to books, journals, and reports to all members of NITI Aayog. In-house consultation facility was also extended to officials of other Departments and research scholars enrolled with various institutions/universities.

The library has over 1.75 lakh books, reports, bound volumes, and audio-visual items. It subscribes to 158 journals and magazines and newspapers in both English and Hindi. It also subscribes the following e-resources:

Databases	Databases	Online Journals
Bloomberg	Jstore	Economist
CEIC	Magzter	EPW
CMIE	Press Reader	Financial Times
India Stat	World Bank e-library	HBR
J-gate	Press Reader	

Online access facility of journals is available to members of the library. It is fully automated with the help of the software KOHA. The page is shown below:



It brings out the following publications:

1. Daily Digest, Parts A and B
 - ◆ Part A contains news pertaining to NITI Aayog.
 - ◆ Part B provides a collection of articles, editorials, comments, and analyses published in different newspapers on different topics.
2. Weekly bulletins: The library compiles weekly bulletins for the following six verticals:
 - a. Agriculture/Rural Development
 - b. Education
 - c. Energy
 - d. Health and Nutrition
 - e. Industry
 - f. Infrastructure
3. Book Alerts (Monthly): It contains the pictures of the front cover and a short abstract of the new books purchased by the library.
4. DOCPLAN (Monthly): It contains abstracts of articles taken from periodicals received in the library, related to core areas dealt by NITI.

5. Recent List of Additions (Monthly): It contains bibliographic details of books/documents added or received in the library.
6. Table of Contents (Monthly): It contains the titles of the articles published in the journals subscribed by the library.

During the period between 1 January–17 November, 484 books were added to the collection. The library also responded to approximately 3000 reference queries and attended to the specific needs of users. About 3022 readers visited the library for purpose of consultation and reference work.

MANAGING URBANIZATION

The managing urbanization vertical focuses on urbanization and works closely with MoHUA. The vertical also collaborates with national and international knowledge centres/institutions, think tanks, experts, and policymakers for capacity building of various stakeholders and initiating dialogues through workshops, meetings, etc., on various sub-sectors. Besides, the vertical also examines SFC/EFC/DIB/PIB proposals, Cabinet Notes, PPRs, detailed project reports, etc., received from Central Ministries/States/UTs for GoI funding and/or external assistance for various projects proposed to be undertaken by them.

The major activities/works undertaken in 2020–21 are as follows.

Approaches to Urban Development

The vertical is preparing a working paper, 'Visioning Urbanization 2035–47', as an input for the 'Vision Document 2035–47' of NITI Aayog. It was felt that India being a diverse country, a singular approach or model for future urbanization may not be suitable. In this context, a virtual brainstorming session on 'Approaches to Urban Development' was held on 4 August 2020, which was chaired by Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog. Certain thematic areas emerged during the session for further deliberations, such as balanced regional planning and development, population density management, use of technology, urban mobility/transport and so on.

Transferable Development Rights (TDR)

TDR is one of the ten value capture methods outlined in the 'Value Capture Finance Policy Framework', announced by MoHUA in 2017. Considering the potential of the TDR method in the development of city infrastructure in a speedy and cost-effective manner, the vertical started developing a background note on TDR in May 2020. A virtual stakeholder consultation was chaired by Dr K Rajeswara Rao, Additional Secretary, NITI Aayog, on 17 July 2020, with Joint Secretary, MoHUA, and the Municipal Commissioners of cities that have implemented TDR.

A draft guideline document was developed based on the inputs received in the concept note presentation; key learnings that emerged from TDR implementation in Indian cities; and a dozen consultations/discussions with the vertical, field practitioners, etc. This was presented in a virtual meeting presided by Secretary, MoHUA, on 24 September 2020 and was much appreciated.

A final document titled 'Transferable Development Rights: Guidelines for Implementation of TDR Tool for Achieving Urban Infrastructure Transition in India' was sent to MoHUA vide DO letter dated 28 September 2020, with due incorporation of all the relevant suggestions provided during the meeting. Another DO letter, dated 5 November 2020, was sent from

CEO, NITI Aayog, to Secretary, MoHUA, with a request to issue an advisory to the States for implementation of guidelines and to organize a webinar with the Principal Secretaries of States/UTs of urban development departments, metro municipal corporations/UDAs, etc., to discuss and disseminate the guidelines for adoption and implementation of TDR. The vertical plans to partner with MoHUA in taking joint steps towards putting the guidelines in action by engaging all States/UTs.

Strengthening States/UTs for Broad-Based Urban Development through Technical Assistance (Non-Lending) from ADB

The vertical has been working in cooperation with ADB towards building approaches/policy for urban development of the States/UTs. The NITI-ADB Programme includes three background studies: meeting with Chief Secretaries; workshop for Principal Secretaries/Secretaries (UD); and a study/field tour. Towards this, a meeting was held on 29 August 2020 under Dr K Rajeswara Rao, Additional Secretary, NITI Aayog, to discuss the scope of work, approach, and other aspects. ADB submitted its proposal on 23 November 2020 to undertake studies in 12 cities from seven States, which was approved by CEO, NITI Aayog, on 27 November 2020. ADB was informed via an email on 27 November to complete the work in a timebound manner and associate regional organizations in these studies.

Reforms in Urban Planning Capacity in India

In view of the projected trend of urbanization, challenges being faced in the cities and India's commitments towards global agendas, strategic interventions are required in terms of technical and quantitative human resource capacities. Towards this, a virtual background consultation meeting on 'Proposed Reforms in Urban Planning Education System in India' was held on 9 October 2020 under Dr K Rajeswara Rao, Additional Secretary, NITI Aayog. Senior representatives from various organizations participated in the consultation and several issues were identified for taking actions. An urgent need for enhancing the human resource capacities of local bodies was highlighted by various participants. Based on the concerns raised by the participants during the consultation, and after internal brainstorming and perusal of research documents of national and international organizations, a detailed background paper was prepared, which highlighted the key issues in urban planning education, demand, and absorption of planners.

In this regard, an advisory committee was constituted, vide OM dated 22 October 2020, under Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog—and comprising NITI Aayog CEO and Additional Secretary, Secretaries of MoHUA, MoE and Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Chairpersons of UGC, AICTE and TCPO, President and Acting Director, CEPT University Ahmedabad, President ITPI, Directors of SPA Delhi, NUIA and vertical members. The committee was requested to complete the exercise within five months of its first meeting, which was virtually held on 17 November 2020. Consequently, the title of the task was revised from 'Reforms in Urban Planning Education System in India' to 'Reforms in Urban Planning Capacity in India' on the advice of Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog. Accordingly, the terms of reference of the committee were revised.

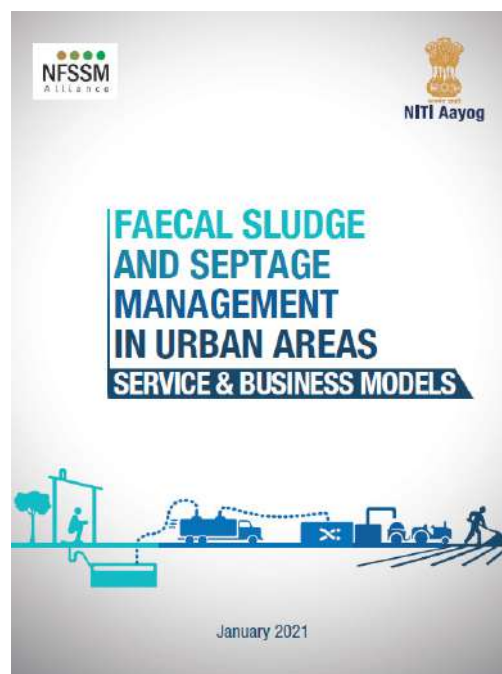
Since the first meeting of the advisory committee, the vertical has been coordinating with AICTE and UGC, and assessing the supply side of planning programmes in the country. Several meetings have been held with experts to discuss the long-term strategic dimensions. The vertical has also been deliberating on possible solutions through a series of brainstorming

sessions. The first session was held on 17 December 2020 and the second on 12 January 2021 under the chairmanship of Dr K Rajeswara Rao, Additional Secretary, NITI Aayog. The vertical is in the process of consolidating the key areas of attention and possible solutions for the next meeting of the committee.

Faecal Sludge and Septage Management

To promote private-sector participation in the urban sanitation sector, CEO, NITI Aayog, desired the mapping of various business models in Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM). Consequently, Dr K Rajeswara Rao, Additional Secretary, NITI Aayog, held a meeting with the national FSSM Alliance on the matter of safety of sanitation workers and mechanization of sanitation operations. Thereafter, on 11 September 2020, the Centre for Policy Research presented before CEO, NITI Aayog, their research findings on the subject. The Director General of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) also presented hybrid annuity-PPP-based business models undertaken in the NMCG project for construction of sewage treatment plants on 24 September 2020. To further understand various models being implemented across the country, a webinar under the chairmanship of CEO, NITI Aayog, was held on 28 October 2020. Key organizations working in the FSSM sector presented various business models adopted by them, along with challenges and the way forward for the sector.

Consequently, NITI Aayog released the book 'Faecal Sludge and Septage Management in Urban Areas: Business and Service Models' on 19 January 2021. The book is a repository of 27 best practices across 10 states, and covers implementation models on every component of the sanitation service chain. The case studies are based on experiences of various urban local bodies across the country. It is hoped that the best practices mentioned in the report will act as a comprehensive resource for other cities in planning sustainable and inclusive sanitation.



Solid Waste Management

Considering the success of the Indore model—the city was declared the cleanest in India four times in a row—CEO, NITI Aayog, desired a step-by-step approach on effective solid waste management to guide and build the capacity of all municipal corporations across the country in the field of solid waste management. Subsequently, the vertical prepared a detailed approach in consultation with the principal consultant of Indore's waste management planning, District Collector, and Municipal Commissioner, which was circulated to all municipal corporations across the country.

Ward Cleanliness Index

A high-level meeting on 'Cleaning up Our Cities' was held on 15 May 2019 under CEO, NITI Aayog, where it was decided to have a detailed performance monitoring and ranking at the ward level. Consequently, the vertical, in consultation with the All-India Institute of Local Self Government, developed a Ward Cleanliness Index, a real-time tool to monitor and rank the wards of municipal corporations across India and to instil competition at the ward level to encourage them to improve urban sanitation and cleanliness. These guidelines were shared with GNCTD, which has selected nine model wards of Delhi to pilot the index. In this regard, a DO letter, dated 1 July 2020, was sent from CEO, NITI Aayog, to Secretary, MoHUA, with a request to forward the same to all the urban local bodies for necessary consideration and implementation.

Urban Management Programme (Water Recycling and Reuse)

The second phase of the Urban Management Programme (Water Recycling and Reuse), a collaboration between NITI Aayog and Singapore Cooperation Enterprise, was launched on 26 November 2018. Eight States/UTs were selected through a challenge method to participate in this programme. Four workshops were organized, including a field trip to Singapore. As an outcome of the programme, a feasibility report, preliminary design report as well as model project document were prepared by experts from Singapore for developing waste-water recycling and reuse projects and circulated to all States/UTs.

Questionnaire for Updation of Socio-Economic Caste Census

NITI Aayog was assigned the task of harmonization of relevant processes and criteria and to provide guidance in the revision/updation process of the Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011 in a meeting chaired by the Principal Secretary to the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 2 June 2016. Towards this, an expert committee on SECC-2011 was constituted by MoHUA in 2017 under the chairmanship of Dr Bibek Debroy, former Member, NITI Aayog. The committee suggested certain modifications in the methodology and questionnaire for data collection in urban areas. The vertical appraised the draft questionnaire prepared by MoHUA, considering the suggestions made by the committee and gave inputs to strengthen the same in the urban context. The vertical provided inputs towards the updation and finalization of the SECC-urban questionnaire in the meetings organized by MoHUA on the matter. So far, two meetings have been chaired by Additional Secretary (Housing), MoHUA, on 14 September 2020 and 6 October 2020, wherein the vertical actively participated.

Appraisal

The following SFC/EFC/EAP/Metro Rail and other project proposals have been analysed:

EFC	Scheme for affordable rental housing complexes for urban migrants
	Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban)
	Swachh Bharat Mission, second phase in urban areas
	Special micro-credit facility for street vendors
	Rationalization of beneficiary base of Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY
	Pollution abatement of River Nag at Nagpur, under National River Conservation Plan
DIB	Construction of common Central Secretariat building at HEC Area, Ranchi, Jharkhand
	Construction of general-pool office accommodation building at KG Marg, New Delhi
PIB	Implementation of Phase 2A and 2B of Bengaluru Metro Rail Project, development/redevelopment of Central Vista Avenue, New Delhi, and implementation of remaining three corridors of Delhi Metro Phase IV project
Comments on various Preliminary Project Proposals/References	
MoHUA	USTDA funding for feasibility study on National Urban Innovation Project, technical support for water and sanitation/Jal Jeevan Mission-Urban, draft specification for QR ticketing for Transit Application Version 1.0 (parts I, II and III) for NCMC, Indo-German Energy Programme–Climate Smart Buildings (IGEN-CSB), Financial Assistance for Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)
Tamil Nadu	Project proposals on 1) sustainable and integrated delivery of urban services, 2) comprehensive urban mobility and spatial development, 3) provision of underground sewerage scheme and strengthening of sewerage infrastructure, 4) recycling and reuse of wastewater from STP, and 5) development assistance for technical cooperation programme
Gujarat	Proposals concerning Gujarat Resilient City Development Programme, Ahmedabad Peri-Urban Infrastructure Development Project, and upgradation of existing water supply network for a 24x7 water supply project
Uttarakhand	Integrated urban infrastructure development in Rishikesh
Tripura	Capacity development for Agartala City Urban Development Project
Bihar	Bihar Urban Development Investment Programme 2, Muzaffarpur Project, and Bihar Urban Development Investment Programme 2, Gaya Project
Manipur	Integrated sewerage system for Imphal City Phase-II

MINERALS

The minerals vertical is responsible for building a strategic and long-term policy for the mines and minerals sector. This division also provides a platform for the resolution of inter-sectoral and inter-departmental issues and impediments in the growth of the minerals sector.

The vision of the minerals vertical is to prepare strategic policies for the sector to ensure: (a) enhanced exploration and extraction of minerals (b) raw material security for all user industries (c) focus on Rare Earths and technology minerals (d) ensure overall sustainability (e) generate more employment opportunities and (f) decrease overall minerals import and enhance export.

The objective of the vertical is to take necessary actions for achieving the aforementioned vision by (a) engaging proactively with stakeholders to identify the risks/challenges in the sector (b) developing mitigation strategies to overcome these risks/challenges and (c) coordinating with the Line Ministry/concerned Department for implementation of these strategies.

Committees

Rare Earths (RE) are crucial raw materials for use in high-tech applications in various strategic sectors such as defence, atomic energy, space, oil, green energy, electronics, etc. India has significant Rare Earths resources; however, the country still depends on imports as it has been unable to achieve self-sufficiency both in mining and production. Self-sufficiency in Rare Earths is vital and critical to our strategic sectors, emerging non-conventional energy missions and other high-tech products.

Keeping this in mind, an expert committee was constituted by NITI Aayog to build a roadmap towards developing self-reliance in Rare Earths by addressing the restrictive trade practices and harnessing the availability of domestic and global resources. The committee submitted its report, and its recommendations are being taken up through sub-committees and their statuses are as below:

Committee for Overseas Acquisition of Rare Earths and Agency to Promote RE Industry in India

The mandate of this committee is to identify the overseas geographies for acquisition of Rare Earths on lease or on joint ventures and initiate the process of setting up of institutional arrangements for extraction of RE. Under this broader umbrella, NITI Aayog accorded approval to the Ministry of Mines for constitution of a joint venture company called 'Khanij Bidesh India Private Limited (KABIL)', which is in the process of identification, acquisition, exploration, development, mining and processing of strategic minerals overseas for commercial use and to meet the country's requirement of the following twelve strategic minerals: tin, cobalt, lithium, germanium, gallium, lanthanum, beryllium, niobium, tantalum, tungsten, bismuth and selenium.

Committee for Augmenting and Updating RE Resources

The mandate of this committee is to update the inventory of resources and reserves position in RE minerals. This committee will explore and map the areas of RE, which can be immediately leased out or utilized for exploitation, keeping in mind the threshold values notified by the Government. AMD, along with the Geological Survey of India, is updating the inventory periodically.

Committee for Establishing Technologies for RE Extraction from Fly Ash and Red Mud

The mandate of this committee is to establish the technologies for RE extraction from fly ash and red mud and to upgrade existing technologies for emerging needs of the country. This committee assesses Indian technologies and benchmarks with best process and technologies worldwide. The final report has been submitted and is under discussion with industry partners.

Committee for Strengthening Recycling of e-Waste

The focus of this committee is to strengthen the recycling of e-waste. The committee was requested to revisit the current policies of recycling and propose necessary changes. It was also mandated to correlate with the policies existing around the world (like Japan) based on which NITI Aayog would prepare a framework on the electronic waste recycling mission.

The committee under the chairmanship of Dr U Kamachi Mudali, CEO, Heavy Water Board, submitted the report on the same on 12 September 2019. The report has been reviewed by Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, and taken up with MeitY for implementation.

Committee for Establishing the Prospects of RE Conversion to Magnets

The mandate of this committee is to establish the prospects of RE in conversion to magnets, especially the Nd-Fe-Cobalt magnet. Requirements for commercial markets are being explored. The final report has been submitted and is under discussion with Government stakeholders.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

The natural resources and environment vertical provides strategic and directional guidance to the Union and State Governments in the natural resource and environment sector. The vertical largely looks at three different sectors of natural resources and environment:

- ▶ Forests, biodiversity, and wildlife
- ▶ Indian Himalayan region (*Details in Section D: Cooperative Federalism*)
- ▶ Island Development (*Details in Section D: Cooperative Federalism*)

The vertical coordinates its activities with MoEFCC.

Objectives

The vertical seeks to achieve the larger goal of:

- ▶ Sustainable management of forests; protection of wildlife and habitats; and maintenance of a clean, green, and healthy environment
- ▶ Conservation and development of the Indian Himalayan Region
- ▶ Holistic development of islands in the country

Achievements

Arctic Policy of India

The vertical provided inputs, comments and suggestions to the National Security Council on the Draft Arctic Policy of India and participated in the discourse, along with other stakeholders.

Illegal Encroachment

The vertical has initiated a study on illegal encroachment of open and degraded forests in and around the Aravalli Hills. The study has been given to Bhaskaracharya Institute of Space Applications and Geo-Informatics, Gandhinagar.

Simplification of Regulatory Approvals for Clinical Trials under Environment Protection Act 1986

A concept note on the simplification of regulatory approvals for clinical trials under the Environment Protection Act 1986 has been developed and shared with MoHFW, MoEFCC, and the Department of Biotechnology.

Based on stakeholder interactions, it was observed that considerable progress has already been achieved by the environmental regulatory authorities with regard to rationalizing and speeding up the process of scrutiny and grant of approvals. However, additional measures were identified to further provide relief to the developer organizations.

Suggestions for Rationalizing Environmental Clearance Procedures for Industrial Estates

The suggestions have been shared with MoEFCC, which has forwarded them to the working group constituted by the Ministry under chairmanship of Shri Ajay Shanker, Distinguished Fellow, TERI.

The suggestions have been made for the purpose of boosting economic development through the growth of industrial estates. Industrial estates offer multiple advantages vis-à-vis standalone industrial units. Hence, the suggestions seek to remove redundancies in the environmental clearance process and rationalize the process for the combined estate and individual units located within it.

Working Papers

The vertical is in the process of drafting three working papers on climate change, coastal areas and forests, wildlife, and biodiversity.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE DIVISION (HINDI SECTION)

The Hindi section continued its efforts towards the greater use of Hindi in official work during the year, keeping in view the annual programme issued by the Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Official Language Policy of the Union, for implementation of the Official Language Act, 1963, and Official Language Rules, 1976, made thereunder.

Quarterly progress reports were sent regularly to the Department of Official Language and those received from attached offices were reviewed regularly. The Hindi section translated various

documents, like the Annual Report, Demand for Grants, Strategy for New India@75, material related to the Parliamentary Standing Committees, Cabinet Notes, CCEA Notes, Parliament questions, notifications, MoUs, forms and drafts, letters, etc.

Implementation of Section 3(3) of Official Language Act

In pursuance of the Official Language Policy, all documents covered under Section 3(3) of the Official Language Act, 1963, are issued both in English and Hindi. The annual programme and other orders/instructions issued by the Department of Official Language were forwarded to all sections of NITI Aayog and its attached offices for information, and directives were issued for compliance.

Official Language Implementation Committee (OLIC)

The Official Language Implementation Committee (OLIC) functions under the chairmanship of Adviser (OL). This committee periodically reviews the progress made in connection with the use of Hindi and gives appropriate suggestions and recommends measures to be taken for the effective implementation of the Official Language Policy. The meetings of this committee are held regularly and the offices under the control of NITI Aayog are also instructed for convening OLIC meetings regularly.

Incentive Scheme for Original Noting and Drafting Work in Hindi

The incentive scheme for noting and drafting in Hindi introduced by the Department of Official Language continued in 2020–21. The scheme carried two first prizes of Rs 5000 each, three second prizes of Rs 3000 each and five third prizes of Rs 2000 each.

Cash Prize Scheme for Dictation in Hindi

An incentive scheme for officers for dictating in Hindi is in operation. Under this scheme, there is provision of two cash prizes of Rs 5000 each (one for Hindi-speaking and the other for non-Hindi-speaking staff).

Hindi Fortnight

During the Hindi fortnight, organized from 1–15 September 2020, various competitions on Hindi essay writing, Hindi typing, Hindi translation, Hindi noting/drafting, extempore and knowledge of the official language were organized. A Hindi dictation competition was also organized for the multi-tasking staff of NITI Aayog.

Hindi Workshops

During the year, two Hindi workshops were organized on 8 and 11 September 2020 to encourage officials to undertake more work in Hindi. As many as 12 officers and employees participated in these workshops.

Inspections Regarding Progressive Use of Hindi

To oversee the implementation of the Official Language Policy, seven divisions, sections, and verticals were inspected by the officers of the official language division of NITI Aayog during the year.

ORGANIZATION METHODS AND COORDINATION (OM&C) SECTION

The OM&C section has been handling public grievances online through CPGRAMS since January 2018.



On 21 June 2020, the section organized the sixth International Yoga Day on the theme 'yoga at home' and 'yoga with family' (snapshots above). Keeping in view Covid-19 guidelines of maintaining social distancing, a small event was organized in NITI Aayog, where only senior-level officers (Advisers and above) participated.

A Covid-appropriate-behaviour pledge was administered virtually by Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, on 12 October 2020. Posters and banners were displayed on the same on office premises.

The section also organized the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas pledge for all officers of the level of Adviser and above, administered by Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, on 29 October 2020. All NITI employees too participated in the virtual undertaking of the pledge.

The section has organized four virtual townhall meetings under the chairmanship of Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog:

- ▶ On 30 June 2020 with all Senior Specialists, Specialists, Senior Associates, and Associates
- ▶ On 1 July 2020 with all Consultants and YPs
- ▶ On 2 July 2020 with all Directors, Deputy Secretaries and Under Secretaries
- ▶ On 7 August 2020 with Senior Specialists, Specialists, Senior Associates, and Associates

The OM&C section also appoints registered medical practitioners as authorized medical attendants for the benefit of the employees of NITI Aayog and their family members, who do not have CGHS facility in the area of their residence.

The OM&C section also forwarded updated information regarding the India Yearbook 2021 received from all verticals/divisions of NITI Aayog to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

PROJECT APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION (PAMD)

The PAMD division discharges the following functions:

- ▶ Prescribe guidelines and develop formats for the submission of proposals for projects and programmes for techno-economic appraisal;
- ▶ Undertake research studies to improve the methodology and procedure for appraisal of projects and programmes;
- ▶ Undertake techno-economic appraisal of major projects and programmes in the public sector; and
- ▶ Assist Central Ministries in establishing proper procedures for preparation of reports of projects and programmes.

Appraisal of Public Sector Programmes, Schemes and Projects

The PAMD division conducts comprehensive appraisal of projects costing Rs 500 crore and above related to PIB and EFC. Proposals of the Ministry of Railways costing Rs 500 crore and above, to be considered by the Expanded Board of Railways (EBR), are also appraised. Revised cost estimate proposals are also appraised by the division to analyse the factors attributed to cost and time overruns and their impact on viability.

In delivering this critical function, PAMD, through its techno-economic appraisals, has brought about a paradigm shift in appraisal mechanisms and procedures for structuring and preparation of public projects and schemes. NITI Aayog, through its appraisal memorandum, has been instrumental in suggesting and bringing about systemic improvements aimed at the efficacy of public sector schemes and spending in terms of delivery and outcomes.

During FY 2020–21 (up to 31 December 2020), appraisal of 94 schemes/programmes contained in the EFC/PIB/EBR proposals and involving an outlay of Rs 13,19,379 crore was undertaken. The sectoral distribution of projects appraised from 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020 has been set out in the table below:

S. No.	Sector	Schemes / Projects (Nos.)	Outlay (Rs Cr.)
AGRICULTURE			
1	Agriculture and Allied Sectors	9	1,66,460
ENERGY			
2	Power	5	3,32,077
3	Coal	1	3,893
4	New and Renewable Energy	1	14,700
TRANSPORT			
5	Railways	3	2,664
6	Surface Transport	3	15,770
7	Civil Aviation	4	2,233
8	Shipping	4	18,118
INDUSTRY			
9	Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises	1	57,048
10	Petrochemicals and Fertilizers	2	19,300
11	Textiles	4	45,270
12	Food Processing Industries	3	27,400
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY			
13	Science and Technology	3	2,090
SOCIAL SERVICES			
14	HRD	2	1,484
15	Youth Affairs and Sports	2	1,739
16	Health and Family Welfare	6	1,28,514
17	Labour and Employment	2	23,514
18	Social Justice and Empowerment	2	1,710
19	Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation	4	1,06,425
20	Rural Development	2	19,259
21	Tribal Affairs	2	28,359
COMMUNICATION			
22	Electronics and Information Technology	1	7,350
OTHERS			
23	Home Affairs	3	5,388
24	Commerce and Industry	5	89,337
25	Environment and Forests	1	828
26	Law and Justice	1	2,972
27	Water Resources	3	21,484
28	North Eastern Region (DONER)	3	39,616

29	Consumer Affairs	1	5,700
30	Finance/Corporate Affairs	5	77,227
31	Planning Commission/NITI Aayog	2	49,325
32	Housing and Urban Affairs	1	608
33	Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	1	949
34	Personnel, Public Grievances, and pensions	2	570
	Total	94	13,19,379

Production-Linked Incentive Scheme

During 2020–21, NITI Aayog assisted in designing and formulating the contours of the PLI scheme for active pharmaceutical ingredients, high-efficiency solar PV modules, medical devices, and mobile manufacturing. These sectors figure among the 10 key sectors for which the PLI scheme was approved by the Cabinet, with the vision to make Indian manufacturers globally competitive and attract investment in the areas of core competency and cutting-edge technology, thereby making India an integral part of the global supply chains.

National Programme and Project Management Policy Framework (NPMPF)

NITI Aayog had constituted a taskforce on project and programme management, with the objective to lay down a plan of action advocating short- and long-term strategies for improving project and programme management practices and aligning them with global best practices. The taskforce made several recommendations, underlining efforts at the pre-planning stage, augmenting organizational skillsets, and leveraging technology, efficiency and transparency in the procurement and development of a national policy framework.

Accordingly, a technical committee—comprising experts from various Ministries, public sector enterprises, and professionals from the field of project management—led by Quality Council of India developed the ‘National Programme and Project Management Policy Framework’. It was launched on 28 October 2020 by Union Ministers Shri Nitin Gadkari and Shri Piyush Goyal. The ‘Indian Infrastructure Body of Knowledge (InBoK)’, a book on the practice of programme and project management in India was also unveiled during the event.



Launch of National Programme and Project Management Policy Framework

QCI has been entrusted to set up an institution, 'National Institute of Chartered Project and Programme Professionals', under its aegis as the nodal body for providing certification to practicing programme and project professionals in India and initiate capability-building programmes. The certification process is envisaged to be weaved into public bidding documents in the future, making it a mandatory requirement for contractors as well as authorities to engage only certified project and programme professionals.

Indian Public Procurement Reforms (Alternatives to 'L1')

Currently, significant Government expenditure is incurred towards the procurement of goods, works and services. There is a long-standing need for reviewing the efficacy of the existing methodology of bidder selection through the Least Cost Selection (or 'L1') method. In high-impact projects and state-of-the-art equipment, involving high-level of customizations, specializations and cutting-edge technology, where innovation, quality, experience and competence of the bidder are important, the present method of selection of the lowest bidder often results in sub-optimal delivery, non-performances, higher life cycle cost, delays and arbitrations.

Based on detailed deliberations with various stakeholders, NITI Aayog has come up with a number of alternative procurement strategies for inclusion in the General Financial Rules (GFR) 2017, to enable public procurement authorities and agencies to select the appropriate method depending on project-specific requirements in a transparent manner. The same is under deliberation with the Ministry of Finance, Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

PARLIAMENT SECTION

The Parliament section coordinates work related to:

- ▶ Parliament questions
- ▶ Calling attention notices
- ▶ Half an hour discussion
- ▶ Resolutions
- ▶ Private members' bills
- ▶ No-day-yet-named motions
- ▶ Matters raised in Lok Sabha under Rule 377 and by way of special mention in Rajya Sabha
- ▶ Assurances given in Parliament
- ▶ Meetings of the various Parliamentary Committees such as the Standing Committee on Finance and the Public Accounts Committee
- ▶ Laying of reports and papers in both Houses of Parliament
- ▶ Arranging of temporary and session-wise general and official gallery passes for the officers of NITI Aayog
- ▶ Issues likely to be raised in Parliament
- ▶ Government business and procurement of Budget document

- ▶ Economic Survey and President's speech to both Houses of Parliament for distribution among the Vice Chairperson, Members, and officers of NITI Aayog.
- ▶ The Parliament section also does the needful for arranging the briefing of the Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Planning, on Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha starred questions.

During the year 2020, the section:

- ▶ Got approval of the Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Planning, for six starred and 38 unstarred questions; prepared/issued the sets to Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and uploaded the soft copies of the same on the web portals of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.
- ▶ Made necessary arrangements for the meetings of the Standing Committee on Finance on demands for grants 2020–21 of the Ministry of Planning/NITI Aayog.
- ▶ Followed up on recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance in their report on demands for grants in 2019–20 and 2020–21 of the Ministry of Planning/NITI Aayog.
- ▶ Compiled the material pertaining to demands for grants for 2020–21 of Ministry of Planning received from various verticals of NITI Aayog and laid the same on the Table of the House of Parliament (Lok Sabha).
- ▶ Circulated NITI Aayog's Annual Report 2019–20 among Members of Parliament through publication counters.
- ▶ Processed and disposed of Parliamentary Assurances.
- ▶ Sent background notes/replies on various subjects selected by the Standing Committee on Finance, Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and Committee on External Affairs, Lok Sabha Secretariat.
- ▶ Arranged sessional and other passes for meetings held in Parliament for the senior officers of NITI Aayog.
- ▶ Successfully coordinated with verticals for sending replies to matters raised in the Zero Hour and Rule 377 in Lok Sabha to the concerned MPs and Lok Sabha Secretariat.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

The PPP vertical is working towards deepening the reach of public-private partnerships as the preferred mode for implementation of infrastructure projects. It seeks to create timebound world-class infrastructure and attract private-sector and institutional capital in infrastructure.

The vertical makes policy-level recommendations for institutional, regulatory and procedural reforms, and works towards the standardization of PPP documents. It also provides transaction structure guidance to implementing agencies, evolves suitable reforms and policy initiatives for consideration of the Government, and appraises PPP projects.

The vertical also develops concession agreement guiding principles and/or model concession agreements in different sectors, and reviews and provides comments on Central Government PPP projects via the PPPAC and/or SFC process.

This year several path-breaking initiatives were undertaken, aimed at promoting private and foreign direct investments in the infrastructure space.

National Programme on Advance Chemistry Cell Battery Storage

NITI Aayog has formulated the contours of the National Programme on Advance Chemistry Cell Battery Storage. The programme pertains to the provision of suitable fiscal incentives and a single-window framework to facilitate investment into 50 GWh of the domestic advance cell manufacturing industry. India's accelerating progress in EVs and renewable energy deployment necessitates the facilitation of investments in such giga factories to indigenize battery production and partake in a sunrise industry. This will also enable less import dependence and secure the future of energy and transport sectors in India. The Union Cabinet recently approved the PLI scheme for 10 sectors. ACC battery was one of the sectors identified for inclusion in the PLI scheme for enhancing India's manufacturing capabilities and exports under the vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'. A financial outlay of Rs 18,100 crore has been approved over a five-year period. NITI Aayog is the implementing agency for the scheme.

Redevelopment of Railway Stations through Public-Private Partnership

NITI Aayog has been working closely with the Ministry of Railways in fast-tracking the railway stations' redevelopment programme across the country. As part of this endeavour, consultations have been undertaken with various stakeholders for evaluation and redressal of challenges. A self-sustainable PPP-based model for development of world-class stations has been finalized and approved. NITI Aayog helped the Ministry of Railways to finalize the concession terms and bidding documents for the same, based on which bidding processes for 10 stations were initiated in FY2020–21. A pipeline of 40 additional stations to be redeveloped under the PPP mode is being finalized by MoR.

Passenger Train Operations by Private Sector through Public-Private Partnership

NITI Aayog, along with the Ministry of Railways, is spearheading landmark reforms in the passenger train operations' space through the PPP mode. Private participation in sourcing and operation of modern technology trains for better passenger experience is one such initiative. NITI Aayog helped the Railway Ministry in the end-to-end process for the project, including conceptualization, transaction structuring, finalization of concession terms, preparation of bid documents, and stakeholder consultations. Pursuant to such efforts, the bidding process for 12 clusters on 109 origin destination pairs involving 150 trains has been initiated.

Eco-Tourism Facilities through Public-Private Partnerships

As part of NITI Aayog's initiative for holistic development of islands, the bidding process for the development of sustainable eco-tourism projects in seven islands of Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep has been undertaken. Several other islands have also been identified for development under the second phase of the project. To effectively facilitate development of such eco-tourism facilities, a model concession agreement has been formulated that can be suitably adopted for such projects.

During the current fiscal, the bidding process for eco-tourism facilities for four islands in Andaman and Nicobar has been undertaken. The vertical has provided the required support to the UT administration in engaging consultants through competitive bidding for holistic master planning of the islands and timely structuring of PPP transactions.

Redevelopment of Jawaharlal Nehru (JLN) Stadium on PPP Mode

During the year, NITI Aayog worked closely with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in finalizing the strategy for redevelopment of the JLN stadium in Delhi. The project is to be executed through PPP by leveraging the mixed-use/real-estate development potential available around the stadium. The key objectives of this project are to promote the holistic development of the stadium and develop the unutilized/underutilized spaces for complementary commercial activities to maximize revenue streams. NITI Aayog, along with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, undertook pre-feasibility analysis of the project to assess viability and initial feasibility through the PPP mode. NITI Aayog is assisting the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in the preparation for the launch of the transaction.

Setting up Integrated Schools for Sports and Academics at Sports Authority of India (SAI) Centres through Public-Private Partnerships

During the year, NITI Aayog supported the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to develop a PPP framework for establishing and operating integrated schools for sports and academics for students from classes 6–12 at select centres of the Sports Authority of India. SAI operates several schemes for identification and development of young talent. Under the existing schemes and arrangements, students who undergo rigorous coaching in sports find it challenging to balance academics and sports in the traditional education system. The existing educational curriculum and systems do not provide enough flexibility to balance sports and academics. Hence, there is a need to integrate sports and education to encourage and nurture students who can achieve academic goals while also getting trained and pursuing excellence in sports. Such integrated schools will create a vibrant student community by offering an academic system built around sports, with the objective of all-round development of students. A concept note has been developed by NITI Aayog detailing the PPP framework, which is under consideration of the Ministry.

Development of Serviced Hostels at SAI Centres under Public-Private Partnership Mode

During the year, NITI Aayog worked with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in developing a PPP framework for setting up serviced hostels with three-star facilities for Sports Authority of India. SAI operates several schemes to support and nurture sporting talent and provides athletes with the requisite infrastructure, coaching and competition exposure. As part of these efforts, SAI is in perennial need for boarding and lodging services. With a view to provide best-in-class boarding and lodging facilities, SAI wants to undertake the development of fully serviced, purpose-built hostel complexes within the campuses of its training centres through PPPs. A concept note has been developed by NITI Aayog detailing the PPP framework, which is under consideration of the Ministry.

Ropeway-Based Public Transportation System on PPP Mode

During the year, NITI Aayog commissioned pre-feasibility studies for the development of ropeway-based public transport systems in Gangtok and Aizawl through the PPP mode. Scarcity of land in urban centres of hilly areas, along with steep road gradients limiting road expansion, is a major constraint in the development of public transport infrastructure. This creates pressure on the public transport system, with most commuters relying on taxis or

private vehicles to commute. A need for a planned public transport system was felt for cities such as Gangtok and Aizawl. Citing this need, NITI Aayog undertook pre-feasibility studies to assess the viability and initial feasibility through the PPP mode. NITI Aayog also prepared a model concession agreement for the development of ropeway projects through the PPP mode. Pursuant to these efforts, the Gangtok project was structured on PPP mode. The transaction for the project is expected to be launched soon.

Scheme for Inviting Private Investment in Medical Education

To address the shortage of qualified medical professionals, general practitioners as well as specialists, a scheme for attaching an existing District hospital and developing a medical college through the PPP mode has been developed by the vertical. The unique PPP framework allows for synergy between the private and public healthcare sectors, capitalizing on their respective strengths. The public sector has functional hospitals with rich clinical material, but lacks adequate resources, infrastructure and faculty base required for a medical college. The private sector on the other hand has investible capital, resources, required infrastructure and faculty, but lacks functional hospitals with the requisite clinical material (required as per the extant regulations). Accordingly, a PPP framework has been formulated that combines a Government District hospital with an affiliated academic institution developed by the private partner. Under the proposed model, the District hospital also gets augmented into a teaching medical college as per the Government of India's stipulated medical education regulatory norms with private sector investment. The combined project is to be operated and maintained by the private partner, as per the applicable norms, governed by a detailed concession agreement. The vertical has developed the model concession agreement and model RFP for medical education during the current fiscal, a copy of which can be accessed from the website.

Enhancement in Viability Gap Funding for Social Sector

Social infrastructure projects face viability concerns. Therefore, to boost private investments in social sector infrastructure such as schools and hospitals, enhancement in VGF allocation for social sector projects was approved by the Ministry of Finance in the current fiscal. The PPP vertical worked in close coordination with DEA, Ministry of Finance, in revising the guidelines as part of this strategic revamp of the VGF scheme. Under the scheme, the PPP projects will be proposed by Central Ministries, State Governments, and statutory entities, and VGF of up to 30%, revised from the earlier limit of 20%, will be provided under the scheme for social sector infrastructure projects. This path-breaking reform will benefit PPP projects and provide a boost to private sector investment in social sector infrastructure creation. The revised guidelines for the scheme have been issued by DEA to the various Ministries and States in the current fiscal.

Structuring of BharatNet on PPP Mode

During the year, NITI Aayog, along with Department of Telecommunications (DoT) finalized the strategy for implementing the BharatNet project through PPP mode. Phase I of the project has already been implemented, while Phase II, which is currently under various stages of implementation, is proposed to be completed through PPP. This will enable leveraging of infrastructure already created by the Government, while capturing the private sector efficiencies, quality and investment for incremental development and impact. NITI Aayog, along with DoT, undertook detailed analysis of various aspects of the project to arrive at an optimal and commercially viable PPP structure. The structure was then deliberated upon and finalized

based on inputs of various committees, investor interactions and stakeholder consultations. Bid documents have been prepared and finalized with support from NITI Aayog. The project, which is proposed to be awarded through a single-stage competitive bidding process, is currently with PPPAC for consideration and approval.

Public-Private Partnership in Space Sector

Opening up of the space sector to substantial private sector participation was recently approved by the Union Cabinet. During the year, NITI Aayog engaged with the Department of Space for exploring PPP models for an accelerated roll-out of new space infrastructure and technologies. Various self-sustainable structures for building and maintenance of satcom assets through private sector participation were conceptualized by NITI Aayog. These have been shared with the Department of Space for further deliberations/inputs. Recommendations for institutionalizing appropriate PPP policies, extensive participation of entities like New Space India in such models and suitable handholding of the Department for undertaking these projects have been ensured. Leveraging the private sector's reach, funding and capabilities reduces Government support for expansion of the space sector while ensuring innovations, global arrangements, flexibility, and efficiency.

Development of Strategic Petroleum Reserve Facilities (Phase II) on Public-Private Partnership Mode

During the year, NITI Aayog supported the Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL) for implementing phase II of the strategic petroleum reserve through PPP. ISPRL is developing the strategic petroleum reserve of 6.5 million metric tonne at Chandikhol in Odisha and Padur in Karnataka. The project will augment India's energy security and serve as a cushion during any supply disruption. Phase I of the facilities have already been implemented, while phase II is now proposed to be taken up through PPP. NITI Aayog has actively worked with ISPRL and MoPNG for structuring the project on PPP mode and is preparing the transaction documents.

Asset Monetization Programme

Investment-led growth is central to the economic agenda of the Government. One of the pre-requisites of such growth is capital and asset recycling. In this context, asset recycling and monetization holds the key to value creation in infrastructure—by unlocking value from public investment and tapping into private-sector efficiencies in delivering infrastructure.

NITI Aayog is steering the recycling and monetization of various core infrastructure assets. Continuing the progress achieved during FY20, during the current fiscal, further ground was covered in creating an asset pipeline and rolling out infrastructure assets through structured transactions. Notable achievements during the period are as under:

- ▶ In the first phase, six AAI airports were successfully awarded at no financial implication to the Government Exchequer, leading to enhanced revenues to AAI.
- ▶ Toll-Operate-Transfer-based concessions were successfully bid out, with an encouraging response from the market. Two bundles have been awarded successfully. The structure has been appreciated by the market and has seen active interest and participation from infra-funds, along with developers.

- ▶ InvITs have emerged as preferred investment structures for long-term institutional investors, garnering aggregate investments of Rs 65,000 crore in India. Monetization of public toll roads as well as transmission towers are in advanced stages of planning through InvIT-based structures.
- ▶ Railways launched the strategic foray into PPP for private participation in running of passenger trains. The first batch of clusters envisages private train operations on 109 pairs of routes structured as 12 clusters with a targeted private investment of Rs 30,000 crore.
- ▶ The station redevelopment programme of the Railways has seen significant scale and progress with the launch of RfQ for 10 stations. Extensive stakeholder consultations have been taken up to bring clarity in the project structure and formulation of the model bid documents.

To date, a pipeline of core assets, comprising over 100 falling in 31 broad asset classes, mapped to 10 Ministries/CPSEs and tentatively valued at Rs 5 lakh crore, has been developed. NITI Aayog has sought information from the Ministries to create a four-year monetization pipeline. Some of the potential asset classes that have been identified are toll road bundles, ports, cruise terminals, telecom infrastructure, oil and gas pipelines, transmission towers, railway stations, sports stadium, mountain railway, operational metro sections, warehouses, and commercial complexes. Consultations with the respective Ministries on possible investment structures are being undertaken.

Review of National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) Projects

The Government had launched the National Infrastructure Pipeline, envisaging Rs 111 lakh crore investment in infrastructure between 2020–25. In this regard, the Finance Minister approved the constitution of a taskforce, of which NITI Aayog is a member. The taskforce interacted with various stakeholders, including Central Line Ministries, Departments, agencies, CPSEs and State-level organizations to understand and collate information regarding the future investment pipeline in infrastructure. NITI Aayog steered the interaction with State Governments and made recommendations for various structural reforms required to facilitate investment into infrastructure. During the current fiscal, the final report of the taskforce was launched. As part of the final report, the taskforce on NIP recommended many reforms in the areas of general contract and project management. As part of the committee of secretaries, NITI Aayog actively oversees the progress of projects enlisted in NIP and provides policy-level guidance on issues from time to time.

Appraisal of Central Government Public-Private Partnerships

During the year 2020–21 (up to 31 October 2020), 34 PPP projects, with a total cost of Rs 61,348 crore, were appraised by the vertical. This includes 33 Central Government projects and one State project. The sector-wise distribution of the PPP projects (including the projects under the VGF scheme) appraised is given in the table below:

Table 2: PPP Projects Appraised during the Period 2020–21 (Up to 31 October 2020)

S. No.	Project Appraised	No. of Projects	Total Cost (Rs in Crores)
1	Roads	17	15,011
2	Sea Ports	6	1,072
3	Petroleum Reserves	1	6,129
4	Silos	1	401
5	Multi Modal Terminals	1	376
6	Redevelopment of Railway Station	8	8,041
7	Passenger Train Project	1	30,099
8	Ropeway	1	996
	Total	36	62,125

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The rural development vertical of NITI Aayog provides overall policy guidance to the Department of Rural Development, MoRD. It also monitors the progress of the various schemes and programmes implemented by the Ministry. Key schemes of the Ministry looked at by the vertical are DAY-National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), MGNREGA, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, National Social Assistance Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission, among others. The rural development vertical also deals with work related to the State of Andhra Pradesh.

State of Andhra Pradesh

The vertical (i) prepared the factsheet, and the State profile of Andhra Pradesh was updated in coordination with the planning department of the State; (ii) handled many court cases pertaining to the State of Andhra Pradesh.

Review of OOMF 2020–21

The vertical coordinated a meeting of MoRD officials with DMEO to review the updation of OOMF for 2020–21.

The process of finalization of indicators for the next year is underway. The comments were given to DMEO for rationalizing indicators and updating OOMF for 2021–22, with respect to CS/CSS under the Department of Rural Development.

Evaluation of CSS Schemes

After the preparation of the terms of reference for the evaluation of key CSS schemes of MoRD last year, this year the evaluation report on the rural development sector, including schemes like National Social Assistance Programme, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin, Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission, Deendayal Upadhyay National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and MGNREGA, was received by the vertical for review. The vertical provided inputs for the finalization of the report. The officials also attended review meetings on the report with MoRD officials and senior officials of NITI Aayog.

Appraisal

The vertical provided comments for the following EFC and SFC proposals:

EFC Proposal

- ▶ Proposal for expansion of interest subvention scheme to women self-help groups under DAY-NRLM.
- ▶ Proposal for continuation of start-up village entrepreneurship programme as sub-scheme of DAY-NRLM beyond the term of the Fourteenth Finance Commission.

SFC Memo

- ▶ Proposal for approval of continuation of Centrally sponsored DRDA Administration Scheme during 2019–20 and 2020–21.

Other Matters

The division handled Parliament questions and provided inputs for answers to Parliament questions received from other divisions of NITI Aayog, and other Ministries and Departments. VIP references related to rural development schemes were also dealt with, along with other routine works like RTI, monthly DO, etc.

MoRD Meetings

The vertical attended important virtual meetings of MoRD, such as performance review committee meetings, deliberations, and approvals of State DPRs under the Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme, National Rural Economic Transformation Project, Mahila Kisan Shashaktikaran Pariyojana, Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana, general body meeting of NRLPS, etc. The vertical attended various empowered and expert committees' meetings to analyse the proposal of States to revisit the definition of kutcha houses and submitted views.

RTI CELL

The RTI cell responds to all RTI queries received online <https://rtionline.gov.in> or physically through post.

During the year 2020–21, the cell was engaged in the following activities:

- ▶ 1272 RTI applications were received, of which 1231 were disposed of (up to November 2020)
- ▶ 89 appeals were received and 88 were disposed of (up to November 2020)
- ▶ 10 CIC hearings were attended (up to November 2020)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (S&T)

The socio-economic development of a country is driven by science, technology, and innovation ingenuities, which are steered by the Government's policies. The S&T vertical of NITI Aayog plays a pivotal role in policy interventions for promoting science and technology in the country, in collaboration with Central Ministries/Departments. It also acts as a focal point for

the convergence of various inter-organizational issues of these Ministries/Departments. The vertical aims to integrate national R&D efforts of different sectors of the economy and build a conducive environment.

During the year 2020–21, the vertical was involved in policy interventions for various initiatives driven by PMO, including methanol economy, Make in India body armour, seaweed cultivation, hydrogen economy, and National Research Foundation, to name a few. It has also been engaged in activities like the formulation of the India Innovation Index, improving India's ranking in the Global Innovation Index, desalination of water and the standardization of the construction, maintenance, and operation of ropeways, etc. The vertical is also nodal for updating information on the e-Samiksha portal.

Some of the key initiatives of the vertical are as follows:

'Make in India' Body Armour

Considering the importance of indigenizing the protective gear of Indian defence personnel, an empowered committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Member (S&T), NITI Aayog, to oversee the implementation of the roadmap prepared for this endeavour.

- ▶ Regular meetings are being held with industries, users, and various stakeholders to know their issues of concern and suggest the way forward.
- ▶ With the interventions of the committee, the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre has been actively involved in developing indigenous body armour components and technologies.

Seaweed Cultivation

The vertical has been working with MoEFCC to promote seaweed cultivation in India and resolve outstanding issues.

Meetings were held at NITI Aayog with all stakeholders, and a joint study is being undertaken to understand the exact impact of seaweed cultivation on corals and sea grass, by collecting data for five cycles off the coast of Tamil Nadu, around the Gulf of Mannar, and the Palk Bay, over a span of one year. The report will be submitted for further consideration to the Ministry and NITI Aayog.

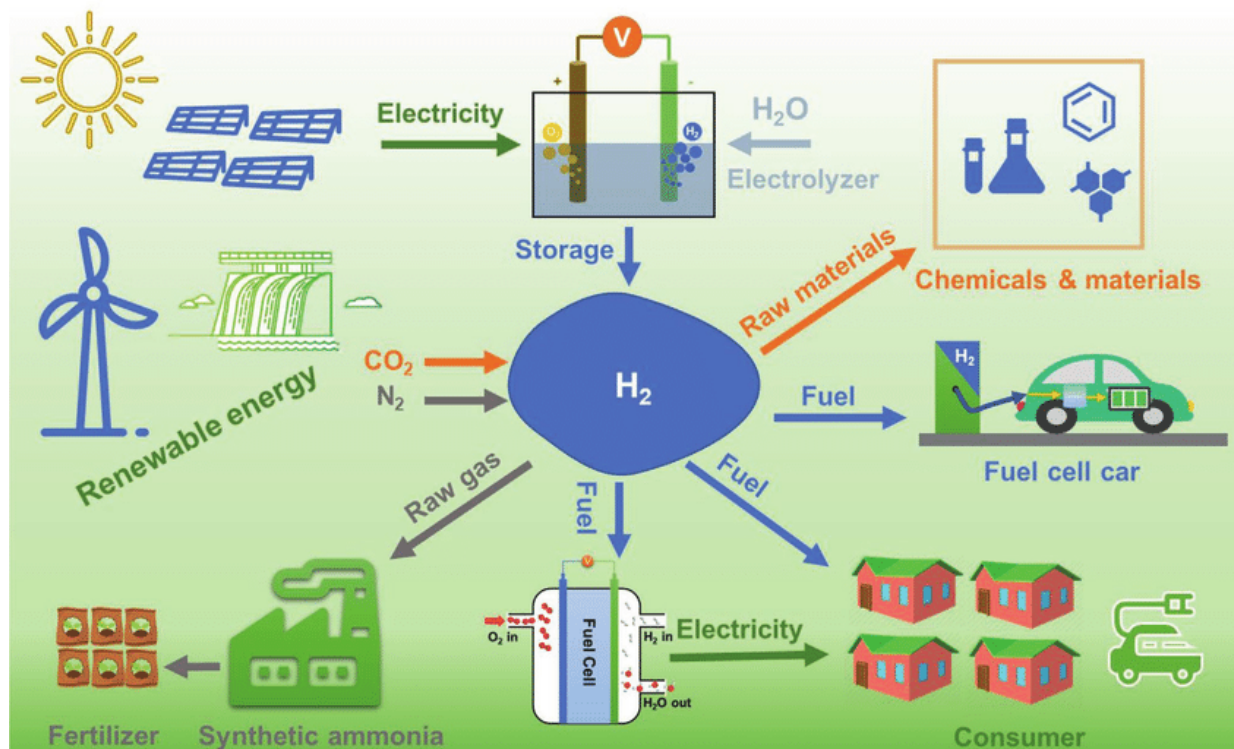
Hydrogen Economy

NITI Aayog is driving efforts to develop a roadmap for the adoption of hydrogen as a fuel in India. On the direction of PMO, NITI Aayog proposed the constitution of an expert committee comprising eminent scientists, industry leaders and policymakers as members. The terms of reference of the committee are:

1. Review the status and explore complete feasibility of application, production, transportation, handling, use, safety aspects, etc., of hydrogen fuel, and suggest a clear roadmap.
2. Examine the utilization of hydrogen as a fuel through focused research on its development and deployment—production, transportation/storage and consumption.
3. Identify the roles of different stakeholders, their interest and capabilities, budgetary requirements, and timeline for various deliverables.

The proposal is under consideration of the Cabinet Secretariat.

So far, two meetings have been held under the chairmanship of the Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, with experts to know the critical challenges in launching the hydrogen economy in India and a specific mechanism to address those challenges.



National Research Foundation

The basic objective of the establishment of the National Research Foundation (NRF) is to fund, coordinate and promote research in the country. As per the direction of PMO, Member (S&T), in association with the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, is working on finalizing the organizational, operational and financial frameworks of NRF.

Construction, Maintenance and Operation of Ropeways

NITI Aayog had constituted a technical committee in August 2019, under the chairmanship of Adviser (S&T), to standardize the construction, maintenance and operation of ropeways in India.

The committee has enabled the formulation of two new standards by BIS, Department of Consumer Affairs, thereby ensuring there is no longer any gap between Indian and European standards regarding the standardization of manufacture, installation, operation, and maintenance of ropeways in India.

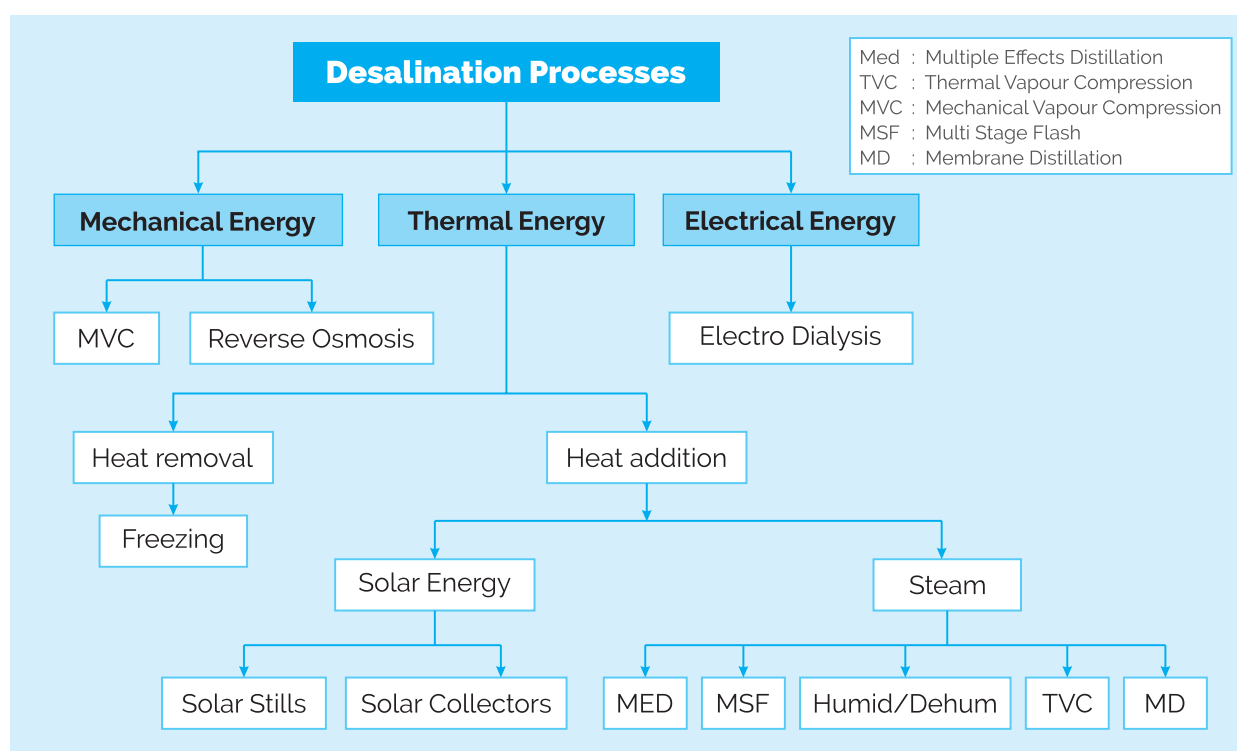
After a wide consultative process, the committee submitted its recommendations to all State Governments and Union Territories. Subsequently, the States and UTs were directed to mandate, in all their tenders, work orders, etc., that the manufacturing of ropeways and associated support structures is done in India.



Maa Mansa Devi Ropeways, Haridwar

Desalination of Water

With a view to integrate the dispersed efforts of different Departments/Ministries in the domain of desalination in India, the S&T vertical organized a meeting on 4 August 2020 in NITI Aayog, with participation from all relevant stakeholders. NITI Aayog is currently developing a white paper on the desalination technologies, which would highlight the most promising technologies and the way forward.



The vertical is also entrusted with the task of examination/appraisal of SFC/EFC memorandum and draft Cabinet Notes on S&T projects of the following Central Ministries/Departments:

- ▶ Department of Science and Technology
- ▶ Department of Biotechnology
- ▶ Department of Science and Industrial Research, including CSIR
- ▶ Department of Space
- ▶ Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
- ▶ Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)

The vertical has prepared the background material for high-level meetings, and represented NITI Aayog in:

- ▶ Governing councils of various autonomous institutes of DBT, DST, MoES
- ▶ Apex committees and sub-committees constituted by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, DBT and DST, for third-party evaluation of all their schemes for their continuance from the Fourteenth Finance Commission to the Fifteenth Finance Commission
- ▶ Advisory and Screening Committee for the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration 2020 in the Innovation General Category
- ▶ Core group for formulation of DPR for the development of semiconductor R&D Centre in India
- ▶ Taskforce for formulation of the National Cyber Security Strategy 2020
- ▶ Steering committee to frame policy document on scientific social responsibility
- ▶ Technical Advisory Committee of NRDC
- ▶ Apex committee and core groups for formulation of the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2020, etc.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

The skill development and employment vertical of NITI Aayog plays a key role in accelerating policy-driven initiatives to impart training to Indian youth, with the objective of strengthening the human capital of the nation and identifying as well as offering solutions to critical issues concerning employment, jobs and livelihood creation, and social security. The vertical provides advice and policy guidance to key stakeholders involved in skill development, jobs and livelihood creation, and social welfare. The key initiatives and activities undertaken by the vertical in 2020–21 are detailed below:

Unified Portal and Support System for Unorganized Workers

The Covid-19 pandemic presented various socio-economic groups, including migrant workers, with grave challenges. The skill development and employment vertical supported the Ministry of Labour and Employment's proposal for the creation of a database of unorganized workers, including migrant labourers, and offered further suggestions.

An exercise to map and analyse the existing job/employment portals of different Ministries and State Governments was undertaken. Meetings were held with States such as Uttar Pradesh,

Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka to discuss about their initiatives in supporting migrant workers and others seeking job and skill development opportunities.

Unnati Platform

NITI Aayog was entrusted with the task of setting up a portal/app for blue- and grey-collar workers. Meetings were organized with various Ministries and State Governments to discuss how their portals could be integrated with Unnati.

Compendium of Best Practices from States and Districts

A compendium of best practices from States and Districts, 'Empowering Migrant Workers through Skill Development and Livelihood Generation', was compiled by the vertical. The compendium provides a glimpse into the various initiatives undertaken by State and District administration to address grave challenges faced by migrant workers in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. States responded to the Hon'ble Prime Minister's call for Aatmanirbhar Bharat and launched initiatives that focused on making workers self-reliant, helping them regain their confidence through livelihood support and social protection. States also undertook the massive exercise of skill-mapping, which directed the creation of livelihood opportunities and identification of reskilling needs.

Technology played a critical role in these initiatives—the data of workers and their families was collated and used for skill-mapping to provide access to shelter, food and other social security measures. Significantly, many such initiatives opened new pathways for innovative solutions to problems of livelihood and social security faced by migrant and unorganized sector workers.

Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) Reforms

The vertical supported the Ministry of Labour and Employment in preparing a 'Roadmap for Transformational Reforms in ESIC'. Innovative and technology-driven solutions were offered for transforming different aspects: network expansion, governance and management, upgradation of technology management and increased beneficiary engagement. It was highlighted that there is an opportunity for ESIC to have a big impact on India's health outcome by leveraging its scale. Reforms undertaken by ESIC could serve as a model for future development of the health insurance and provision ecosystem.

Enhancing Female Labour Force Participation

Various consultative meetings were organized with UN agencies and relevant Ministries in 2019 to deliberate on the challenges around declining female labour force participation in India and steps needed to enhance women's employment opportunities. Based on these deliberations, a strategy paper on 'Enhancing Women's Labour Force Participation in India' was prepared and forwarded to the concerned Ministries/Departments in July 2020 for taking forward the recommendations.



Review of Performance of Aspirational Districts

Among the Aspirational Districts, poor-performing and best-performing Districts were identified. Communication was sent to these Districts, indicating areas that need improvement, appreciating achievements and suggesting opportunities for better outcomes.

The vertical is also facilitating development partners, L&T, CII, FUEL and Lupin, in advancing skill development in these Districts.

Labour Reforms

Extensive work was done to study various labour laws in the country and labour codes that were drafted by the Ministry of Labour and Employment. Suggestions on labour reforms were made for the ease-of-doing business, increasing productivity and scale of manufacturing.

Strengthening Implementation of Apprenticeship System in India with Focus on Absorption of Apprentices in Industry

The vertical regularly reviews the apprenticeship schemes that are being implemented by the Central Government. A paper is being prepared on 'Strengthening the Implementation of Apprenticeship System in India', which reviews the implementation of different schemes, with a focus on the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme. The paper puts forth recommendations for making the apprenticeship programme more effective and accessible for apprentices as well as employers.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SJE)

The social justice and empowerment vertical is the nodal division in NITI Aayog for the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment and Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities), Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Ministry of Minority Affairs.

The major responsibility of the vertical is to provide inputs in the formulation and strengthening of policies and programmes to safeguard and empower the interests of the socially, educationally and economically weaker sections of the society, such as the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Economically Backward Classes (EBCs), Nomadic, Semi-Nomadic and De-Notified Tribes (NT, SNT and DNTs), safai karmacharis, minorities and other vulnerable groups like Persons with Disabilities, senior citizens, victims of substance abuse/drug addicts, beggars/destitute, transgender persons, and others.

The vertical is also responsible for formulating and implementing guidelines for the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan (SCSP) and the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP), making suggestions or modifications in the guidelines for grants under Article 275(l) and Special Central Assistance to SCSP and TSP. The vertical is also responsible for dealing with the State/Union Territory issues of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

The division examined various proposals meant for CCEA, EFC, SFC and modification of scheme guidelines, etc., from the concerned nodal Ministries and supported the proposals with constructive suggestions. Major actions taken during 2020–21 are as follows:

NITI Aayog Guidelines (2017): New Arrangement for Implementation of SCSP and TSP

The division reviewed and revised the SCSP and TSP Guidelines 2010 to frame a new arrangement for the allocation of funds for the welfare of SCs and STs. Certain issues in allocation and better utilization of funds by certain Ministries are being reviewed.

Establishing Institutional Mechanism for Monitoring and Review of SCSP and TSP

NITI Aayog is working with nodal Ministries to further develop a framework for online portals to monitor outcomes on a real-time basis: e-uthan.gov.in, which is the portal of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment for SCSP; and stcmic.gov.in of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for TSP.

Revamped Tribal Research Institutes

A sub-group has been constituted in NITI Aayog, which recommended that the States give adequate autonomy to such institutes. The Union Government has enhanced the allocation for these institutes. The recommendation to establish a Birsa Munda National Institute for Tribal Development and Research is being implemented.

Taskforce for National Survey on Manual Scavengers

The taskforce has completed a national survey on the identification and rehabilitation of manual scavengers in the country. As per the survey, there are 57,411 persons who identified as manual scavengers. They were all given a one-time cash assistance of Rs 40,000 to relocate to other dignified occupations, including self-employment. Further, NITI Aayog has formulated a draft national policy towards achieving a manual-scavenging-free India.

NITI Aayog Committee on Identification of NTs, DNTs and SNTs

PMO has constituted a committee under the chairmanship of Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, for identification of De-notified Tribes, Nomadic Tribes, Semi-Nomadic Tribes, and tribes not yet formally classified. The committee has commissioned an ethnographic study by the Anthropological Survey of India, Kolkata, to study the 62 De-Notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes/Communities mentioned in List C of the Idate Commission Report. A survey for the same was completed in June 2020 and the report submitted on 48 communities. It was further decided in a meeting held under Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, to complete the study of another 204 communities.

Appraisal

The division examined various proposals meant for CCEA, EFC, SFC and modification of scheme guidelines, etc., from the concerned nodal Ministries and supported the proposals with constructive suggestions.

During the year, the vertical worked closely with DMEO, Central/State Governments/Line Ministries/Departments, institutions/agencies and other stakeholders for conducting evaluation studies on Centrally Sponsored Schemes under package 10, social inclusion law and order and justice delivery.

Besides, the SJE vertical also dealt with various Parliament-related matters (raised under Rule 377, Parliament Standing Committee and Parliament questions), RTIs, public grievances and representations related to SJE-related matters.

STATE FINANCES AND COORDINATION

The financial resources vertical was merged with the state coordination vertical in May 2020 and subsequently renamed 'state finances and coordination'. The merger is aimed to strengthen the coordination with States, promote cooperative federalism, and serve as a single point of contact for all matters/issues pertaining to finances of States and multi-state issues. The vertical has been entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining a state-wise database on macroeconomic, financial, fiscal and social indicators; assessing the financial health of the States, including assessment of transfers from the Centre to the States; and fostering cooperative federalism through structured support and initiatives.

The issues related to Finance Commission, funding requests for special projects and inter-governmental transfers are also handled by the vertical.

The vertical is committed towards providing inputs in the formulation of policies, pushing for reforms in fiscal matters and providing institutional support in terms of DSSS for development of infrastructure. The vertical also acts as the nodal for coordinating the work related to the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF) 2018–22.

The major activities and studies undertaken by the vertical during 2020–21 were:

Database on Financial Indicators

The vertical maintains a state-wise database on major financial indicators and central transfers to States, which is updated periodically. This data is used by NITI Aayog for providing important policy inputs to the States on matters related to public finance.

Analysis of States' Finances

The vertical prepared the States' fiscal health profiles, which are an effective at-a-glance summary of each State's financial health. These profiles reflect the States' performance in various fiscal indicators like GSDP growth; per capita GSDP; receipts, including resources generated from taxes; expenditures, including capital expenditure and social sector expenditure; fiscal and revenue deficit; and debt position. The vertical also analysed the position of each State vis-à-vis others and all-India average on various fiscal and financial indicators, including growth in State GDP and various sectors of the economy, receipts, expenditure, debt, and deficit position over the decade (2011–20). The vertical maintains information on central transfers, which is updated monthly and uploaded on the Knowledge Management System (KMS) of NITI Aayog.

Allocation to States

The Union Government endeavours to assist the States to meet the spill-over liabilities of their area-specific schemes and projects for which budget provision has not been made after the implementation of the Fourteenth Finance Commission recommendations and to provide need-based assistance keeping in view socio-economic-geographical factors. The vertical acts as the nodal for all recommendations made from NITI Aayog to the Department of Expenditure,

Ministry of Finance, for 'special assistance' to the States, under the demand 'transfers to States'. Based on NITI Aayog's recommendation, Rs 219 crore has been released as special assistance to the State of Nagaland by the Ministry of Finance during 2020–21.

United Nations Sustainable Development Framework 2018–22

NITI Aayog and United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) in India signed the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF) 2018–22, which is a five-year roadmap outlining the action-oriented response of UN agencies to key national developmental priorities, integrating the Sustainable Development Goals. The seven priority areas of development under UNSDF are: (i) poverty and urbanization; (ii) health, water and sanitation; (iii) education and employability; (iv) nutrition and food security; climate change, clean energy, and disaster resilience; (vi) skilling, entrepreneurship and job creation; and (vii) gender equality and youth development.

A joint steering committee has been set up, chaired by Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, and UNRC in India, to monitor progress under UNSDF. The third meeting of the committee was held on 24 November 2020 to monitor progress, with special emphasis on health in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. The attendees deliberated on the Health Joint Response Plan developed by WHO India in close collaboration with MoHFW, with an emphasis on fighting against the pandemic, and issues pertaining to vaccination and strengthening the resilience of public health systems.

Coordination with Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, for Status on Budget Announcements' Actionable Paras

The vertical coordinated with the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, for updation of the status of the Union Budget announcements, pertaining to NITI Aayog. These are periodically reviewed at various levels.

Standardization of State Profiles

The vertical has undertaken an exercise to standardize the templates of State factsheets/profiles, which would briefly provide the summary of the State's performance across different sectors, such as economic growth; agriculture; industry; labour and employment; fiscal affairs; health and education; water and sanitation; urbanization; etc., along with their performance in the major flagship programmes/schemes. The exercise involves not only indicating respective sources for each set of data, but also emphasizing a greater usage of maps, graphics, and charts to improve visual appeal.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Overview

In 2020, NITI Aayog renewed its commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals by reinforcing existing efforts towards localization, presenting India's second Voluntary National Review, and initiating new projects aimed at monitoring and evaluation of progress.

Localization of SDGs

States and Union Territories have created discrete institutional structures for implementation of SDGs in their own specific contexts. All States and UTs have identified and tasked nodal departments for implementation of SDGs. Departments dealing with planning and finance have been given this nodal responsibility. Several States have also created nodal mechanisms within every department and at the District levels to make coordination, convergence, and data management more precise and predictable.

High-level committees have been established at the State level to provide continuous guidance, oversee implementation and monitoring, and put in place mechanisms for ensuring coordinated action on SDGs. These committees are usually chaired by the Chief Secretary of the State, with all departmental heads as members. In a few cases, these committees are also headed by the Chief Minister, which lends more thrust to the SDG reviews.

Some States have also created professional units on SDGs in the shape of an SDG cell in the nodal department with personnel having technical expertise and experience. Key activities of the SDG cells/teams include:

- ▶ preparing knowledge products and progress reports
- ▶ organizing capacity-building programmes
- ▶ providing timely inputs as required
- ▶ playing a support-oriented role in interventions on SDG

NITI Aayog conducted extensive workshops for Government officials on SDG adoption, implementation, and monitoring across several States to augment State capacity and improve statistical systems.

SDG India Index

NITI Aayog believes in the mantra 'what gets measured gets done'. However, SDG action cannot be limited to the national level. Given the federal structure of the country, and the division of powers and responsibilities between the Central and State Governments as per the Constitution, for the SDGs to be achieved at the national level, the States must play the leading role. Therefore, the approach of cooperative and competitive federalism has resulted in the concept of the SDG India Index, which is the world's first Government-led sub-national measure of SDG progress. It measures the progress of all States and Union Territories in their journey towards achieving SDGs. The first edition of the index was launched in December 2018; the second edition on 30 December 2019; and the third edition is due for launch in February 2021. A dashboard has been developed for the index, with interactive visualization, which is in the public domain. It is being upgraded with multiple new features and interactive user elements to further increase its utility.

The index adopts a methodology in which the status on each SDG, and the performance of each State and UT, and that of the country, are measured on a scale of 0 to 100, where 100 implies achieving the target and 0 indicates worst performance.

While the 2018 edition of the index covered 13 SDGs, the 2019 edition covered all of them, with ranking on 16 SDGs and a qualitative assessment on Goal 17. While the 2018 edition used 62 indicators, the 2019 edition included 100 indicators. The 2020 version of the document will include more indicators to improve coverage of the SDG targets.

India's Voluntary National Review

NITI Aayog presented India's second VNR at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2020. The HLPF is the foremost international platform for follow-up and review of progress on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The India VNR 2020 report was released by NITI Aayog Vice Chairperson Dr Rajiv Kumar, Member (Health) Dr VK Paul, CEO Shri Amitabh Kant, and Adviser SDG Smt. Sanyukta Samaddar.

The VNRs presented by member states at the HLPF are a critical component of the review of progress and implementation of the 2030 agenda and the SDGs. The reviews are voluntary and state-led and aimed at facilitating the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned. The process of preparation of a country's VNR provides a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of various relevant stakeholders. NITI Aayog prepared and presented India's first VNR in 2017.

The India VNR 2020 represents NITI Aayog's efforts in embodying the whole-of-society approach and its commitment towards localization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Multidimensional Poverty Index

NITI Aayog has been assigned the nodal responsibility for the global MPI in India. As part of this mandate, NITI Aayog is responsible for monitoring progress, reviewing States/Union Territories' rankings and performance, preparing reform action plans, and constructing an indigenized national MPI in collaboration with the publishing agencies OPHI and UNDP.

An indigenized national MPI, which will include national priorities that are not present in the global MPI framework, will provide opportunities to the Central and State Governments to understand the multiple factors, which are hindering growth, and assist them in making interventions more effective, impactful and durable.

The MPI is a high-resolution household-level measure of non-monetary poverty. It captures the deprivation faced by the household across three dimensions and 10 indicators.

TOURISM

The objective of the tourism vertical is to support and suggest policies to increase the number of tourists, both domestic and international, in India.

- ▶ Covid-19 impacted the entire value chain of travel, hospitality, and tourism industry. The tourism vertical, NITI Aayog, started frontline initiatives, post consultations with industry and associations, and took them up with the Ministry of Tourism and State Governments for necessary action.
- ▶ The vertical is actively following up with the State of Uttarakhand on the International Convention Centre in Rishikesh under DSSS-I initiative of NITI Aayog.
- ▶ A meeting was held on 7 October 2020 in NITI Aayog, wherein a presentation was made by the Ministry of Tourism on the National Tourism Policy. After long discussions, the Policy was supported by NITI Aayog.
- ▶ The vertical provided valuable insights into the Lakshadweep Tourism Policy, such as launching the 'Lakshadweep Plastic-Free Destination' campaign, to ensure the region

is plastic-free; local architectural style of accommodation facilities; use of electric vehicles; maritime archaeology tourism; etc.

- ▶ A meeting was held on 17 August 2020 on the Ecotourism Policy of India, wherein a presentation was made by MoEFCC. The Policy was supported by NITI Aayog with observations on carrying-capacity assessment, creating experience tours, etc.
- ▶ The vertical examined the following PPRs related to tourism: holistic development of Tehri and its catchment area; mega ecotourism project at Loktak Lake, Manipur; development of tourism infrastructure and improvement of road connectivity to different tourist destinations in the State of Tripura; development of an eco-pilgrimage tourism complex at Dodak in West Sikkim; experiential eco-tourism infrastructure development for empowering rural youth and conserving natural resources and indigenous culture in Meghalaya.
- ▶ The vertical has examined and provided comments on EFC proposals on the development of iconic tourist sites during the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Finance Commission periods (2019–20 and 2024–25).

VIGILANCE SECTION

Activities

The vigilance section deals with all cases of corruption, malpractices, and lack of integrity of officials and officers working at NITI Aayog. It is also responsible for issuance of vigilance status and certificates to officials and officers in NITI Aayog.

Between January–December 2020, around 300 vigilance clearances were issued. During this period, several RTIs and whistle-blower complaints were dealt with and disposed of in consultation with CVC. The cases of disciplinary proceedings against some officials and officers were disposed of.

Preventative Vigilance

Vigilance Awareness Week was observed from 27 October to 2 November 2020. The theme was 'Vigilant India, Prosperous India'. On this occasion, an integrity pledge was administered.

Prevention of Sexual Harassment

The Internal Complaints Committee was constituted in accordance with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal), Act 2013.

VOLUNTARY ACTION CELL (VAC)

Voluntary organizations play a vital role in the shaping and implementation of participatory democracy. Their credibility lies in the responsible and constructive role they play in society. They work at the grassroots level in remote areas. They are closer to ground realities and know the needs of the communities. Their approach with the target group is direct and empathetic, hence, they draw more contextualized plans of action. They also manage to develop intimate contacts with people and develop confidence among them.

The Government of India recognizes the collaborative role of the voluntary sector in the socio-economic development of the country. The task of the voluntary action cell in NITI Aayog is to promote partnership and voluntarism in the country. The functions include preparation of policy guidelines for the voluntary sector; operationalization of the National Policy on Voluntary Sector, 2007; preparation of guidelines for the implementation of various Government schemes through voluntary organizations; maintenance of databases of NGOs and voluntary organizations, etc.

NGO Darpan Portal

VAC also maintains an electronic database of NGOs and voluntary organizations: NGO Darpan portal (earlier called the NGO Partnership System). The portal is also an attempt to enable such organizations to operate in the country with accountability and transparency.

To transact business with a Line Ministry/Department and apply for grants, an NGO must first sign up on the portal and obtain a unique identity number by furnishing the required details. Ministries/Departments implementing schemes through NGOs are also required to develop their own portals and integrate them with Darpan to facilitate a seamless flow of information. The Ministries/Departments can also verify the credentials of the NGOs through the integrated system before considering any applications from them for grants.

Darpan captures the data of fund flow through PFMS. In the last four years, as many as 6162 NGOs/CSOs have availed grants of Rs 3677.84 crore from 60 Central Ministries and Departments.

A helpdesk, 'Hunting and Helpdesk No. 14414', has been made operational on Darpan for faster and smoother grievance redressal. Approximately 1200 grievances are redressed every month. Features such as a chat bot, voice bot and IVRS have also been tested and will soon be hosted on the portal; they will act alongside Hunting and Helpdesk No. 14414 and reduce the human interface, thereby making grievance redressal faster and smoother. All grant-giving Ministries and Departments must be on board with Darpan. So far, 30 out of 51 grant-giving Ministries and Departments have linked their portals with Darpan.



Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, addressing participants in a workshop-cum-training session for States/UTs and Central nodal officers on managing Darpan portal on 12 March 2020

The cell has provided login access of the dashboard to nodal officers of Central Ministries/ Departments and States and UTs. Consequently, around 53 grant-giving Central Ministries have updated their information and eight States and Union Territories have updated their schemes. The rest are in the process of updating their schemes on Darpan. The information is shown publicly for the benefit of NGOs/CSOs. VAC receives regular calls and emails regarding registration, updation, modification, etc., since PAN and Aadhaar were made mandatory and their verification started online.

NITI-CSO Standing Committee

The NITI-CSO Standing Committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, and comprises 30 members from different sectors of CSOs and development partners. The committee was reconstituted in March 2020 for a period of four years as a standing forum for sustainable engagement with CSOs involved in various areas of development.



Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, chaired NITI-CSO Standing Committee meeting on 30 June 2020

The committee first met on 30 June and discussed the development of emerging issues and potential areas for partnerships and interventions. It was decided to constitute thematic sub-groups to identify critical areas and bottlenecks so that suitable steps could be taken to address issues related to policy and operational difficulties, especially in the Aspirational Districts. Accordingly, the following seventeen sub-groups were constituted on:

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Human Trafficking and Bonded Labour
- ▶ Elderly Care
- ▶ LGBTQI
- ▶ WASH
- ▶ Health and Nutrition
- ▶ Mapping, Capacity Building and Regulation of Voluntary Sector

- ▶ Youth Engagement
- ▶ Disability and Accessibility
- ▶ Disaster Relief and Environmental Issues
- ▶ Entrepreneurship and Skill Development
- ▶ Migrant Labour
- ▶ Microfinance
- ▶ Innovation Technology Transfer
- ▶ Sustainable Livelihoods
- ▶ Child Rights
- ▶ Women Empowerment

POSHAN Maah

A letter was sent by Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, to 35,721 NGOs/CSOs working in the fields of health and nutrition, inviting them to participate in POSHAN Abhiyaan activities.

An overwhelming response was received, and CSOs/NGOs shared detailed reports of their activities conducted during POSHAN Maah. Many NGOs reached out to the masses and conducted activities throughout POSHAN Maah to benefit target groups of children, adolescent girls, and pregnant and lactating women. They were also involved in distributing food and Covid-19 relief kits to beneficiaries. Further, iron, and folic acid syrup were distributed at the ICDS centres.

(For more on the role and contribution of the Voluntary Action Cell, see Section F: Covid-19 Management.)

WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The women and child development division provides policy guidance and oversees programme implementation of MoWCD through periodic monitoring and evaluation exercises for ensuring overall survival, development, protection and participation of women and children. It is broadly guided by the twin objectives of empowering women to live with confidence and dignity and to help them nurture their children,



and provide them with safe, healthy, and protective environments. It also focuses on improving nutritional outcomes and the overall development of children and adolescent girls. During the year 2020–21, some of the major activities undertaken by the division were:

Urban Health and Nutrition

NITI Aayog is in the process of developing a strategy paper, which aims to provide the way forward on promoting preventive health and nutrition service delivery and decentralizing local governance for effective health and nutritional outcomes. The paper focuses on suggesting a coherent and integrated model of healthcare, which will be aimed at providing equitable and accessible healthcare in urban areas. The strategy paper has been enriched by several in-depth deliberations with State health and nutrition departments, urban local bodies, NGOs and health practitioners and academics, and experiences on field visits undertaken by the NITI team.

Secretarial Assistance to Taskforce on Age of Marriage and Motherhood

The Hon'ble Finance Minister of India during her 2020–21 Budget speech in Parliament stated that, 'Women's age of marriage was increased from fifteen to eighteen years in 1978, by amending the erstwhile Sharda Act of 1929. As India progresses further, opportunities open up for women to pursue higher education and careers. There are imperatives of lowering MMR as well as improvement of nutrition levels. Entire issue about age of a girl entering motherhood needs to be seen in this light. I propose to appoint a taskforce that will present its recommendations in six months' time...[sic].' Thereafter, the Government notified the taskforce, dated 4 June 2020, entrusting the responsibility of secretarial assistance to NITI Aayog. The taskforce is in the process of finalizing and submitting the report.

Mapping of Schemes under Global Hunger Index Strategy

Schemes of various Ministries/Departments that have a bearing on the components of the Hunger Index have been mapped out and a wider strategy is being developed under Secretary, MoWCD. A series of meetings was organized under the chairmanship of NITI Aayog Vice Chairperson, Member (Health), and Member (Agriculture). The methodology and way forward for improving the rank of India in the global scenario were presented. Timebound Ministry-wise targets were made and shared with respective Ministries for improving India's overall rank.

Engagement with Civil Society Organizations

With an objective to improve health- and nutrition-related indicators on ground, NITI Aayog is trying to strengthen the *jan andolan* component of POSHAN Abhiyaan. NITI Aayog, along with a network of NGOs/CSOs, is working towards improving health and nutrition indicators by community engagement and mobilization. The work by CSOs/NGOs is done in identified communities to engage beneficiaries, primarily mothers, to improve:

- ▶ Awareness about health and nutrition schemes and interventions ('Knowledge');
- ▶ Utilization of services provided by these schemes by demand generation ('Attitude');
- ▶ Compliance with programme interventions ('Practice'), which will thereby
- ▶ Help achieve the impact of these evidence-based interventions.

POSHANGYAN: National Digital Repository on IEC Material for Health and Nutrition Promotion

The national digital repository on IEC material for health and nutrition promotion is being developed by the WCD vertical, which would be a compilation of all (print, audio, video, SMS, and social media creatives) end-user resources indexed according to health and nutrition themes in various regional languages.

Additional Tasks

1. Assessment of ICDS Service Delivery during Covid-19

An assessment was undertaken by the WCD division keeping in mind the following objectives:

- ▶▶ To assess ICDS take-home ration/hot-cooked meals' delivery during Covid-19
- ▶▶ To draw insights from good practices on ICDS take-home ration/hot-cooked meals' delivery in States

Twenty large States were approached telephonically and/or via emails to understand the service delivery systems of the Supplementary Nutrition Programme, scope of digital training, State-specific health and nutrition initiatives, and challenges being faced by Anganwadi Workers on the field. Emerging challenges and recommendations were provided in the report, shared with Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog.

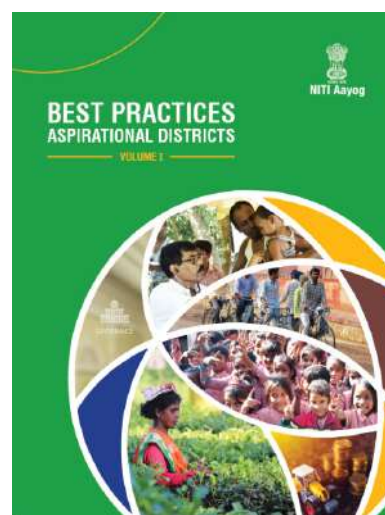
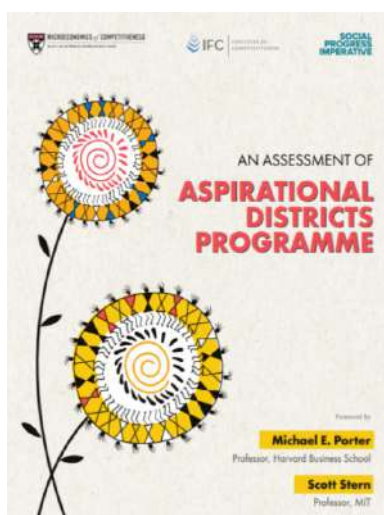
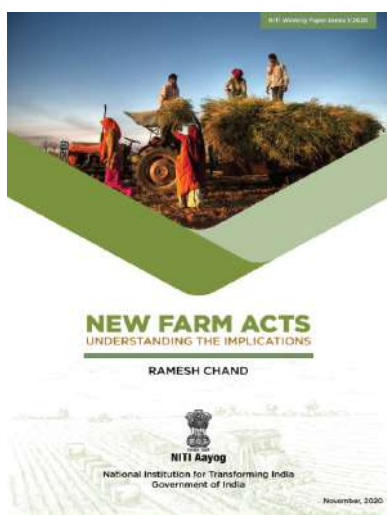
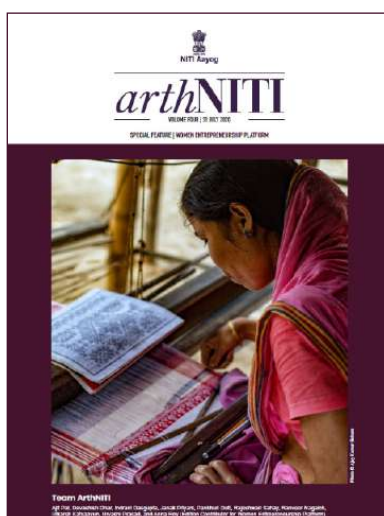
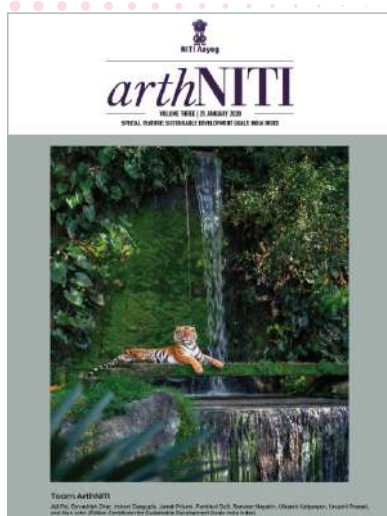
2. Webinars for Awareness during Covid-19

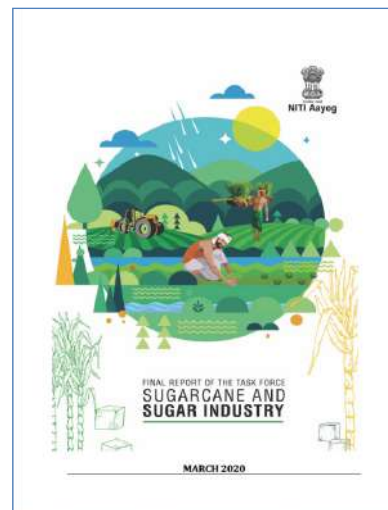
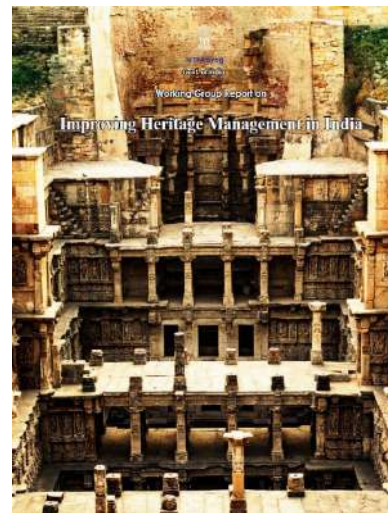
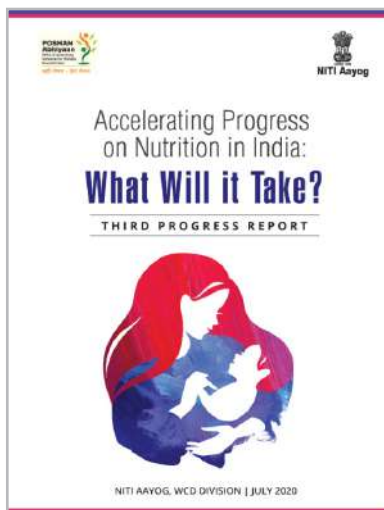
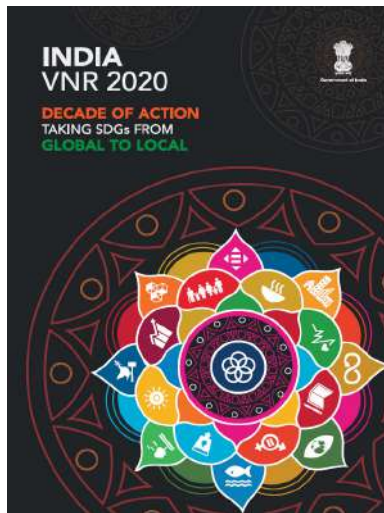
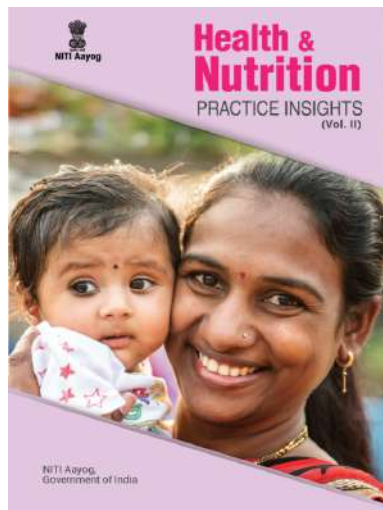
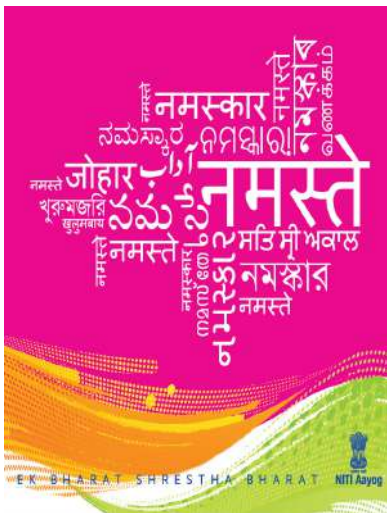
A series of webinars was organized for generating awareness during Covid. The webinars were chaired by CEO, NITI Aayog. They were on:

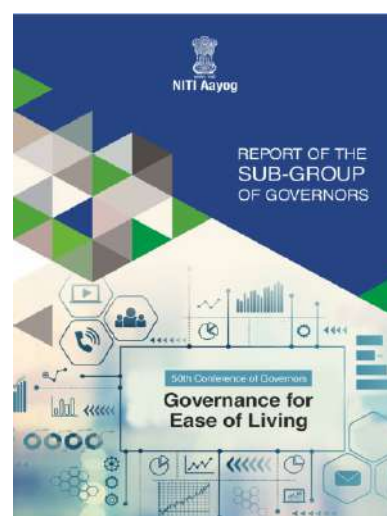
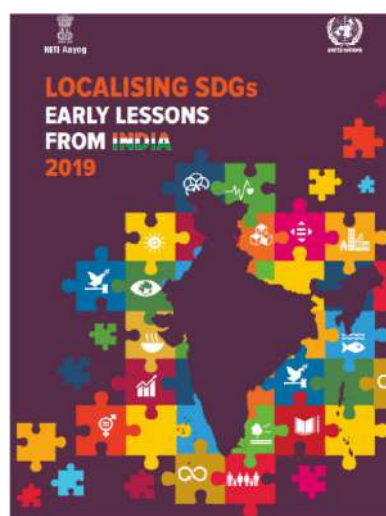
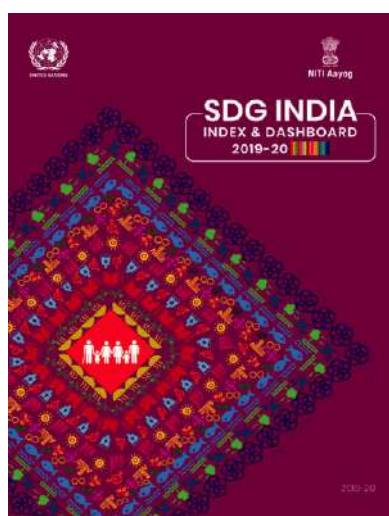
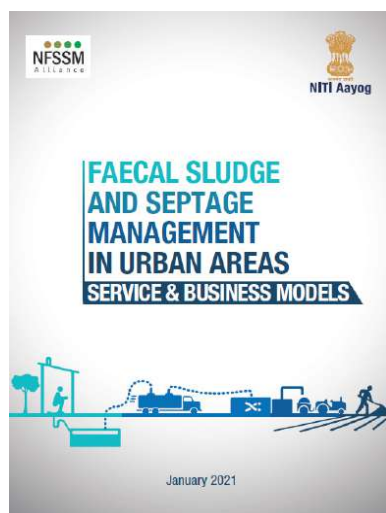
- ▶▶ taking care of our senior citizens during Covid-19
- ▶▶ self-care of the elderly during Covid-19
- ▶▶ sustaining breastfeeding practices during Covid-19

(For more on WCD reforms, see Section B: Policy and Programme.)

*Reports
and
Publications*







Annexures

ANNEXURE I

(DEVELOPMENT MONITORING AND EVALUATION OFFICE)

Lists of Output-Outcome Monitoring Framework reviews conducted, performance notes, and webinars done, and toolkits developed in FY 2020–21

Table 1: Output-Outcome Monitoring Framework Reviews conducted during 2020 (up to 13 November 2020)

S. No.	Ministry/Department	Under Chairmanship of
1	Department of Commerce	Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog
2	Ministry of Culture	
3	Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises	
4	Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation	
5	Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying	Dr Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog
6	Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals	
7	Department of Fertilizers	
8	Department of Consumer Affairs	
9	Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities	
10	Department of Fisheries	
11	Department of Food and Public Distribution	
12	Department of Rural Development	
13	Department of Social Justice and Empowerment	
14	Department of Sports	
15	Ministry of Minority Affairs	
16	Ministry of Tribal Affairs	
17	Department of Science and Technology	Dr VK Saraswat, Member, NITI Aayog
18	Department of Biotechnology	
19	Ministry of Civil Aviation	
20	Ministry of Coal	
21	Ministry of Earth Sciences	
22	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology	
23	Ministry of Labour and Employment	
24	Ministry of New and Renewable Energy	
25	Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas	
26	Ministry of Power	
27	Ministry of Railways	
28	Ministry of Road Transport and Highways	
29	Ministry of Shipping	
30	Department of School Education and Literacy	

Table 2: Performance Notes on Key Government Schemes

S. No.	Name of the Scheme	Ministry
1	Direct Benefit Transfer- LPG	Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
2	Eklavya Model Residential School	Ministry of Tribal Affairs
3	Grants to Inland Waterways Authority of India	Ministry of Shipping
4	Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyaan	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
5	Transfer to Rashtriya Rail Sanrakshan Kosh	Ministry of Railways
6	Public Financial Management System	Ministry of Finance
7	Regional Connectivity Scheme (UDAN)	Ministry of Civil Aviation
8	Market Intervention Scheme and Price Support Scheme	Department of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare
9	District Agromet Units	Ministry of Earth Sciences
10	Special Central Assistance to LWE-Affected Districts	Ministry of Home Affairs
11	National Mission on Libraries	Ministry of Culture
12	Establishment of Network of Laboratories for Managing Epidemics and Natural Calamities	Department of Health Research

Table 3: Webinars with external experts conducted by DMEO

S. No.	Title	Partners
1	Measurement and Theory of Change	Ms Harini Kannan, Research Scientist, CLEAR/JPAL SA
2	Generalized Survey Solution in NSS	Mr Arindam Modak, MoSPI
3	Community-Based Monitoring (CBM) to Assess Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Socio-economic Condition of Vulnerable Population	Mr KD Maiti, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Social Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation Section, UNICEF India
4	Unpacking India's Covid-19 Social Assistance Package	Ms Urmila Chatterjee, Senior Economist, World Bank
5	M&E in Government: Partnerships in a Multi-Stakeholder Environment	JPAL, UNICEF, WFP, ISB, and Ministry of Tribal Affairs
6	M&E in Government: Data Quality in Theory and Practice	JPAL, UNICEF, WFP, ISB, and Ministry of Tribal Affairs
7	M&E in Government: Institutionalization, Demand Generation and Points of Entry	JPAL, UNICEF, WFP, ISB, and Ministry of Tribal Affairs
8	JPAL's IDEA Initiative: Use of Administrative Data	Ms Aparna Krishnan, Project Director, JPAL South Asia
9	UN World Food Programme: How the World's Largest Humanitarian Organization Responds to Global Crises	Mr Eric Kenefick, Deputy Country Director, WFP

S. No.	Title	Partners
10	Data-Driven Governance initiative	Dr Poornima Dore, Head of Data Driven Governance, Tata Trusts
11	Adopting Monitoring, Research and Evaluation to COVID-19	Ms. Nikola Balwin and Ms. Maaïke Bijker, Research and Evaluation Specialists, UNICEF India.
12	Insights from IHDS	Prof Sonalde Desai, NCAER NDIC
13	Consumer Pyramids Household Survey by CMIE	Dr Kaushik Krishnan, Chief Economist, Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE).
14	Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses	Prof. Soham Sahoo, Centre for Public Policy (CPP), IIM Bangalore
15	Schedule Design for Consumer Expenditure	Mr Amitava Saha DDG (Survey Design & Research Division), MoSPI
16	Schedule Design for Labour Force Survey	Mr Salil Mukhopadhyay, DDG (SDRD), MoSPI
17	Handling of NSS Data and Use of CAPI In NSS Surveys	Mr Soumendra Chattopadhyay, DDG DPD(HQ), MoSPI
18	Strategies to Bring M&E into Evidence-Based Policymaking	Mr Adil Zainulbhai, Chairman, Quality Council of India
19	Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Ms Aparna Mittal, Founder of Samāna Centre for Gender, Policy and Law

Table 4: Toolkits developed and available on the DMEO website

S. No.	Title
1	Template for Terms of Reference for CS Schemes
2	Monitoring Maturity Assessment for CS/CSS Schemes
3	Template for Rationalization of CS and CSS Schemes
4	Procurement Toolkit Comprising Model RFP, ToR Templates, Guidelines and Samples
5	State Scholarship Portal Maturity Assessment Template

ANNEXURE II

(GOVERNANCE AND RESEARCH)

Lists of Researched Studies Approved, Studies Completed and Logo Support Provided

Table 5: List of New Research Studies Approved during the year 2020-21
(up to 30 November 2020)

S. No.	Research Studies Approved	Institution/Researcher
1	Roadmap for devising WTO complaint strategies to create global champion in automotive industry	PricewaterhouseCoopers Private Limited, Gurugram
2	Reforming legal education system in India: Analysis and suggestions	Lawlyty Education Private Limited, New Delhi
3	Mainstreaming Online Dispute Resolution in India	Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, New Delhi
4	Mega textile park chain assessment and PPP structuring options	Ernst and Young Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi
5	Developing a carbon-neutral resource efficient strategy for Ladakh	The Energy and Resources Institute, New Delhi
6	Efficiency and competitiveness of Indian Railways as well as policy-level strategies to improve modal share of Railways in Indian Freight Movement	Bureau of Research on Industry and Economic Fundamentals, New Delhi
7	Integration of small businesses/ traders on e-commerce platform	PricewaterhouseCoopers Private Limited, Gurugram
8	Evaluation of training institutes in India	Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi
9	Integration of an artificial intelligence platform for screening of diabetic retinopathy in public health facilities	Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh
10	Prediction of GDP	Quantta Analytics Pvt Ltd, Kolkata

Table 6: Studies Completed during the Year 2019–20
(till 30 November 2020)

S. No.	Title of the Study	Institution/Researcher
1	Composite Water Management Index, Round II	Dalberg Development Advisors Private Ltd, New Delhi
2	Kaizen Assessment and Pilot at NITI Aayog	Kaizen Institute SAIN LLP India, Ahmedabad
3	Impact Assessment of Prime Minister's Kaushal Vikas Yojana	Centre for Economic Policy Research, Amritsar.
4	Health Surveys and Research Studies: MIS Component of the Umbrella Scheme for Family Welfare and Other Health Interventions	ICRIER, New Delhi
5	Action Research for Waste Reduction	Chintan Environmental Research and Action Group, New Delhi
6	Measures to augment Resources of PRIs	Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi
7	Rapid Assessment of Swasth Nagrik Abhiyan of erstwhile IEC Programme	Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi
8	Adoption of Natural Farming and Its Effect on Crop Yield and Farmers' Livelihood in India	ICAR-National Academy of Agricultural Research Management, Hyderabad
9	PPP Framework for NILERD	KPMG Advisory Services Private Ltd, Chennai
10	Assessment of Environmental and Economic Impacts of Use of Washed Coal for Power Generation	TERI, New Delhi

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