Syllabus subtopic: Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

Prelims and Mains focus: About NITI Aayog’s SDG India Index and performance of various states

News: Kerala tops the States in progress towards the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while Bihar is at the bottom of the NITI Aayog’s SDG Index, released on Monday.

Background

The SDG India Index was developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Global Green Growth Institute and United Nations in India.

- The index comprises a composite score for each State and Union Territory based on their aggregate performance across 13 of the 17 SDGs. The score, ranging between 0 and 100, denotes the average performance of the State/UT towards achieving the 13 SDGs and their respective targets.
- The aim of the index is to instill competition among States to improve their performance across social indices as the States’ progress will determine India’s progress towards achieving the set goals by 2030. Using the index, States will be monitored on a real-time basis.

What are Sustainable development Goals (SDGs)

- The SDGs are a set of 17 broadbased global goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, and intended to be achieved by 2030.
- With onesixth of the world’s population, India is key to the achievement of the goals. The UN has developed 232 indicators to measure compliance by member nations. The NITI Aayog has adapted the monitoring approach to the Indian context, with 100 indicators of its own for the Index.
- Only 40% of these indicators were used for last year’s baseline index and hence, the two indices are not directly comparable. However, it is still
interesting to note that Kerala has retained its top slot, while Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim have shown the most improvement.

Performance of other states

- Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim have joined the four southern States among the frontrunners, which scored over 65 points out of a possible 100.
- Ending hunger and achieving gender equality are the areas where most States fall far short, with the all-India scores at a dismal 35 and 42 points respectively.
- On the other hand, the NITI Aayog has given India an overall score of 60 points, driven mostly by progress in energy and sanitation (88); peace, justice and strong institutions (72); and affordable and clean energy (70).

SDG-wise analysis

- The second SDG — zero hunger — shows sharp divergence in the performance of States, with little middle ground. Kerala, Goa and parts of the northeast, including Mizoram, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, have scored above 65, with Goa at 75 points.
- However, 22 of the States and Union Territories have scored below 50, with the central Indian States of Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Chhattisgarh scoring below 30, showing high levels of hunger and malnutrition.

- On the fifth SDG — gender equality — almost all States fare poorly. Only Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala have managed to cross 50 points. The indicators considered include crimes against women, eradicating sex selection and discrimination against daughters, and access to reproductive health schemes, as well as indicators showing women’s economic and political empowerment and leadership.
- A sex ratio of 896 females per 1000 males, a 17.5% female labour participation rate, and the fact that one in three women experience spousal violence all contribute to a low score countrywide.

- The Swachh Bharat Mission has contributed largely to the high scores on the sixth SDG — clean water and sanitation — although that was helped by the fact that four out of seven indicators dealt with toilets and sanitation, while
only one indicator was related to safe and affordable drinking water.

- All States and Union Territories except for Delhi have scored above 65, with the national capital scoring poorly on the percentage of urban households with individual household toilets (less than 1%) and, oddly, providing no data on districts verified to be open defecation free.