STATE SUPPORT MISSION (SSM) , NITI Aayog.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते |

तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योग: कर्मसु कौशलम् ||

(Bhagavad Geeta, Chapter 2, Verse 50)

The man of equanimity born of wisdom releases himself both from good and bad even in this life. Therefore, strive for nishkama karma with an equal mind. Yoga is skill in action.

The State Support Mission (SSM) is a central sector, demand-driven scheme of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), Government of India. It is designed to institutionalize and strengthen the planning framework of States/UTs by fostering collaboration between the Government of India and the States/Union Territories (UTs) to accelerate an inclusive, extensive, and evidence-based development process. The scheme was announced in the Union Budget of 2022-23 by Hon'ble Finance Minister and was officially rolled out during FY 2023-24.

The State Institutions for Transformation (SITs), established under State Support Mission, serve as enabler for planned development aligned with the national vision. Formed under the ambit of the State Support Mission, SITs act as catalysts to strengthen the development planning and implementation capacities of States and Union Territories.

As on date, a total of 31 SITs has been notified under SSM and, these are actively working towards the socio-economic goals of the States and thereby the Nation. Importantly, States have the flexibility to establish SITs as units augmenting the existing planning departments, or by renaming and restructuring their planning departments. This flexibility allows States to customize the SIT framework according to their institutional structures and development priorities.

Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) was entrusted with evaluating the State Support Mission (SSM) implemented by NITI Aayog. The broad objective of the evaluation was to assess the extent to which the scheme's goals were achieved in terms of processes, outcomes, and intended impacts. The overarching focus was to review the financial and physical achievements of the scheme in line with the third-party assessment template. The SSM scheme was evaluated against thirteen predesigned objectives encompassing the review of its implementation status, performance of SITs, and formulation of state development strategies aligned with national priorities. The assessment also examined institutional structures, expert engagement, capacity-building initiatives and fund utilisation. Further, it sought to identify challenges, recommend corrective measures, and outline a strategic road map for the Mission's continuation beyond FY 2025–26. The evaluation also put forward actionable and practical recommendations to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the scheme.

To get the responsive feedback on the study objectives, descriptive methodology was designed in the positivist frame of reference. By employing a mixed-methods approach, the study used both quantitative and qualitative research tools.The study took a comprehensive approach to examine the objectives, implementation mechanism, key bottlenecks, and challenges faced, using carefully crafted parameters to collate both quantitative and qualitative data points. The approach applied also measured how well the stated objectives were achieved in the participating States. The assessment analysed the degree of goal attainment as outlined in the Action Plan of each State. The study visit was conducted in a total of 12 sample States and 1 UT; (11 participating and 2 non-participating), viz. (1) Odisha, (2) Bihar, (3) Maharashtra, (4) Gujarat, (5) Uttarakhand, (6) Rajasthan, (7) Jharkhand, (8) Tamil Nadu, (9) Uttar Pradesh, (10) Madhya Pradesh, (11) Meghalaya, (12) Mizoram, (13) Delhi.

The research tools used in the evaluation were (1) Questionnaire (Close and open ended), (2) In-depth interview, (3) Observation, and (4) Focus group discussion. Based on responses received, the performance matrix of the scheme was carved out from the objectives of the evaluation. Accordingly, the major findings of the study are as under:

1. The launch of the State Support Mission (SSM) by NITI Aayog has come at a crucial juncture as India aspires to realize Viksit Bharat @2047.Less than three years of its roll out, the Mission has emerged as a proactive Government of India platform enabling States and Union Territories to come together in pursuit of shared national and State/UT development priorities. Through this collaborative framework, the Mission has strengthened the spirit of cooperative federalism, encouraging cross-learning, innovation, and coordinated action toward achieving the country's long-term development vision.
2. Though SSM is a demand driven scheme, it has been well received by the majority of States and Union Territories. So far, **31 States/UTs have notified the establishment of SITs within a span of two years**—one of the remarkable achievements of the scheme, given its distinctive focus on institutional strengthening, capacity building, fostering innovative approaches, and leveraging knowledge institutions to enhance state-level policy and development strategies.
3. The States have benefitted out of the implementation of the SSM in **designing, formulating State visions**, **strategies in alignment with shared vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047.**

4. The scheme has encouraged the States to **re-imagine the role of the planning departments**, positioning them as the vital node for State-level planning and strategy formulation in the face of rapid major technological and socio-economic changes.
5. The **support of sectoral experts** under the Program Implementation Unit (PIU) of SITs under the Mission has enabled the States/UTs to enhance the quality deliberation on socio economic development in the States giving boost to their strategic initiatives to achieve their growth objectives.
6. The Mission has enabled NITI Aayog and SITs to strengthen industry–academia collaboration by engaging **Lead Knowledge Institutions (LKIs)** and development partners, thereby leveraging their domain-specific expertise. Furthermore, the Mission has fostered a **tripartite partnership between the States, LKIs, and NITI Aayog**, with each partner contributing distinct strengths and expertise toward advancing the National Development Agenda. The flexibility provided in the Mission to engage institutions such as IIMs, IITs, State universities, or other organizations enabled the States/UTs to choose their LKIs based on their developmental priorities.
7. The States/UT has been able to strengthen their **M&E ecosystem** under the Mission for meeting their critical information needs, enabling evidence-based policymaking and data-driven governance. The establishment of state- of- the art **immersive digital experience room, called, Viksit Bharat Strategy Rooms (VBSRs) at NITI Aayog and LBSNAA, Mussoorie**, has inspired the States/UTs to adopt data**-rich visualization techniques** in their policymaking processes and also for **monitoring of programmes and schemes**. Many States are also in process of setting up of similar experience room in the respective states to give boost to data-driven policy making.
8. The Mission has provided a platform for States to learn from each other through the sharing of their best practices. **NITI for State Knowledge platform** developed under the Mission has been successful in addressing information asymmetry by providing easy access to knowledge products such as best practices, and datasets at one place to make better informed decisions.
9. Within two years, the Mission has also created a robust platform for deliberation, discussion, and brainstorming on key issues and development challenges through **55 National Level Workshops** in two financial years under its initiative of **NITI-State**

Workshop Series. These workshops have enabled meaningful dialogue on emerging areas of interest to the States, effectively linking them to the broader Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

10. As per the SFC, the Mission was approved with an outlay of **Rs. 237.5 crore** for a period of three years i.e. from FY 2022-23 to FY 2024-25. During the FY 2022-23, a token amount of Rs. 0.5 crore was allocated and thereafter in FY 2023-24, an amount of Rs. 40 crore was allocated against the approved outlay of Rs. 100.2 crore by the Ministry of Finance (MoF), GoI. Similarly, for FY 2024-25, Rs. 40 crore was initially allocated at the Budget Estimate (B.E.) stage, which was slightly increased to Rs. 44.96 Cr at the Revised Estimate (R.E.) stage. The Mission has successfully utilized 90% of the allocated funds. Meanwhile, the Mission period was extended by one year without any revision to the original outlay. Accordingly, Rs. 45 Cr was allocated for FY 2025-26, of which over 60% had been released as of 15th October 2025. The trend in the expenditure highlights that the scheme is gaining momentum with each financial year as total expenditure increased from 53.9% in FY 2023-24 to almost 91% in FY 2024-25 and within 7 months of the present FY almost 60% of the funds have been utilized. **This trajectory indicates that the Mission is gaining momentum in optimizing financial utilization in line with its physical targets, thereby strengthening institutional capacities in the States to drive reform initiatives, further indicates better planning and rationalisation in fiscal management.**

11. The Mission's activities and goals contribute to achieving SDG 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels), particularly SDG goal on Targets 16.6 (Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels) and SDG Target goal 16.7 (Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels), by establishing and strengthening SITs as multi-disciplinary resource centres for evidence-based policymaking, strategic planning, and programme implementation.

12. SSM plays an instrumental role as a catalysing mechanism to achieve the objectives of the Viksit Bharat @ 2047 vision. It serves as a strategy for an all-inclusive structural and institutional transformation agenda and promotes the operational utilization of digital and

other technologies to transform governance in the States and UTs. The Mission provides structured support to States and UTs across multiple dimensions, including capacity building, institutional strengthening, state-specific development agendas, promotion of cooperative federalism, data-driven governance, monitoring, reforms, and innovation.

13. To ensure effective implementation of the scheme, promote peer learning, and strengthen monitoring and course correction mechanisms, NITI Aayog has undertaken several key initiatives, including: NITI-State Workshop Series, NITI for States Knowledge Portal, Viksit Bharat Strategy Room, Regular Review Meetings, SIT Orientation Sessions, Regional Workshops and PFMS and CNA Trainings.
14. All 13 sampled States and UTs have either established SITs or strengthened their existing State Planning Boards. Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, and Uttarakhand emerged as front runners in setting up SITs during FY 2023-24, while Mizoram, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Bihar followed suit in FY 2024-25. Notably, several SITs—such as the Maharashtra Institution of Transformation (MITRA), Meghalaya Government Innovation Lab (GIL), and SETU Aayog of Uttarakhand—have established multidisciplinary resource centres aligned with the SIT framework outlined under the Mission.
15. After analysing the budget data and its utilization and also interaction with the States, it came to highlight that the **States took time to understand the procedure for fund utilization under the present model of CNA-02 on PFMS being used by SSM**, **due to which the fund utilization from CNA account was delayed**. However, as States/UTs and respective LKIs are adapting to PFMS, the fund utilization is expected to increase. Also, **procedural and administrative delays in hiring of experts and team members** which is pivotal to the expenditure on part of the States led to delay in utilization of funds. However, inadequate fund absorption level impedes the effective operationalisation of SITs, PIUs and knowledge activities, and there is a strong necessity for corrective mechanisms in terms of streamlining PFMS processes, enhancing financial planning and coordination between the administrative departments of States/UTs and the SITs.
16. Human resources, capacity building, and fund utilization emerged as common concerns across the sampled States and UTs. Nearly all the States and UTs studied highlighted

recruitment difficulties, low remuneration, and high attrition, sector experts have also highlighted concerns arising from third-party recruitment as core bottlenecks, along with delays in accessing funds through CNA and low fund utilization.

17. The State Support Mission scheme is **unique in galvanizing State and UT planning departments to develop systematic blueprints for state development**. To maximize its impact, the Mission needs to be expanded with enhanced capacity and resources. Coverage should extend to all 36 States and UTs, accompanied by increased financial assistance. Since the scheme's goal is to align the development agendas of States and UTs with the broader Viksit Bharat Roadmap, expanding its coverage will help ensure that both the individual components and the overall system are strengthened, working together more effectively to achieve greater impact. Additionally, sector-specific LKIs could be onboarded to foster a comprehensive intellectual collaboration that drives desired outcomes. States have also expressed the need for greater handholding support from NITI Aayog. This could be addressed by organizing more workshops at NITI Aayog, providing a platform for States and UTs to actively participate, network, cross-learn and clearly articulate their action plans. Furthermore, many sampled States have shown a strong interest in establishing Viksit Bharat Strategy Rooms (VBSR) to enhance data-driven decision-making and meet high information and data requirements.
18. In the context of sampled non-participating states (Jharkhand and Odisha) under the SSM scheme, the reasons for the non-establishment of the SITs have not been specified. Jharkhand has indicated a preference for leveraging existing departments within the Planning Board, with suggestions that an SIT may be established in the future to better align with the state's specific needs.

Keeping in view the Scheme's demand, effective annual action plan-based fund approvals, a robust fund transfer mechanism through PFMS, accelerated growth drivers via the establishment of SITs, and the strategic outlook expanded by LKIs with the capability to catalyze the visions of Viksit States and UTs, the Mission stands out as one of its kind. Given these merits, the State Support Mission (SSM) ***is strongly recommended for continuation with an augmented budget and new components*** to stay aligned with its original vision of enabling Viksit Bharat through Viksit Rajya @ 2047. The Mission will also play a crucial role in fostering Centre-State collaboration to achieve national priorities and SDG goals by 2030.