



Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University Delhi
Shodhotsav 2026

Theme: Reimagining Sustainability for Viksit Bharat: Knowledge, Power and Practices

Research and Development Division
Research Ideation Competition
8th September 2026

Theme - Sankalp se Siddhi: Sustainable Societies

Introduction

The world today is facing a range of interconnected challenges, such as climate change, increasing energy demands, resource scarcity, environmental degradation, rapid urbanisation, and changing patterns of consumption. These new concerns shape our everyday life by influencing public policy, livelihoods, and quality of life of present and future generations. Hence they demand new ways of thinking and acting.

As nations working towards sustainable development goals, the question we face is how such change can be achieved in equitable, innovative, and accessible ways. While technological advancements have generated new possibilities, it is increasingly evident that they cannot create sustainable futures in isolation. **Meaningful change also requires informed citizens, inclusive institutions, responsible consumption practices, community participation, and innovative approaches to resource management.**

Energy occupies a central place in this discussion. **Modern societies require energy for economic growth, transportation, communication, education, healthcare, and daily life. The related patterns of energy production and consumption have significant environmental consequences. The transition towards energy-efficient and climate-resilient societies therefore becomes a significant challenge of our time,** encompassing social innovation, public awareness, and behavioural change.

An **Energy-Smart Society** offers a useful framework for understanding these challenges: it promotes responsible use of resources, adopts appropriate sustainable technologies, and encourages participation from individuals, communities, institutions, and industries. Such a

society cultivates awareness, resilience, inclusion, and long-term thinking.

Small actions promoting sustainability collectively produce a significant impact. Research increasingly shows that behavioural changes, public engagement, and community-led initiatives can be as important as technological solutions. Understanding factors that encourage or discourage such behaviour becomes a central area of inquiry.

Another focus is the importance of rethinking conventional models of production and consumption that often follow a linear pattern of extraction, use, and disposal, resulting in increasing waste and pressure on natural resources. In contrast, circular approaches emphasise reuse, recycling, repair, and regeneration, creating opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship, and more efficient resource use, thus becoming an important area for research and experimentation.

Urbanisation presents another significant challenge and opportunity. Growing cities become major centres of energy consumption, posing questions of sustainable infrastructure, green spaces, mobility, housing, water management, and environmental planning. Parallely, rural areas continue to offer valuable lessons in community-based resource management, local innovation, and sustainable living. Research around these diverse contexts can create more balanced and inclusive approaches to development.

Water security is another critical concern as climate variability, population growth, and increasing demands has intensified pressure on water systems. Innovations in water conservation and sustainable agricultural practices therefore become essential for future sustainability strategies.

The contemporary sustainability discourse has also highlighted the importance of recognising multiple forms of knowledge. Alongside scientific and technological expertise, local experiences, indigenous knowledge systems, and community practices continue to offer valuable insights. Traditional approaches to agriculture, water management, conservation, and collective action demonstrate how these knowledge systems, alongside modern innovations, can generate context-sensitive approaches to sustainability.

For students, these issues provide fertile ground for innovative inquiry, as these challenges require fresh perspectives and interdisciplinary action rooted in social realities, economic considerations, cultural contexts, and technological possibilities. Universities have a crucial role to play in fostering such thinking by encouraging students to engage with real-world problems through research and critical inquiry.

The Research Ideation Competition under Shodhotsav 2026 seeks to create a platform for undergraduate and postgraduate students to develop innovative research ideas that respond to their context. Beyond the finished solutions, the competition encourages participants to identify emerging issues, formulate meaningful research questions, and create novel possibilities for a

sustainable future. This is a call to build energy-smart societies capable of responding to the environmental challenges and issues of the present and the future.

Research Themes :

1. The Power of Small Changes

Sustainability is often shaped by everyday choices and collective action. This theme explores how individual behaviour, community initiatives, and local interventions can contribute to larger environmental and social transformations.

Possible areas of inquiry:

- Behavioural change for sustainability
- Public awareness and environmental communication
- Sustainable consumption and lifestyle practices
- Community-led sustainability initiatives
- Youth engagement and citizen participation
- Social innovation and grassroots action
- Everyday practices and environmental responsibility

2. Innovating for Energy Efficiency: Ideas for a Sustainable Future

This theme focuses on innovative approaches to reducing energy consumption, improving efficiency, and promoting sustainable energy transitions.

Possible areas of inquiry:

- Energy-efficient technologies and systems
- Renewable energy solutions
- Energy conservation practices
- Low-cost and accessible energy innovations
- Smart energy use in homes, campuses, and workplaces
- Climate resilience through energy innovation
- Sustainable energy policies and governance

3. Energy-Smart Societies: Learning, Leadership, and Inclusion

Building sustainable futures requires informed citizens, inclusive institutions, and effective leadership. This theme examines the role of education, capacity-building, and participation in

creating energy-smart societies.

Possible areas of inquiry:

- Sustainability education and environmental literacy
- Leadership for climate action and sustainability
- Community learning and public engagement
- Inclusion and participation in sustainability initiatives
- Youth leadership and social change
- Empowering communities through knowledge and action

4. Circular Futures: Resource Efficiency, Water, and Urban Sustainability

This theme encourages students to rethink how resources are produced, used, and managed in ways that reduce waste and support resilient communities.

Possible areas of inquiry:

- Circular economy and resource recovery
- Recycling, reuse, and waste reduction
- Water conservation technologies and practices
- Green infrastructure and eco-friendly planning
- Resource-efficient communities and industries

5. Indigenous Knowledge, Local Wisdom, and Sustainable Futures

This theme explores how traditional knowledge systems and community practices can contribute to contemporary sustainability challenges and climate resilience.

Possible areas of inquiry:

- Indigenous ecological knowledge
- Traditional approaches to water and resource management
- Community-based conservation practices
- Local innovations for sustainability
- Cultural knowledge, traditional practices and climate resilience
- Integrating indigenous and scientific knowledge systems

Note : The above mentioned possible areas of inquiry are indicative and not exhaustive. Teams are encouraged to submit ideas addressing any other relevant issues or innovative areas that align

with the broader objectives of the five research sub-themes.

Expected Orientation

The competition encourages interdisciplinary, innovative, and research-driven ideas that bridge theory and practice. Proposals may draw from the social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, environmental studies, management, technology, media studies, public policy, education, design, and related fields.

Students are encouraged to develop ideas that are rooted in real-world challenges, informed by research, and attentive to local contexts. The competition particularly welcomes proposals that combine creativity with critical inquiry, connect multiple perspectives, and demonstrate the potential for meaningful social and environmental impact. Rather than offering ready-made solutions, participants are invited to ask important questions, identify emerging challenges, and imagine new pathways towards more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient futures.

Categories

Participants may submit their ideas under any one of the following categories:

- Research Project
- Startup
- Design
- Product/Patent

Event Structure

1. Team Composition

- Students are encouraged to form **interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary teams**.
- Each team may consist of **up to four (4) members**.
- Teams may choose to have one faculty member as a mentor to guide them in the development of their idea. Faculty mentorship is optional and not mandatory for participation.

2. Screening of applications (Online)

- Each team will be allotted **5 minutes**:
 - **3 minutes** for presentation
 - **2 minutes** for discussion/Q&A
- Teams may present using:
 - A maximum of **five PowerPoint slides**, or
 - Any simple presentation format.

- The preliminary pitches will be evaluated by a **Screening Committee** comprising faculty members from Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) and/or designated experts.
- **Mode:** Online

3. Final Round (In-Person Only)

- Teams shortlisted in the preliminary round will be invited to the final round.
- Shortlisted teams will be required to submit their **project proposal, product, or prototype**, as applicable.
- Each shortlisted team will be allotted **10 minutes** to present and defend their idea using a maximum of **seven presentation slides**.
- Presentations will be evaluated by an **Expert Jury** comprising external experts and AUD faculty members.
- The jury will select the **Winner, First Runner-up, and Second Runner-up**.
- **Venue:** Atal Incubation Centre, Ambedkar University Delhi, Kashmere Gate Campus

Awards

- All participants shortlisted for the final round will receive **Certificates of Participation** from Ambedkar University Delhi.
- Winning teams will receive certificates as :
 - Winner
 - First Runner-up
 - Second Runner-up
- The top three teams will also be awarded **cash prizes**.

Eligibility and Registration

Eligibility

Students enrolled in **Undergraduate (UG), Postgraduate (PG), and PhD programmes** across all disciplines, including:

- Social Sciences
- Humanities
- Sciences
- Engineering
- Other allied disciplines

Registration Fee

- **AUD Students:** No registration fee

- **Students from other institutions: ₹500/- (Rupees Five Hundred) per team**

Please note: Ambedkar University Delhi will not bear any expenses related to travel, boarding, lodging, or local transportation for participants.

Originality and Academic Integrity:

- All ideas submitted must be original and free from plagiarism.
- As part of the registration process, all team members shall submit a signed undertaking affirming that the work presented is their own original contribution and does not infringe upon the intellectual property of others.
- Any submission found to contain plagiarised content or to have violated principles of academic integrity at any stage of the competition shall be disqualified. The concerned team and its members may also be debarred from participation in the competition.

Important Dates :

- Registration & Proposal Submission last date - 20 August, 2026
- Screening (Online) - 27 August, 2026
- Notification of Shortlisted Teams - 31 August, 2026
- Final Round (In-Person) - 08 September 2026

Final Event Details

Venue: Atal Incubation Centre, Ambedkar University Delhi, Kashmere Gate Campus

Time: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Registration Form -

<https://forms.gle/55hgvuMmxrf3CQ4P7>

For any queries contact - shodhotsav@aud.ac.in