



**UNIVERSITY OF DELHI**

**SDG ALIGNMENT ANALYSIS  
OF PhD THESES**

2006 – 2026

*Comprehensive Analysis of Research Contributions to the  
United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*

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## Executive Summary

This report presents a comprehensive analysis of PhD theses submitted to the University of Delhi from 2006 to 2026, examining their alignment with the 17 United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Using advanced machine learning classification techniques, we analyzed 8933 doctoral theses across 60+ disciplines.

### Key Highlights

<b>8,933</b> Total PhD Theses Analyzed	<b>14,909</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned
<b>SDG 16</b> Most Addressed SDG	<b>1.68</b> Average SDGs per Thesis
<b>SDG 17</b> Least Addressed SDG	<b>4,999 (56%)</b> Interdisciplinary Theses: addressing multiple SDGs

### Top 5 SDGs Addressed:

1. SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions 41% of these
2. SDG 12 - Good Health and Well-being 11.1% of these
3. SDG 3 - Responsible Consumption and Production 8.2% of these
4. SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy 6.6% of these
5. SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure 6% of these



Figure 1: United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015, represent a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030. Universities play a crucial role in advancing these goals through research, education, and community engagement.

The University of Delhi is committed to advancing global sustainability through its research endeavors. This report provides a systematic analysis of how our doctoral research aligns with and contributes to achieving the SDGs.

## 1.2 Objectives

- Map PhD research outputs to the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Identify trends in SDG-related research over the 2006-2026 period
- Analyze the distribution of research across different SDGs
- Identify interdisciplinary research patterns through multi-label classification
- Provide recommendations for enhancing SDG-aligned research

## 1.3 Scope

This analysis covers all PhD theses successfully defended and submitted to the University of Delhi between March 2006 and February 2026. The study encompasses 60+ departments across 16 Faculties and various centres of study.

## 1.4 Limitations

The current report highlights the overall landscape of SDG alignment of the PhD theses submitted to the University of Delhi (2006-2026). However, there could be several limitations to the study, as follows:

- Language Issues: PhD theses in Indian languages may have been treated inconsistently
- Data inconsistencies: We have observed several impurities in the data that are beyond rectification, and hence, there might be several inconsistencies in the analysis.
- Technical limitations: The analysis is based on sdgBERT ML model, as well as keyword matching for SDG 17. It may carry all the biases of the sdgBERT model and hence only 80-90% accuracy is claimed.



## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Data Collection

PhD thesis data were collected from library records. For each thesis, the following information was extracted:

- Title of the Thesis
- Abstract
- Year of completion
- Keywords (extracted from the title and abstract of the theses using NLP)
- Research area/discipline

### 2.2 Technologies Used

The SDG Classification Tool is built in Python, leveraging modern, industry-standard NLP, machine learning, and data-processing technologies.

Category	Technology	Purpose
Deep Learning	PyTorch	Neural network framework for model inference
NLP	Transformers	Hugging Face library for BERT model loading and tokenization
Data Processing	Pandas, NumPy	Data manipulation, CSV/Excel processing
Web Interface	Streamlit	Interactive web application framework
Visualization	Plotly, Matplotlib	Interactive charts, word clouds, heatmaps
Word Clouds	WordCloud, PIL	Custom-shaped word cloud generation

### 2.2 Classification Approach

The classification was performed using the Python-based in-house developed SDG Classification Tool, which employs a hybrid approach combining machine learning and keyword matching:

SDGs	Method	Description
SDGs 1-16	Machine Learning (sdgBERT)	BERT-based transformer model with ~90% accuracy
SDG 17	Keyword Matching	Weighted keyword algorithm with ~75% accuracy

### 2.3 Classification Parameters

- **Threshold (SDGs 1-16):** [0.90] - Minimum confidence for ML-based classification
- **Threshold (SDG 17):** [0.25] - Minimum confidence for keyword-based classification
- **Multi-label:** Enabled - Each thesis can be assigned multiple SDGs



### 3. Overall Summary (2006-2026)

This section presents the cumulative analysis of all PhD theses across the twenty-one-year period from 2006 to 2026.

#### 3.1 Distribution Overview

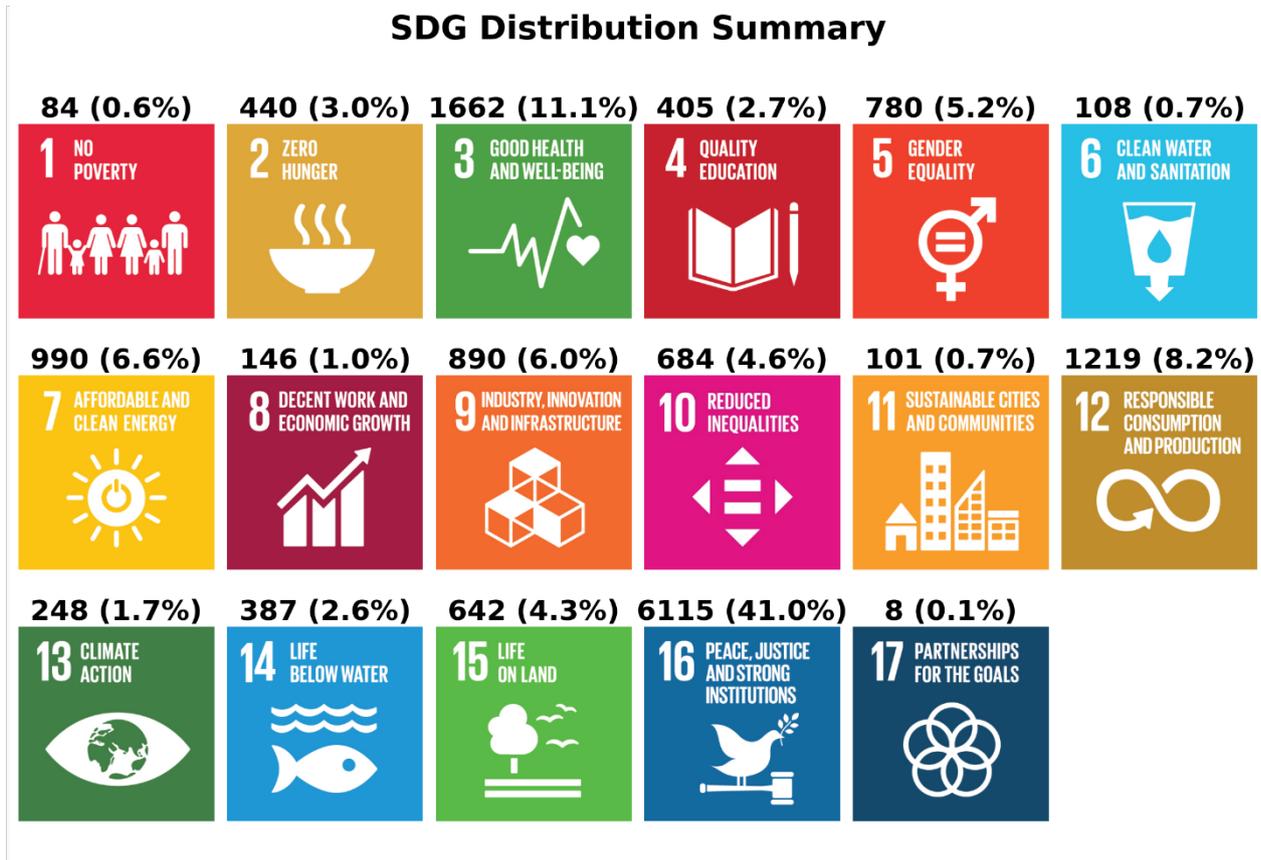


Figure 2: Overall SDG Distribution (2006-2026)

#### 3.2 Summary Statistics

Metric	Value
Total PhD Theses Analyzed	<b>8933</b>
Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>14,909</b>
Average SDGs per Thesis	<b>1.68</b>
Theses with Multiple SDGs	<b>4,999 (56%)</b>
Most Addressed SDG	<b>SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</b>
Least Addressed SDG	<b>SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals</b>



## 4. Year-wise Analysis

This section provides a detailed analysis for each year from 2006 to 2026.

### 4.1 Year 2026

<b>728</b> Total Theses	<b>1064</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 3, 10</b> Top SDG
----------------------------	---	---------------------------------

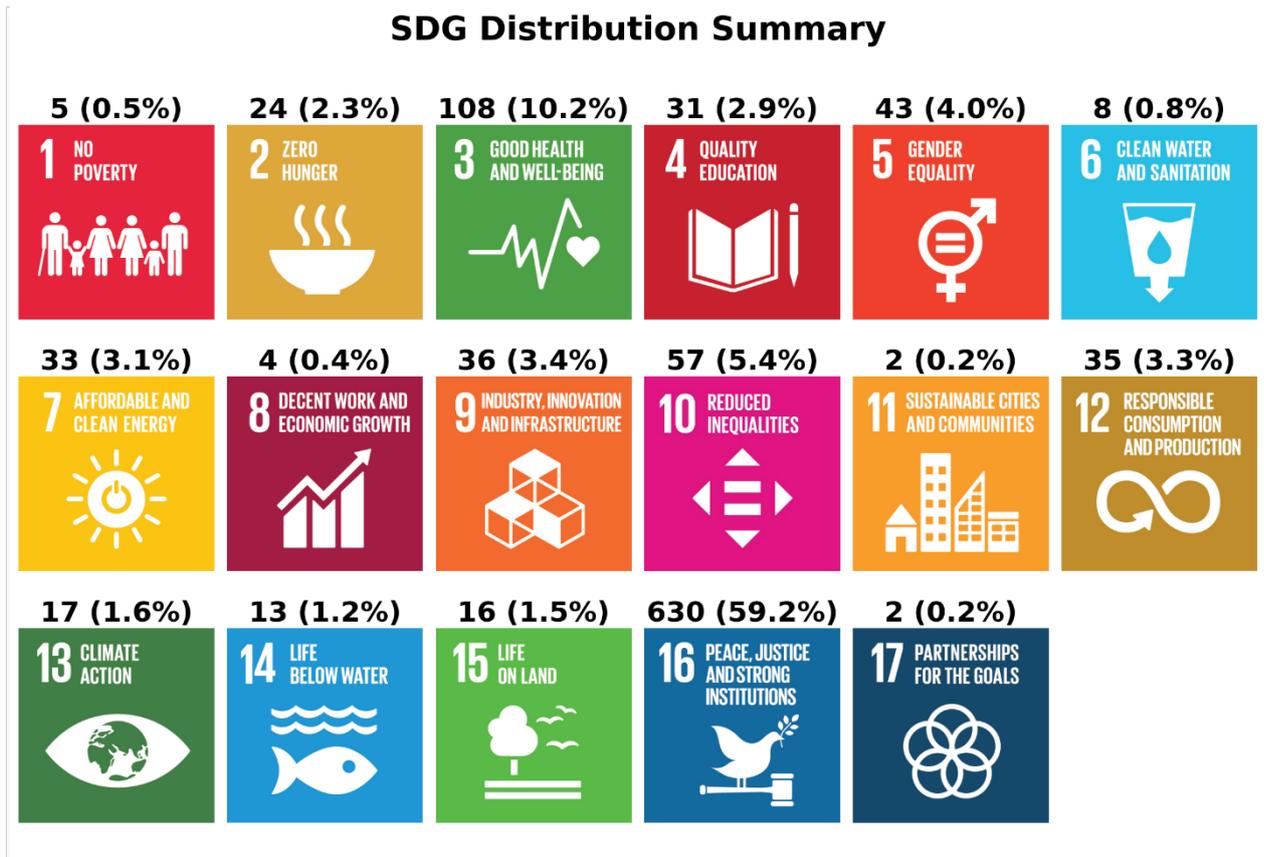


Figure 3: SDG Distribution for 2026

#### Key Observations for 2026:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 630), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 108), **SDG 10** (Reduced Inequalities: 57)
- High concentration: Top 3 SDGs = 74.7%
- Average SDGs per record: 1.51
- Interdisciplinary: 316 records (43.4%) address multiple SDGs



## 4.2 Year 2025

<b>638</b> Total Theses	<b>957</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 3, 10</b> Top SDGs
----------------------------	--	----------------------------------

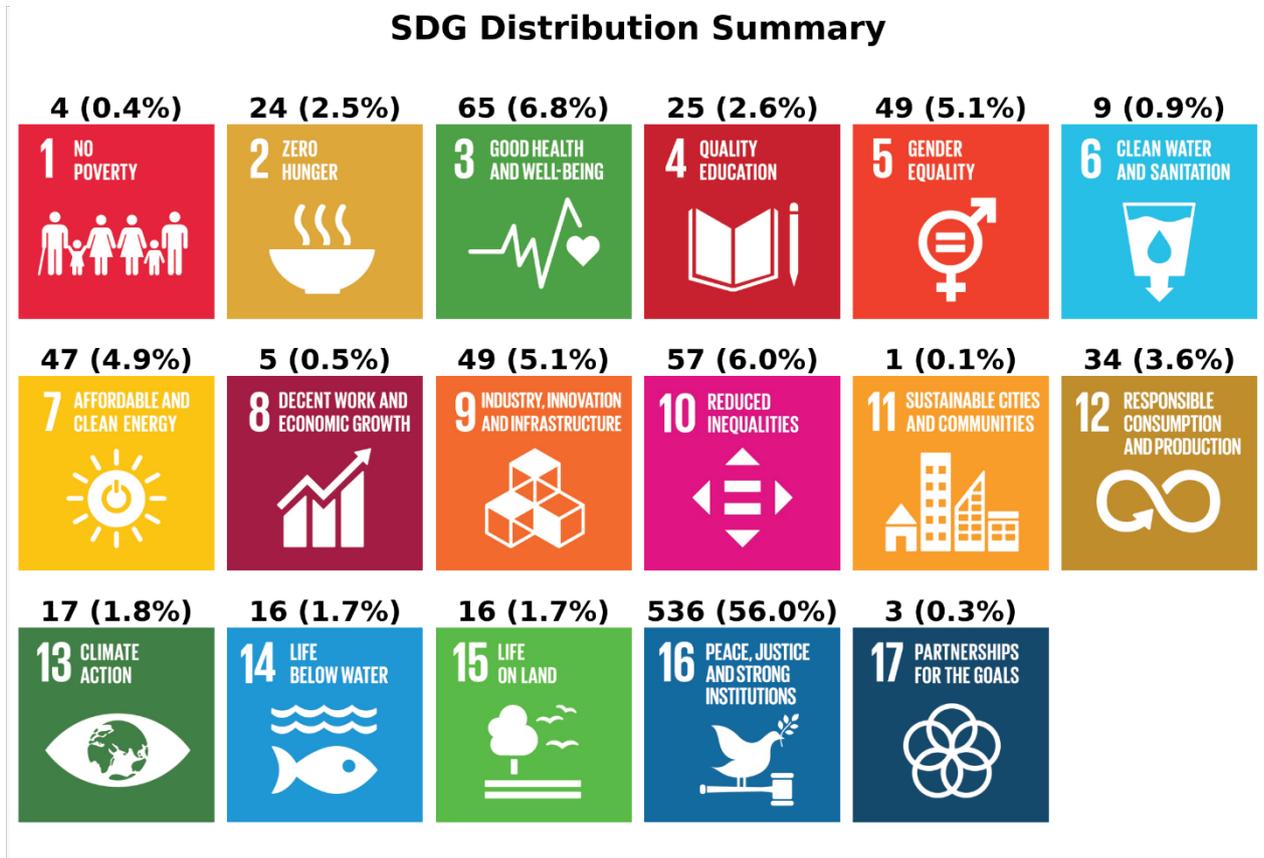


Figure 4: SDG Distribution for 2025

### Key Observations for 2025:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 536), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 65), **SDG 10** (Reduced Inequalities: 57)
- High concentration: Top 3 SDGs = 68.8%
- Average SDGs per record: 1.55
- Interdisciplinary: 290 records (45.5%) address multiple SDGs



### 4.3 Year 2024

<b>697</b> Total Theses	<b>1113</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 3, 7</b> Top SDG
----------------------------	---	--------------------------------

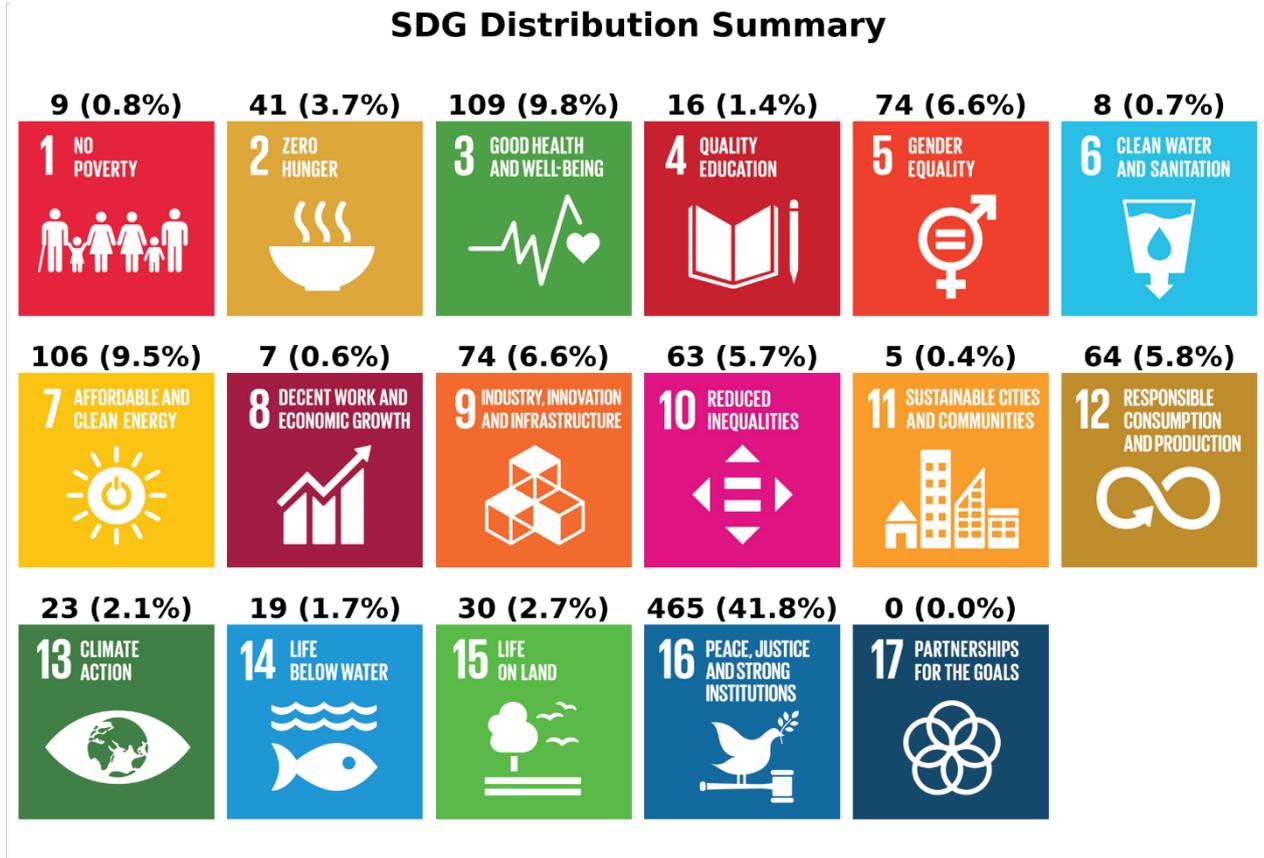


Figure 5: SDG Distribution for 2024

#### Key Observations for 2024:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 465), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 109), **SDG 7** (Affordable and Clean Energy: 106); Not addressed: **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals)
- High concentration: Top 3 SDGs = 61.1%
- Average SDGs per record: 1.58
- Interdisciplinary: 364 records (52.2%) address multiple SDGs



### 4.4 Year 2023

<b>682</b> Total Theses	<b>1272</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 12, 15</b> Top SDG
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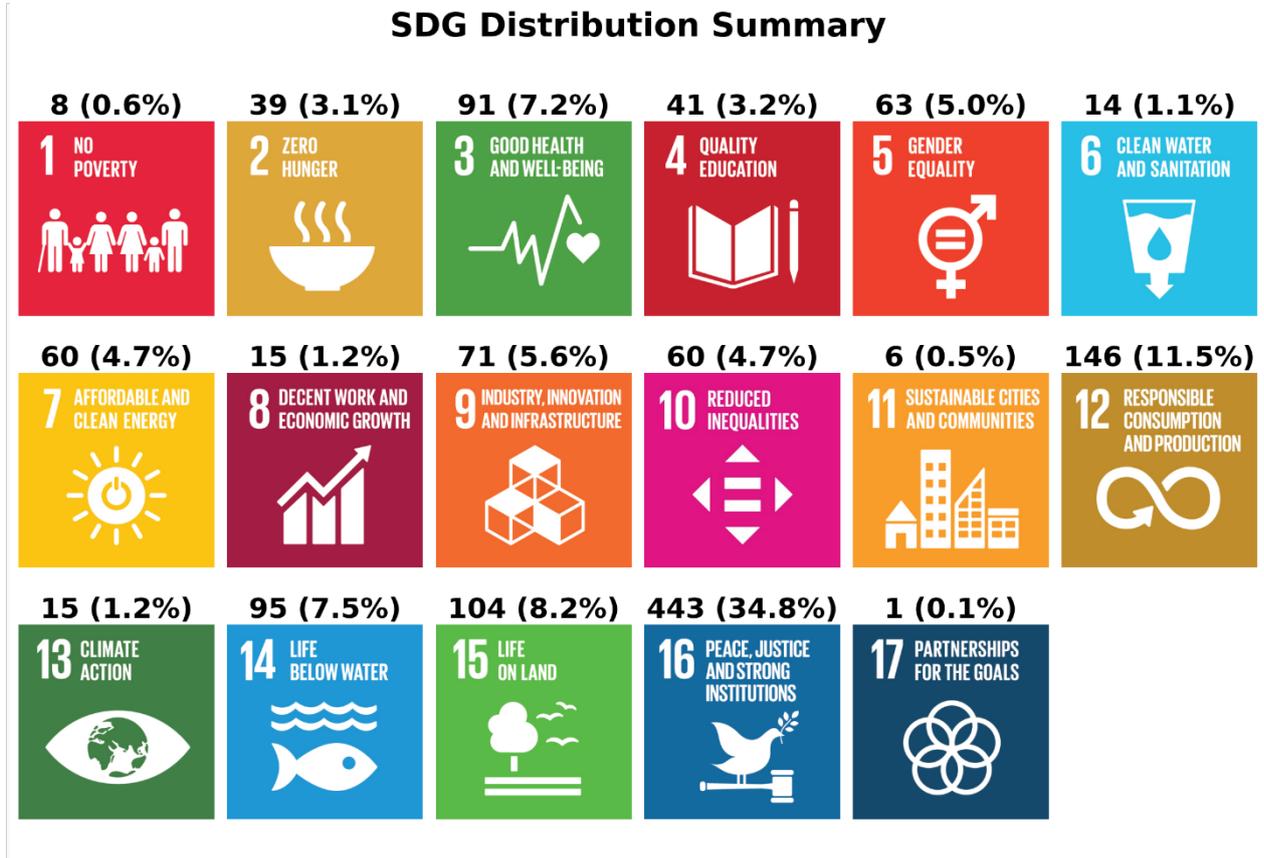


Figure 6: SDG Distribution for 2023

#### Key Observations for 2023:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 443), **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production: 146), **SDG 15** (Life on Land: 104)
- Average SDGs per record: 1.94
- Interdisciplinary: 444 records (65.1%) address multiple SDGs



## 4.5 Year 2022

<b>562</b> Total Theses	<b>953</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 3, 12</b> Top SDG
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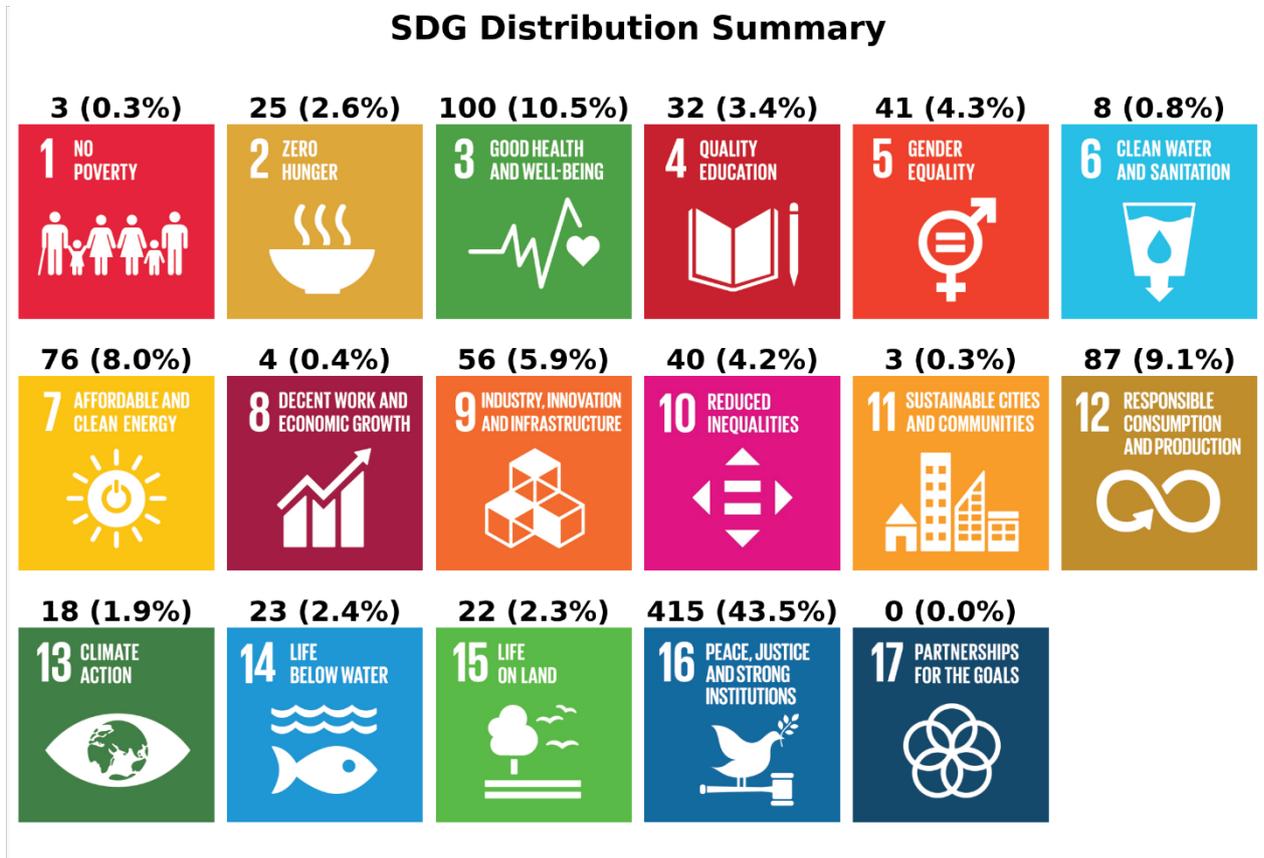


Figure 7: SDG Distribution for 2022

### Key Observations for 2022:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 415), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 100), **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production: 87); Not addressed: **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals)
- High concentration: Top 3 SDGs = 63.2%
- Average SDGs per record: 1.77
- Interdisciplinary: 337 records (60.0%) address multiple SDGs



## 4.6 Year 2021

<b>627</b> Total Theses	<b>976</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 5, 3</b> Top SDG
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Figure 8: SDG Distribution for 2021

### Key Observations for 2021:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 363), **SDG 5** (Gender Equality: 95), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 90); Not addressed: **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals)
- Average SDGs per record: 1.50
- Interdisciplinary: 302 records (48.2%) address multiple SDGs



## 4.7 Year 2019

<b>517</b> Total Theses	<b>842</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 10, 3</b> Top SDG
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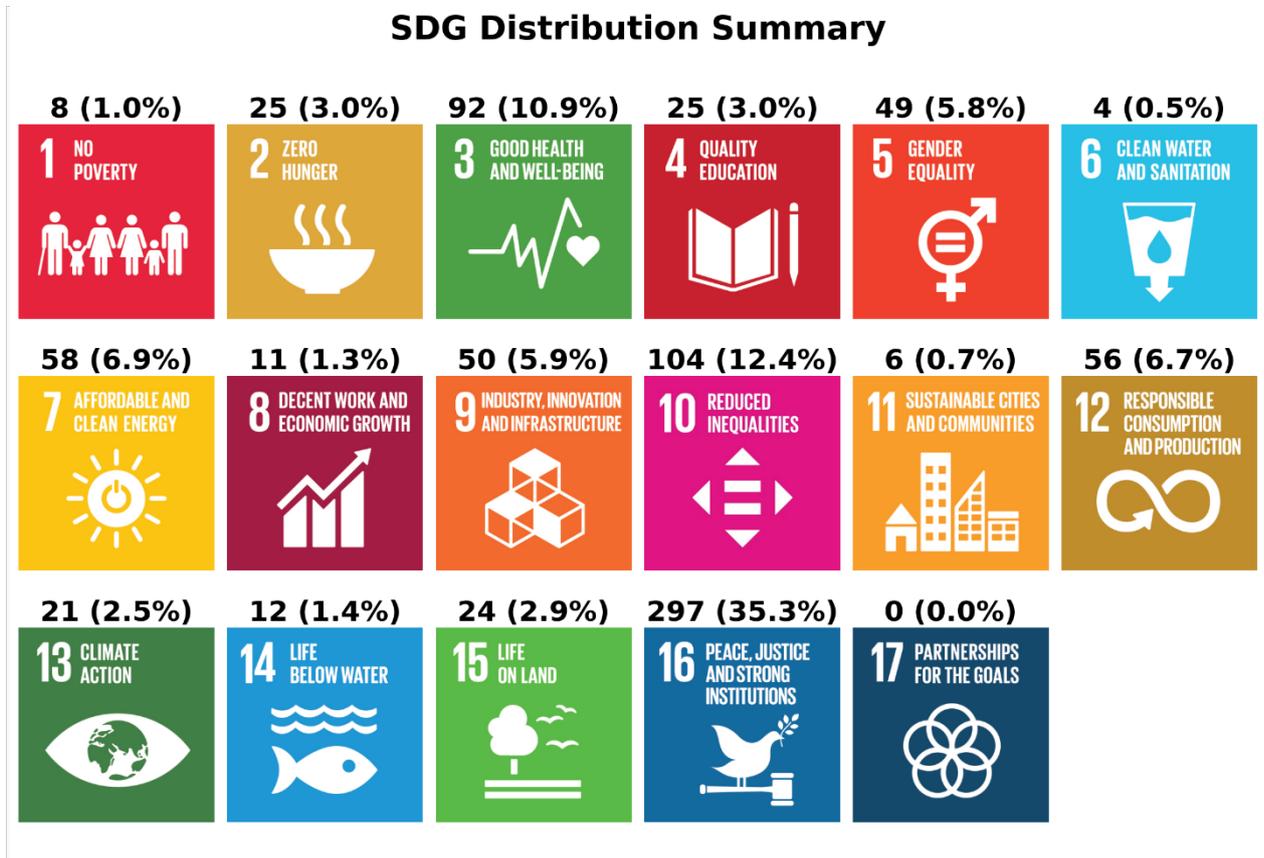


Figure 9: SDG Distribution for 2019

### Key Observations for 2019:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 297), **SDG 10** (Reduced Inequalities: 104), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 92); Not addressed: **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals)
- Average SDGs per record: 1.59
- Interdisciplinary: 278 records (53.8%) address multiple SDGs



## 4.8 Year 2018

<b>494</b> Total Theses	<b>862</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 3, 12</b> Top SDG
----------------------------	--	---------------------------------

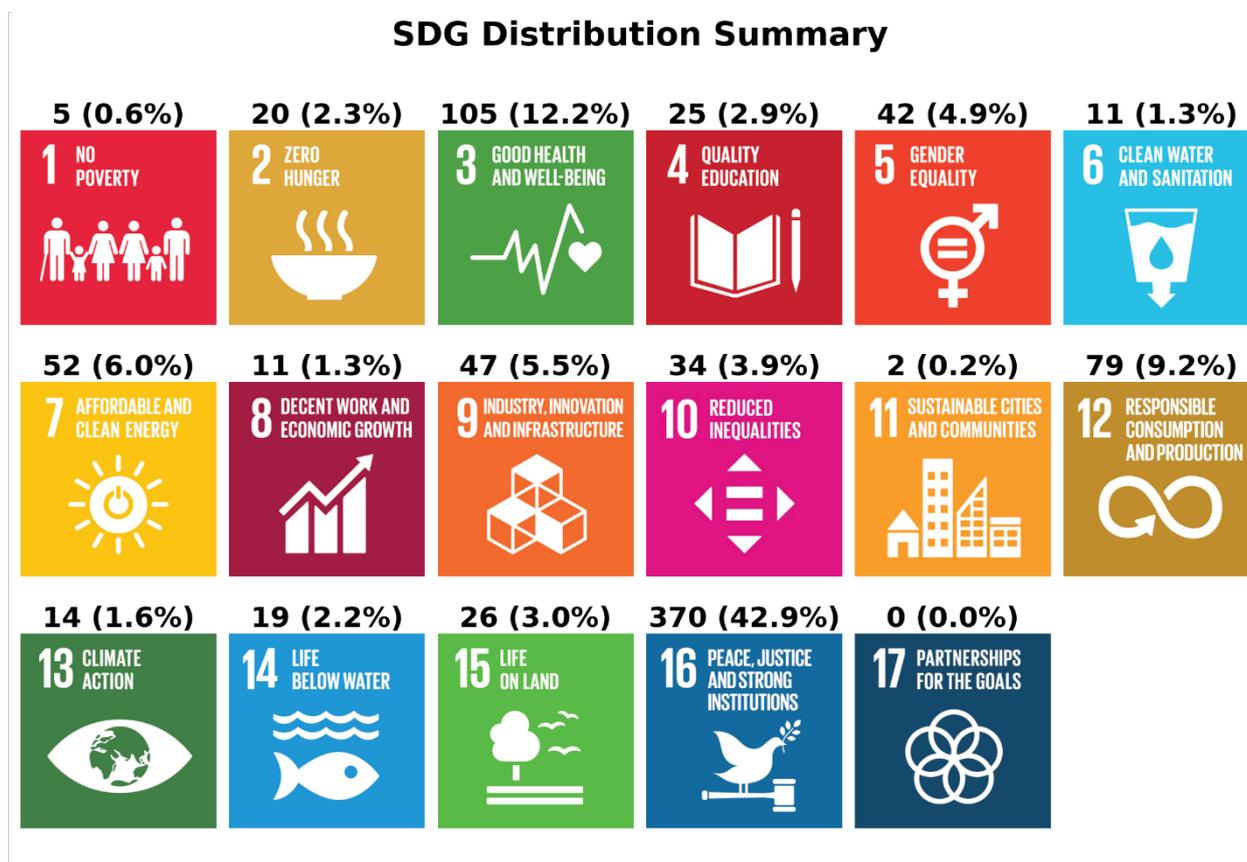


Figure 10: SDG Distribution for 2018

### Key Observations for 2018:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 370), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 105), **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production: 79); Not addressed: **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals)
- High concentration: Top 3 SDGs = 64.3%
- Average SDGs per record: 1.81
- Interdisciplinary: 312 records (63.2%) address multiple SDGs



## 4.9 Year 2017

<b>429</b> Total Theses	<b>730</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 3, 12</b> Top SDG
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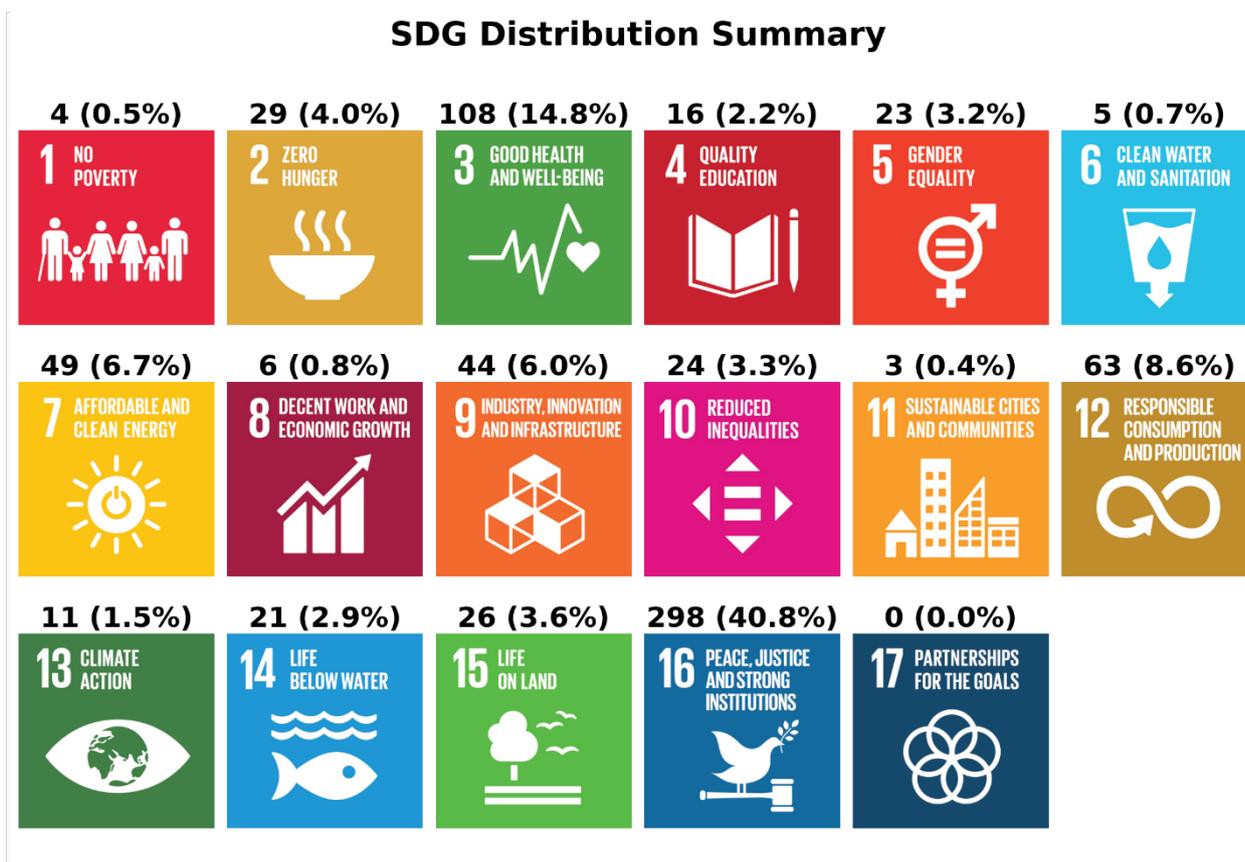


Figure 11: SDG Distribution for 2017

### Key Observations for 2017:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 298), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 108), **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production: 63); Not addressed: **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals)
- High concentration: Top 3 SDGs = 61.4%
- Average SDGs per record: 1.78
- Interdisciplinary: 266 records (62.0%) address multiple SDGs



### 4.10 Year 2016

<b>549</b> Total Theses	<b>885</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 3, 12</b> Top SDG
----------------------------	--	---------------------------------

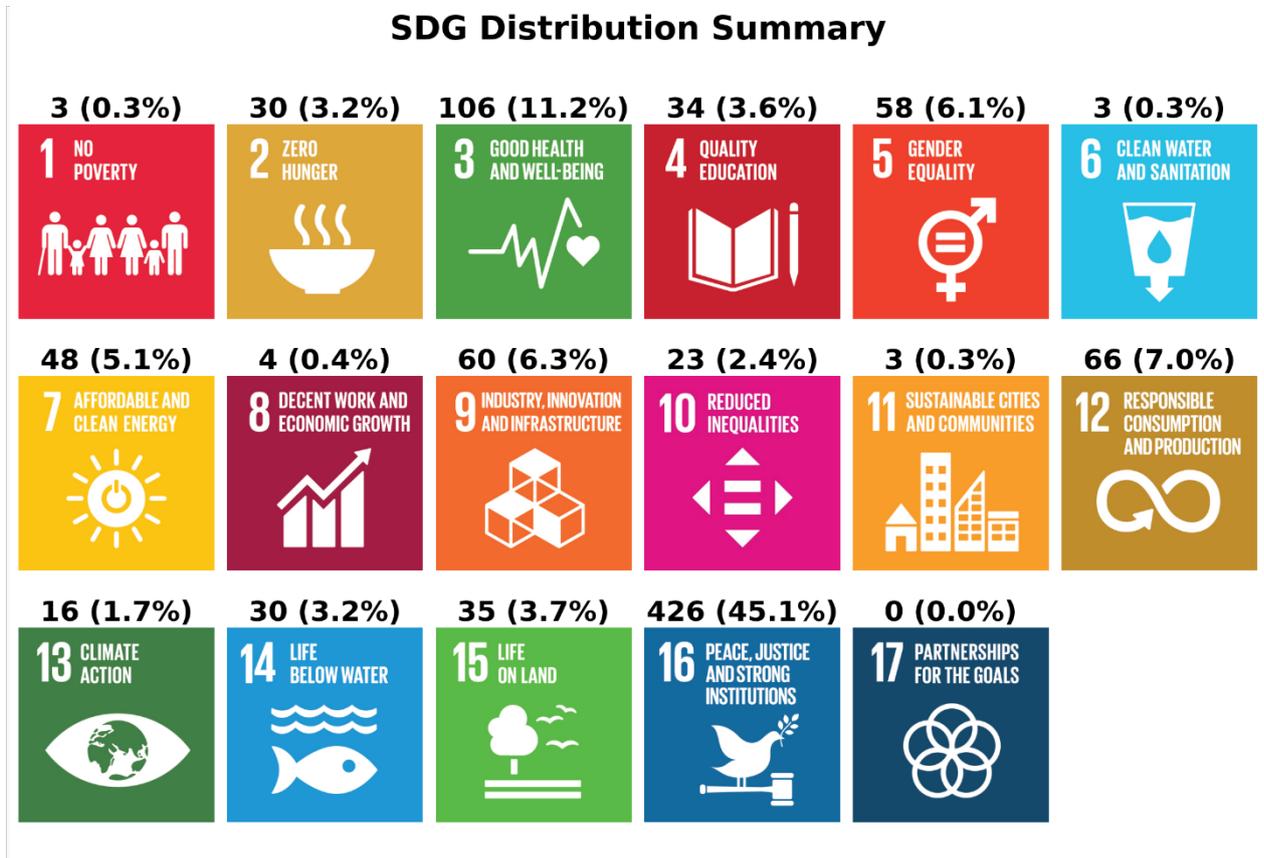


Figure 12: SDG Distribution for 2016

#### Key Observations for 2016:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 426), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 106), **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production: 66); Not addressed: **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals)
- Average SDGs per record: 1.56
- Interdisciplinary: 271 records (49.4%) address multiple SDGs



## 4.11 Year 2015

<b>833</b> Total Theses	<b>945</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 3, 15</b> Top SDG
----------------------------	--	---------------------------------

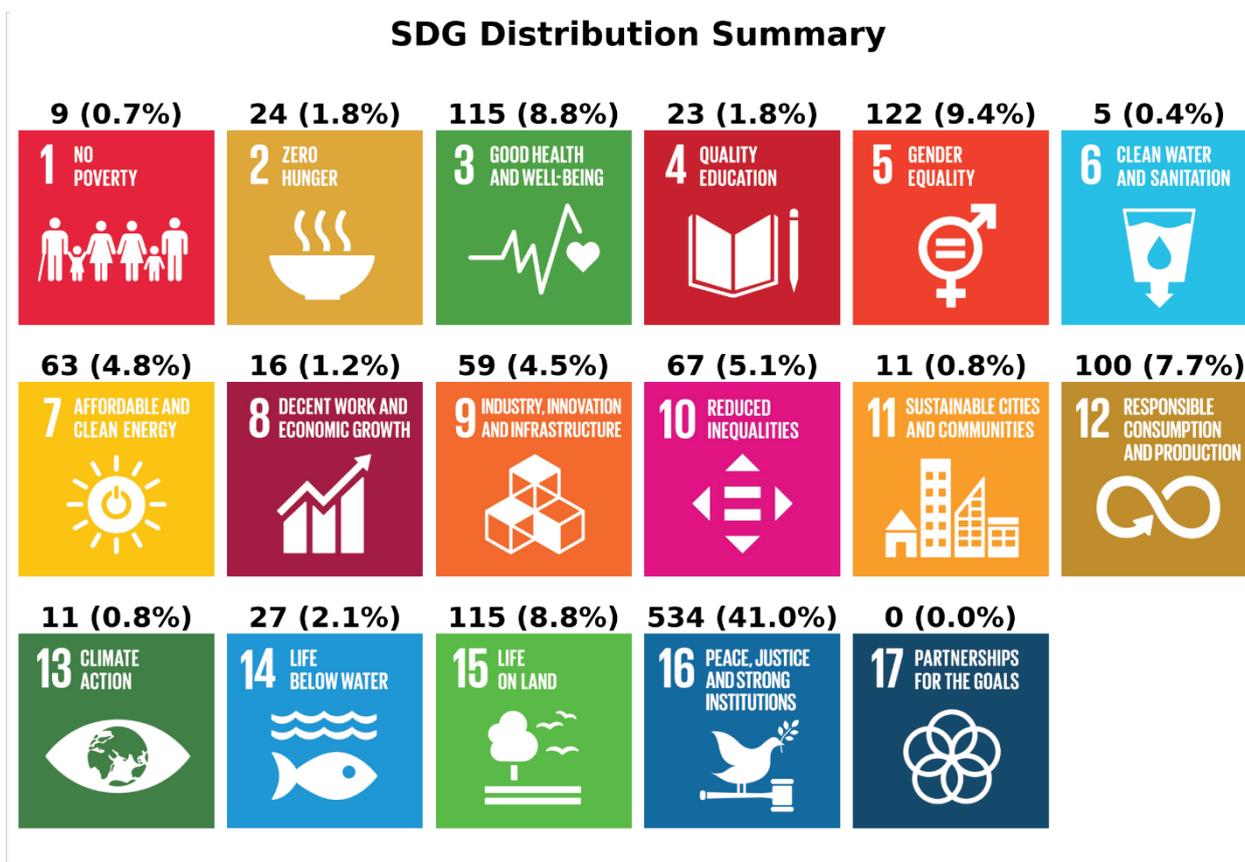


Figure 13: SDG Distribution for 2015

### Key Observations for 2015:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 139), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 124), **SDG 15** (Life on Land: 99); Not addressed: **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals)
- High concentration: Top 3 SDGs = 60.5%
- Average SDGs per record: 1.47
- Interdisciplinary: 297 records (50.7%) address multiple SDGs



## 4.12 Year 2014

<b>469</b> Total Theses	<b>791</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 15, 3</b> Top SDG
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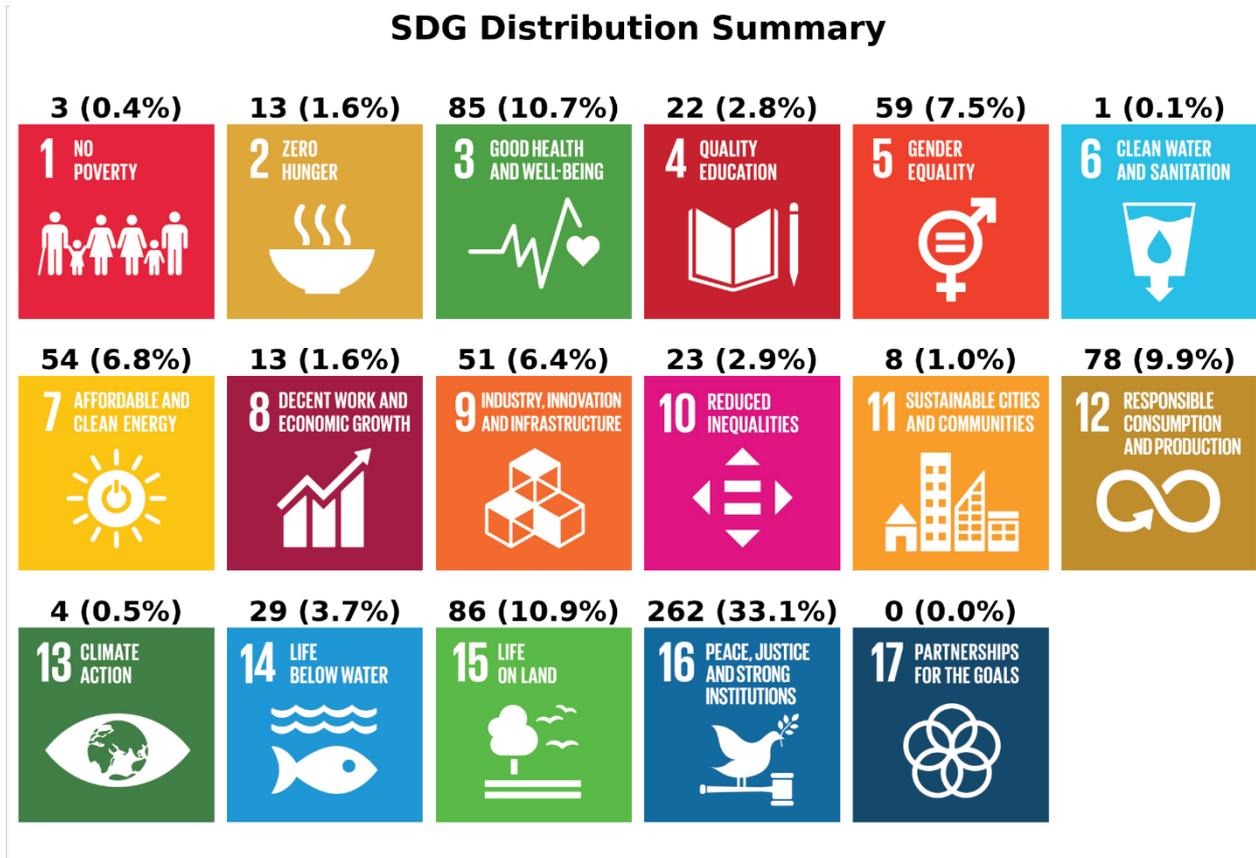


Figure 14: SDG Distribution for 2014

### Key Observations for 2014:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 262), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 85), **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production: 78); Not addressed: **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals)
- Average SDGs per record: 1.54
- Interdisciplinary: 258 records (55.0%) address multiple SDGs



### 4.13 Year 2013

<b>308</b> Total Theses	<b>540</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 3, 12</b> Top SDGs
----------------------------	--	----------------------------------

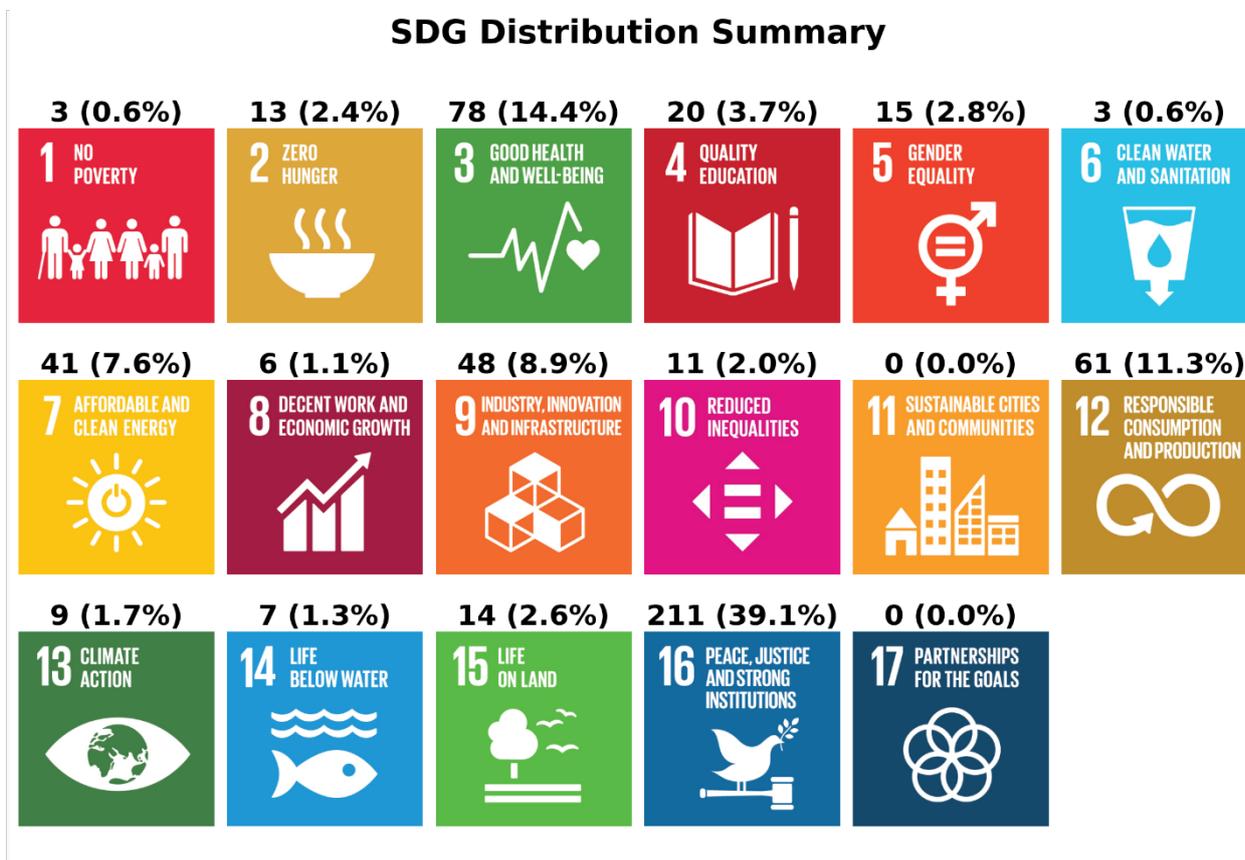


Figure 15: SDG Distribution for 2013

#### Key Observations for 2013:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 211), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 78), **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production: 61), Not addressed: **SDG 11** (Reduced Inequalities), **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals)
- High concentration: Top 3 SDGs = 64.8%
- Average SDGs per record: 1.77
- Interdisciplinary: 199 records (64.6%) address multiple SDGs



### 4.14 Year 2012

<b>336</b> Total Theses	<b>589</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 3, 12</b> Top SDGs
----------------------------	--	----------------------------------



Figure 16: SDG Distribution for 2012

#### Key Observations for 2012:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 237), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 88), **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production: 59)
- High concentration: Top 3 SDGs = 65.2%
- Average SDGs per record: 1.76
- Interdisciplinary: 201 records (59.8%) address multiple SDGs



### 4.15 Year 2011

<b>360</b> Total Theses	<b>525</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 3, 12</b> Top SDGs
----------------------------	--	----------------------------------



Figure 17: SDG Distribution for 2011

#### Key Observations for 2011:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 191), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 86), **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production: 58); Not addressed: **SDG 11** (Reduced Inequalities), **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals)
- High concentration: Top 3 SDGs = 63.8%
- Average SDGs per record: 1.48
- Interdisciplinary: 190 records (52.8%) address multiple SDGs



## 4.16 Year 2010

<b>297</b> Total Theses	<b>524</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 3, 12</b> Top SDGs
----------------------------	--	----------------------------------

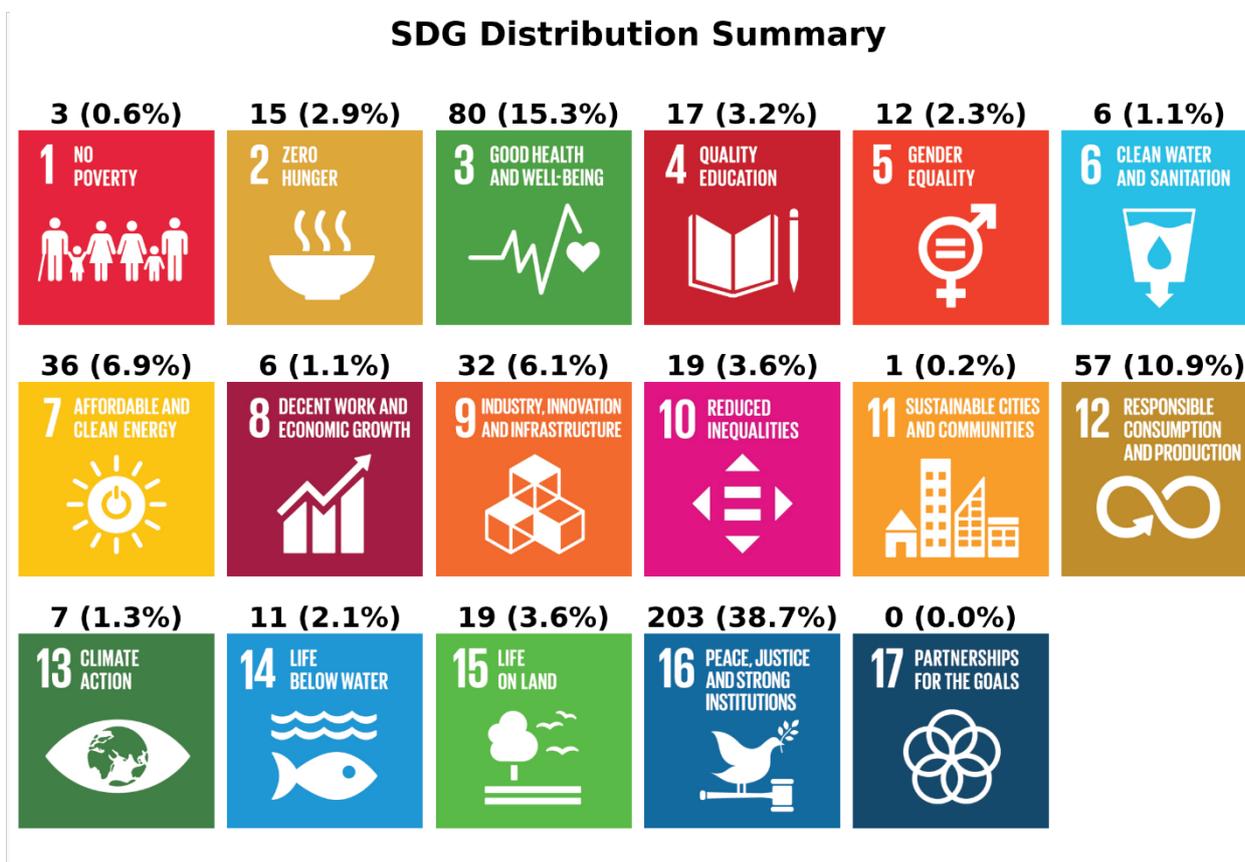


Figure 18: SDG Distribution for 2010

### Key Observations for 2010:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 203), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 80), **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production: 57); Not addressed: **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals)
- High concentration: Top 3 SDGs = 64.9%
- Average SDGs per record: 1.79
- Interdisciplinary: 180 records (60.6%) address multiple SDGs



### 4.17 Year 2009

<b>210</b> Total Theses	<b>388</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 3, 12</b> Top SDG
----------------------------	--	---------------------------------

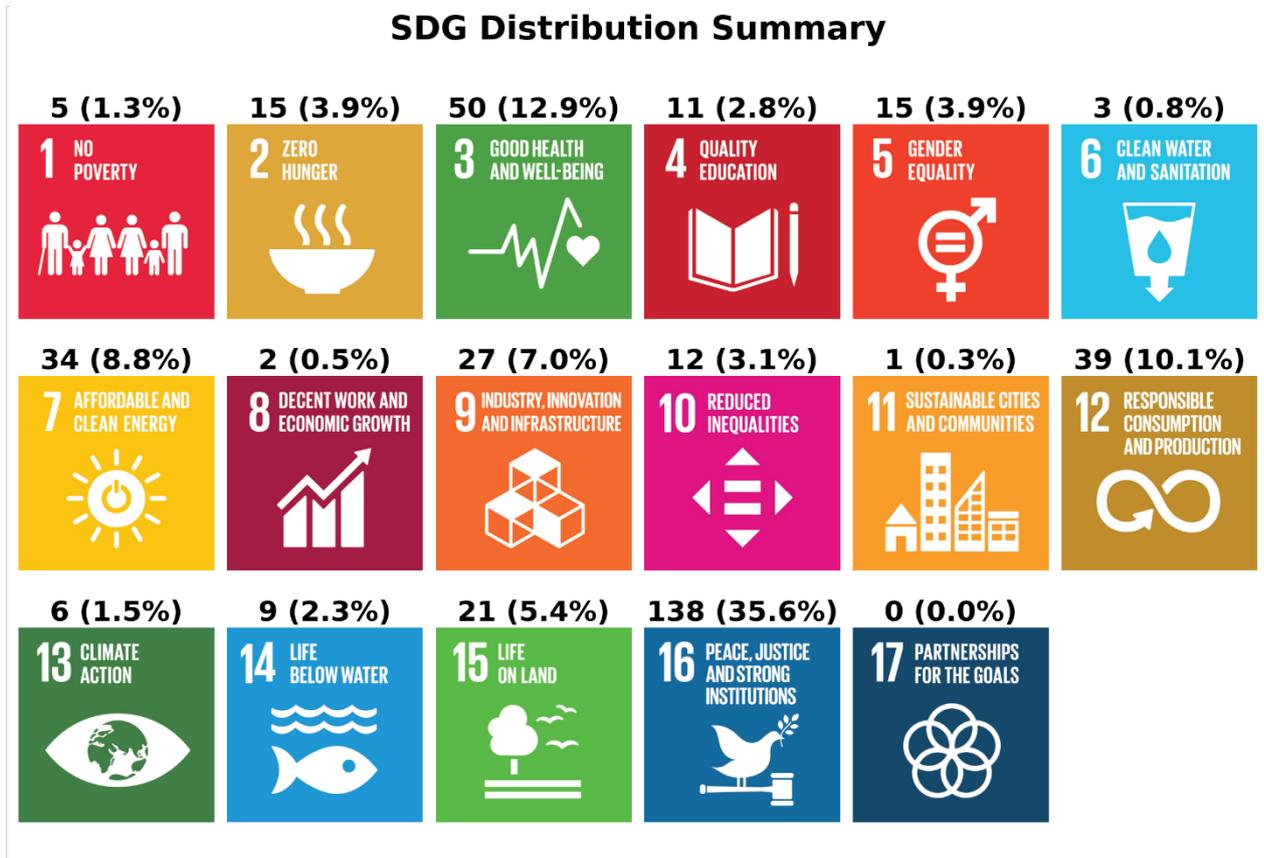


Figure 19: SDG Distribution for 2009

#### Key Observations for 2009:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 138), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 50), **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production: 39); Not addressed: **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals)
- Average SDGs per record: 1.85
- Interdisciplinary: 130 records (61.9%) address multiple SDGs



### 4.18 Year 2008

<b>255</b> Total Theses	<b>458</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 3, 12</b> Top SDGs
----------------------------	--	----------------------------------



Figure 20: SDG Distribution for 2008

#### Key Observations for 2008:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 149), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 60), **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production: 47); Not addressed: **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals)
- Average SDGs per record: 1.83
- Interdisciplinary: 159 records (62.4%) address multiple SDGs



### 4.19 Year 2007

<b>131</b> Total Theses	<b>234</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 9, 3</b> Top SDGs
----------------------------	--	---------------------------------

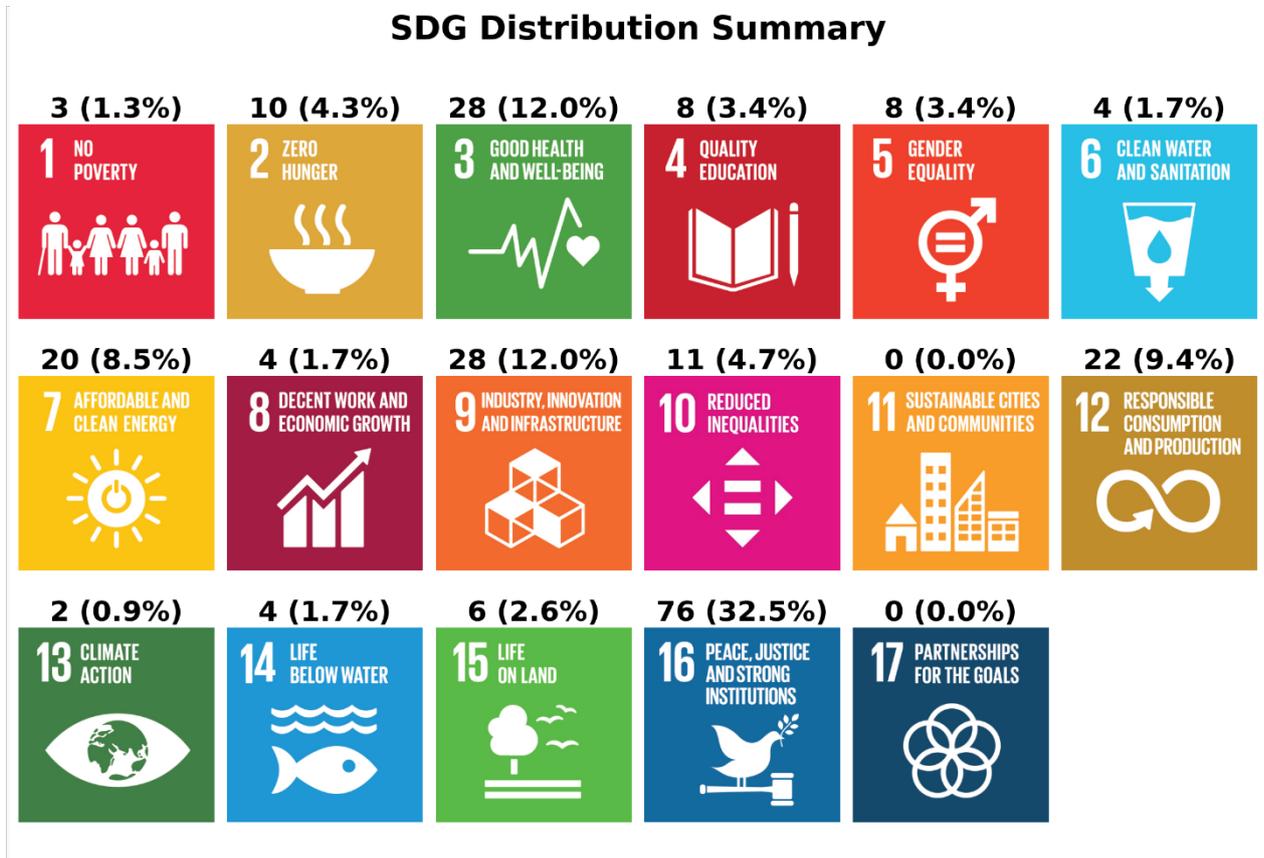


Figure 21: SDG Distribution for 2007

#### Key Observations for 2007:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 76), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 28), **SDG 9** (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: 28); Not addressed: **SDG 11** (Reduced Inequalities), **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals)
- Average SDGs per record: 1.85
- Interdisciplinary: 79 records (60.3%) address multiple SDGs



## 4.20 Year 2006

<b>127</b> Total Theses	<b>205</b> Total Primary SDG Assigned	<b>SDG 16, 3, 12</b> Top SDGs
----------------------------	--	----------------------------------

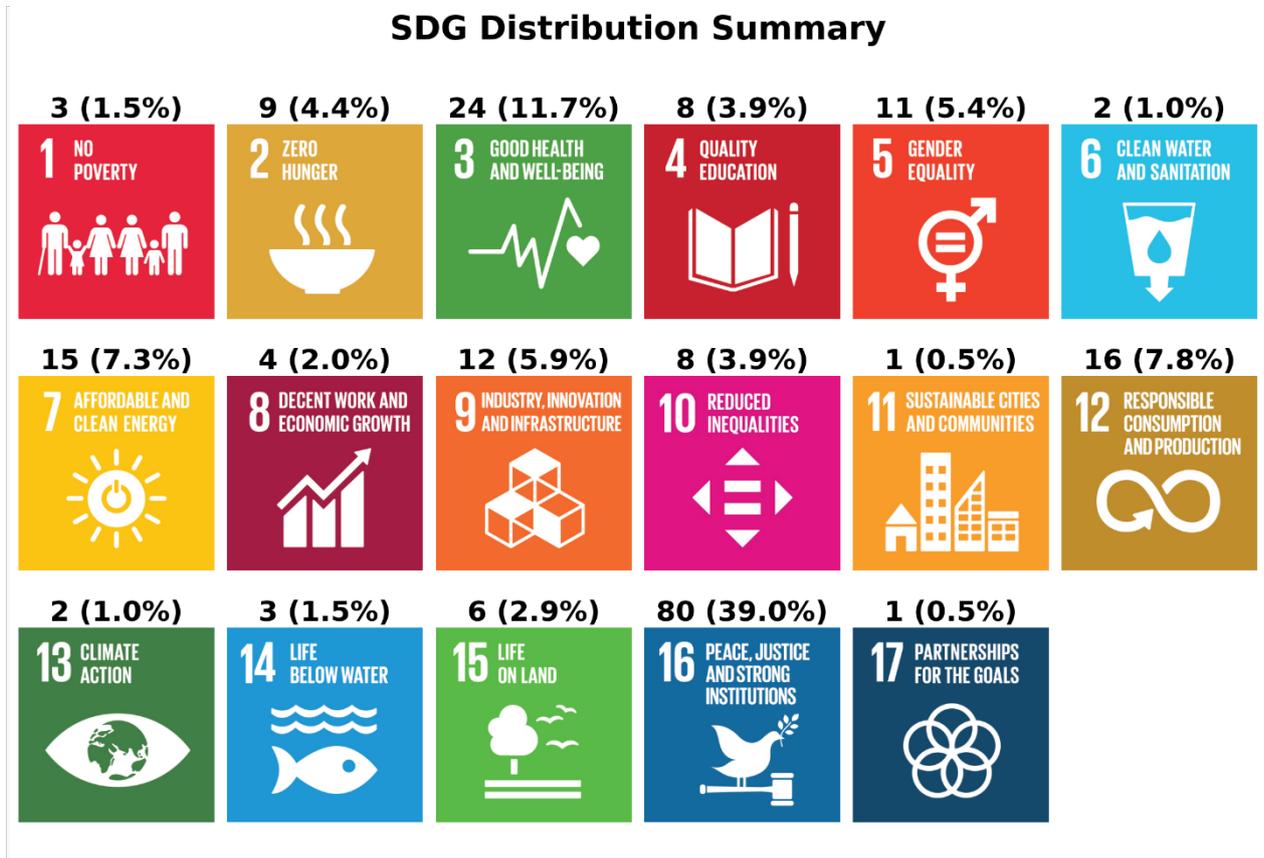


Figure 22: SDG Distribution for 2006

### Key Observations for 2006:

- Top SDGs: **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: 80), **SDG 3** (Good Health and Well-being: 24), **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production: 16)
- Average SDGs per record: 1.73
- Interdisciplinary: 72 records (56.7%) address multiple SDGs



## 5. Cumulative Analysis: Key Findings

### 5.1 SDG Distribution Across All Years (2006-2026):

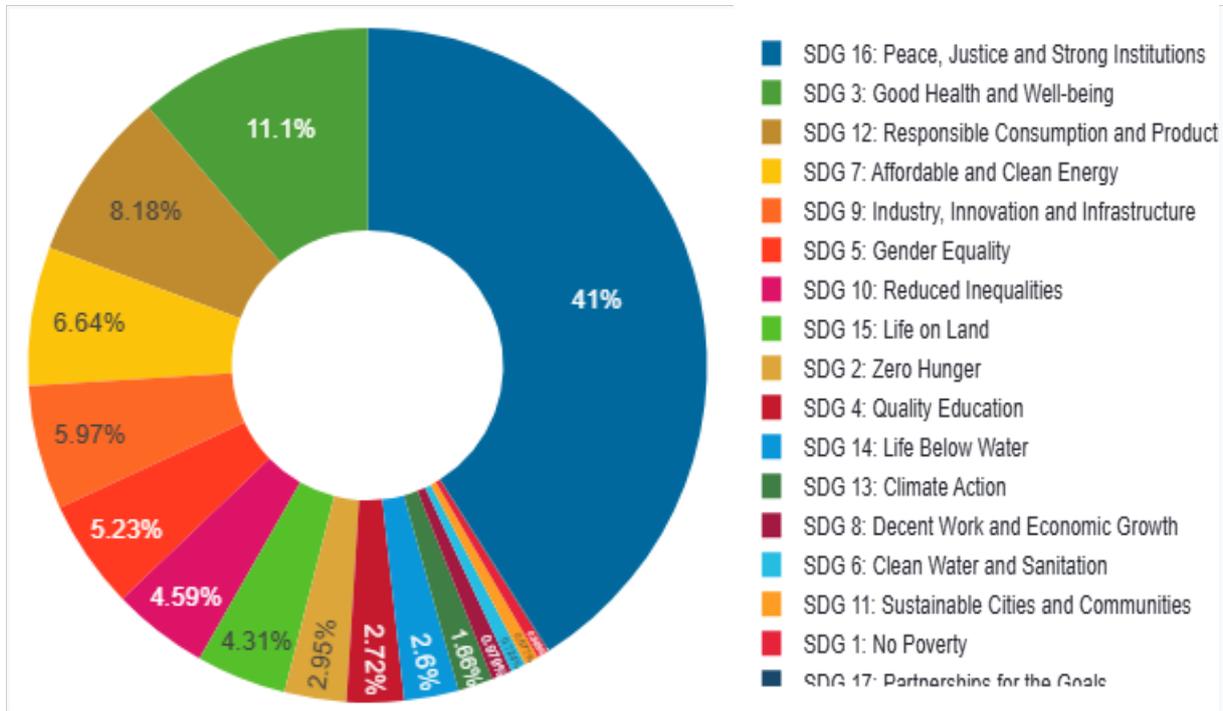


Figure 23: Cumulative SDG Distribution (2006-2026)

#### Research Strengths

The analysis reveals that the University of Delhi demonstrates strong research alignment with the following SDGs:

- **SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**
- **SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production**
- **SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-being**

#### Areas for Growth

The following SDGs present opportunities for increased research focus:

- **SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals**
- **SDG 1 - No Poverty**
- **SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth**



## 5.2 SDG Co-occurrence Analysis: Interdisciplinary Research

The co-occurrence heatmap below shows which SDGs frequently appear together, indicating interdisciplinary research areas.



Figure 24: SDG Co-occurrence Matrix

### Co-occurrence Insights: Most common SDG pairs:

- SDG 3 + SDG 16: 927 co-occurrences
- SDG 9 + SDG 16: 603 co-occurrences
- SDG 5 + SDG 16: 476 co-occurrences
- SDG 7 + SDG 16: 452 co-occurrences
- SDG 7 + SDG 12: 421 co-occurrences



### 5.3 Major Research Themes Analysis

The sunburst chart below highlights the major research areas classified under each major SDG.

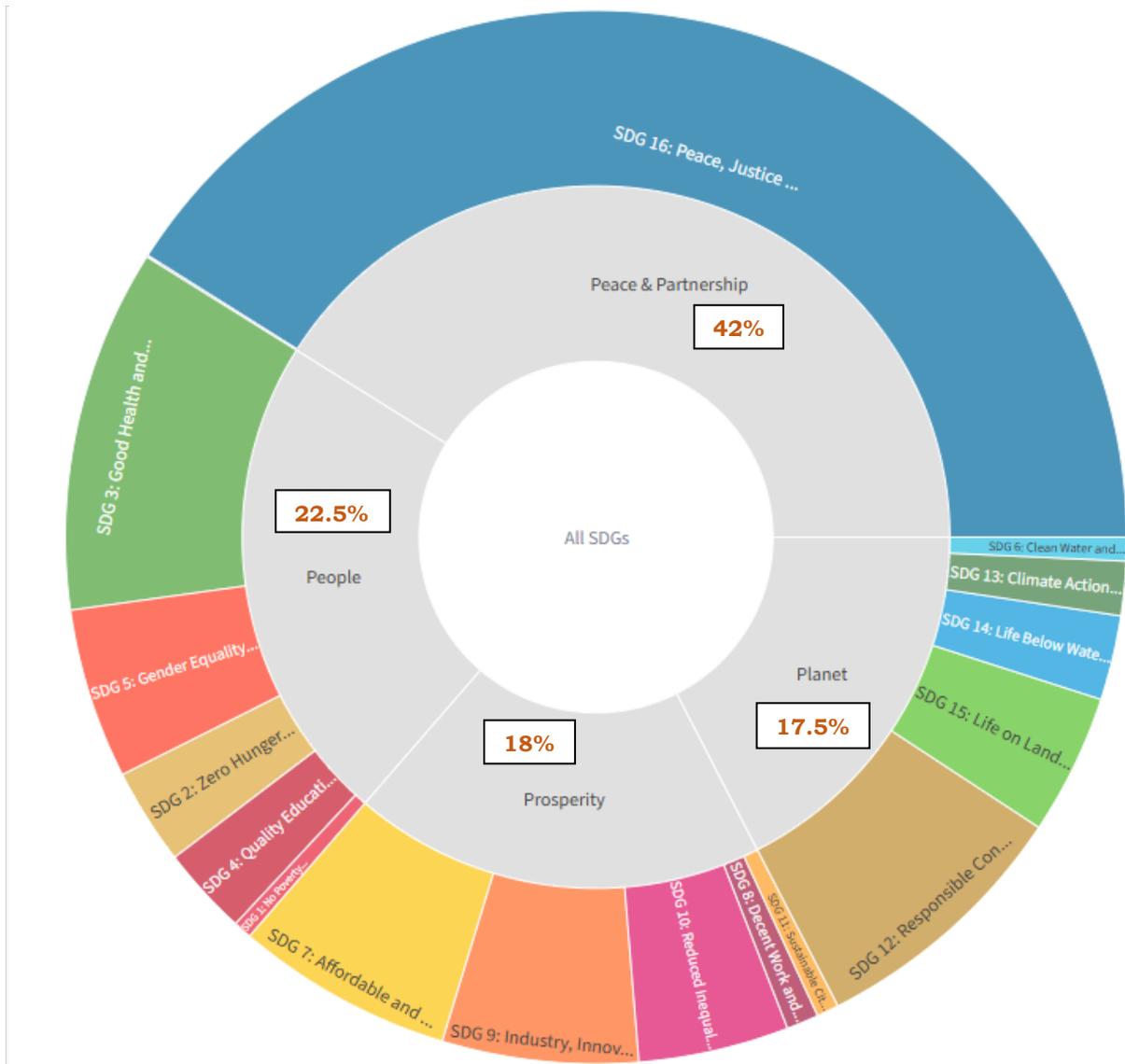


Figure 25: Sunburst Chart by Major Research Themes



### 5.4 Radar Chart - University SDG Profile

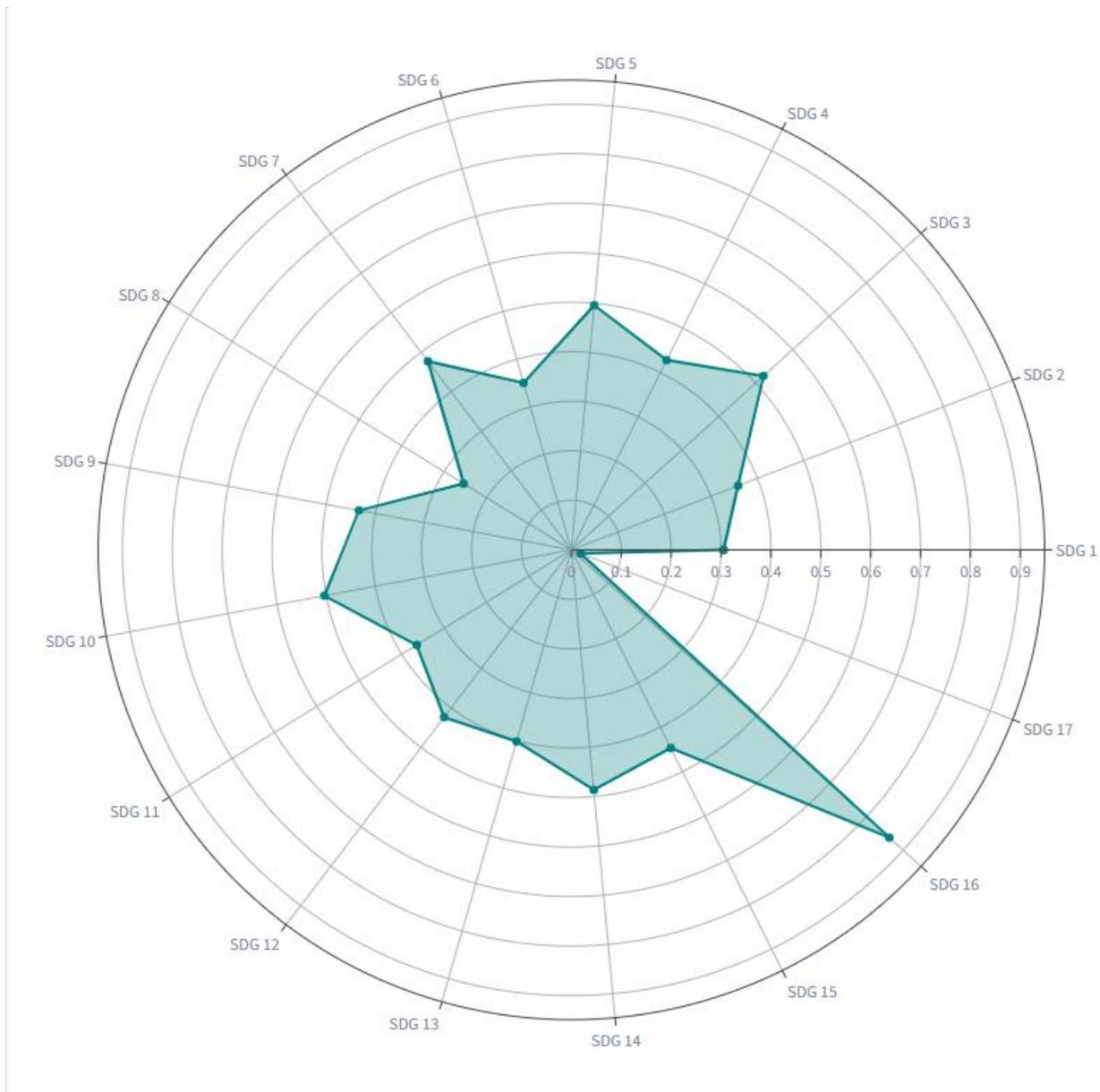


Figure 26: University SDG Research Profile



## 6. Trends and Patterns

### 6.1 Year-over-Year Trends



Figure 27: SDG Research Trends (2006-2026)

#### Key Trend Observations:

- Increasing SDG-aligned research over time
- Rapid increase in SDG-aligned research after 2015 (since the UN announced the SDGs)



Figure 28: Top SDGs Trends (2006-2026)

#### Key Trend Observations:

- Consistent growth in major SDGs, especially SDG 3 and SDG 12
- Increasing focus on Good Health and Well-Being, Responsible Consumption and Production, Affordable and Clean Energy, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

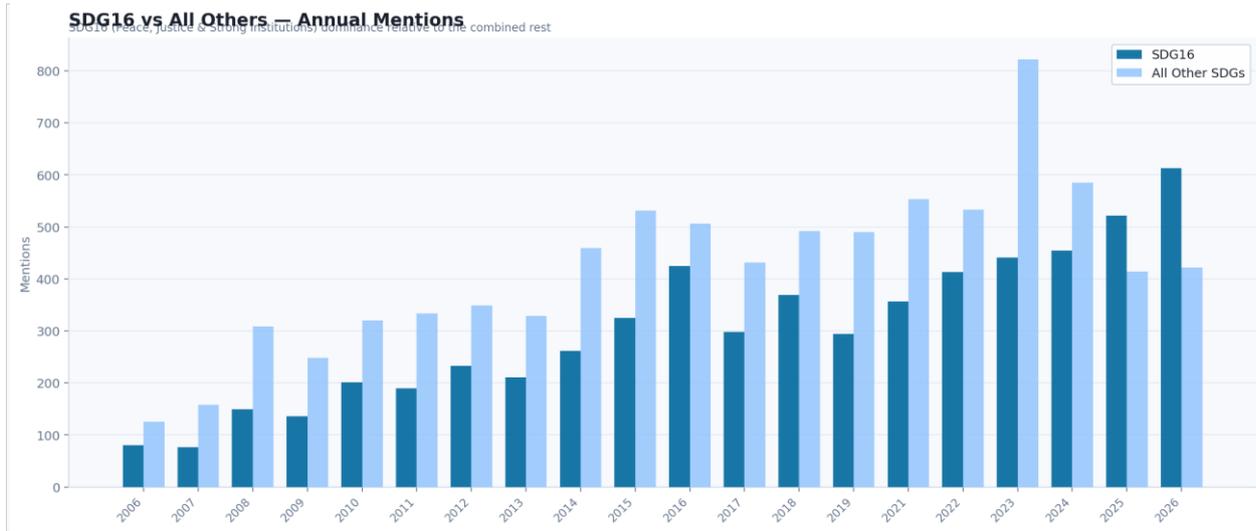


Figure 29: SDG16 vs All Other SDGs over time (2006-2026)

**Key Trend Observations:**

- SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) shows a strong dominance over all other SDGs.



Figure 30: SDGs Research Trends Before 2015 vs After 2015

**Key Trend Observations:**

- All SDGs show an increase in annual mentions after 2015, with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) dominating both eras.



## 6.2 Growth Rates by SDG

Analysis of compound annual growth rates (CAGR) for research output by SDG:

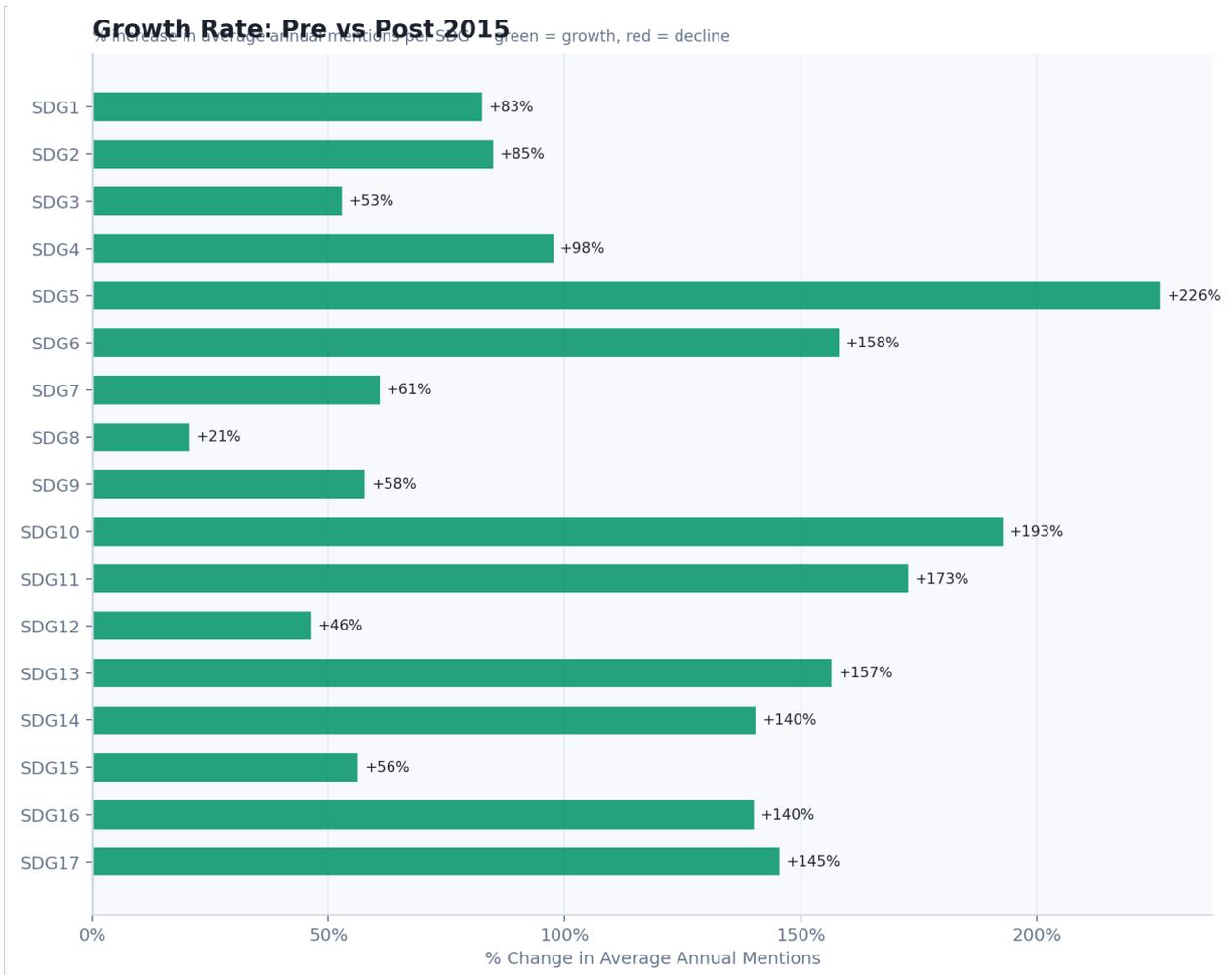


Figure 31: SDG Research Trends (2006-2026)

### Key Trend Observations:

S. No.	SDG	% Growth after 2015
1	SDG 5 - Gender Equality	226%
2	SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities	193%
3	SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities	173%
4	SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation	158%
5	SDG 13 - Climate Action	157%
6	SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals	145%



## 7. Recommendations

Based on the analysis findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

### 7.1 Strategic Research Directions

6. **Strengthen underrepresented SDG areas:** Consider targeted funding or PhD scholarships for research in SDG 17, SDG 1, and SDG 11.
7. **Promote interdisciplinary collaboration:** Encourage research that bridges multiple SDGs, particularly in emerging areas like Gender Equality, Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Clean Water and Sanitation, Climate Action, and Partnerships for the Goals.
8. **Build on existing strengths:** Leverage the university's strong performance in SDG 16, 12, and 3 to establish centers of excellence.

### 7.2 Operational Recommendations

9. **SDG tagging at submission:** Implement SDG classification as part of the thesis submission process.
10. **Annual monitoring:** Conduct annual SDG alignment analysis to track progress and identify emerging trends.
11. **Faculty engagement:** Share findings with faculty to raise awareness of SDG-relevant research opportunities.

### 7.3 Reporting and Communication

12. **External reporting:** Include SDG alignment metrics in sustainability reports and university rankings submissions.
13. **Stakeholder communication:** Highlight SDG contributions in communications with funding bodies, government, and industry partners.



## 8. Conclusion

This comprehensive analysis of 8933 PhD theses from 2006 to 2026 demonstrates the University of Delhi's significant contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals through doctoral research.

Key conclusions from this analysis include:

- Almost 90% of all PhD research aligns with at least one SDG, indicating strong relevance to global sustainability challenges.
- The university shows particular strength in SDG16, SDG12, and SDG 3, reflecting institutional expertise and priorities.
- Interdisciplinary research is prevalent, with 56% of theses addressing multiple SDGs.
- There is growing momentum in Gender Equality, Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Clean Water and Sanitation, and Climate Action, indicating emerging research priorities.

Moving forward, the University of Delhi is well-positioned to enhance its contribution to the 2030 Agenda by implementing the recommendations outlined in this report and continuing to monitor and strengthen SDG-aligned research.

— End of Report —