



The Big Picture: Aspirational Model: Inspiration for the World

Why in News

The [United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#) has lauded India's [Aspirational Districts Programme \(ADP\)](#), saying that it should serve as a "best practice" for other countries where regional disparities in development status persist for many reasons.

- An independent appraisal report by the UNDP described it as a very successful model of local area development which has resulted in sectoral growth and improvements in governance and administration.

Key Points

- **UNDP Appraisal Report:** The report was presented by UNDP India Resident Representative to NITI Aayog.
 - The UN development body has lauded Indian government's effort that made a difference in the lives of 21% of the country's population.
- **ADP Principal:** As per the UNDP, ADP is a successful model of local area development aligned to the principle of "**leave no one behind**" - the vital core of the [Sustainable Development Goals.](#)"
- **The Third Tier of the Government:** The programme highlights the districts as the third tier of the government and coherently brings focus on it

Aspirational District Programme and UNDP

- **Key Areas of Analysis:** UNDP's analysed across the key sectors of the ADP; health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, basic infrastructure, skill development and financial inclusion.
 - The programme has been proved as a catalyst for expediting development in the districts.
 - All the progress of these indicators are captured on the **Champions of Change dashboard** on a real-time basis. Every month, the best performing district of the previous month is found out.
- **Delta Rankings:** The UNDP report commended the [Delta Rankings](#) provided on the Champions of Change dashboard.
 - Several low performing districts have been successfully pushed ahead to improve their standing in the past three years.
 - The districts of Simdega (Jharkhand), Chandauli and Sonbhadra (Uttar Pradesh) and Rajgarh (Madhya Pradesh) were found to have **progressed the most since the beginning of the programme.**
- **Best Practices Undertaken under Programme:**
 - **Learning from Peers:** Making the districts take inspiration from their fellow competitors and making them realise their own calibre.
 - **Assigning Responsibilities to the Districts:** Identifying the areas where the districts lag behind and vesting in them the responsibility of developing innovative ideas to

overcome the situation is one of the best practices.

- **Team Work:** The soul of the programme is teamwork.
 - NITI Aayog, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Ministry of Education, various state governments and their notable officers all together form a team in this ADP.
- **Improvements in the Aspirational Districts (ADs):**
 - **Health and Nutrition:** As per the UNDP report, 9.6% more home deliveries are attended by a skilled birth attendant and 5.8% more pregnant women with severe anaemia were treated.
 - **Malaria Elimination:** The [Malaria](#) incidents in districts of Chhattisgarh have also been reduced by 71% and 54% and was recommended as one of the 'best practices' found in ADs.
 - **Financial Inclusion:** The UNDP report found registration of 1,580 more accounts per one lakh population under the [Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana](#).
 - **Assisting Farmers:** GoalMart, an e-commerce portal launched by one of Assam's district administration promotes rural, ethnic and agrarian products of the district in the national and global markets.
 - It helped the farmers and retailers during the Covid-19 lockdown and was also profitable for the farmers.
 - **Exports:** The black rice cultivation of one of Uttar Pradesh's districts was a great success.
 - The high-quality black rice from the district is now exported to Australia and New Zealand.
- **ADP's Assistance Amid the Pandemic**
 - **Assisting the Vulnerable People:** The most vulnerable section amid the pandemic was the senior citizens. The development partners of ADP have reached out to the [elderly people](#).
 - **Assisting the Doctors of Rural Areas:** Excessive information from various sources created confusion among the doctors of the remote areas.
 - At the platform **Omnicuris**, a panel of senior level doctors was created to provide support and the guidance to the block level doctors.
- **Creating Awareness:** In order to create awareness among the common people, [NITI Aayog](#) along with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation created the '**India fights Covid**' platform on which all the practices of [Covid-19](#) management were provided.
 - Also, for the NGOs, the [NGO DARPAN](#) portal was created to provide assistance to 90000+ NGOs.
- **Surakshit Hum Surakshit Tum Abhiyaan:** Recently, NITI Aayog and Piramal Foundation launched '[Surakshit Hum Surakshit Tum Abhiyan](#)' in 112 aspirational districts.
 - This drive was launched to assist the administration in providing home care support to Covid-19 patients, who are either asymptomatic or have mild symptoms.
 - Most of these districts are in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra.

Challenges

- **Lack of Coordination:** ADP is implemented by multiple ministries which leads to a lack of coordination.
- **More Focus on Quantity:** The Delta ranking is largely focused on assessing quantity (coverage of access) rather than quality.
- **Geographical and Political Constraints:** It must be noted that most Aspirational Districts are located in remote areas, and some even plagued with [Left Wing Extremist \(LWE\)](#) conflicts which hinder their growth and make it more difficult for any development programmes to be implemented
- **Data Related Issues:** There may be underreporting or overreporting of data.

Way Forward

- **Encouraging Developmental Plans:** There is a need to ensure that focus on the developments of these districts is encouraged further.
 - The momentum India has gained in expediting growth is maintained as well and keeping the competitive spirits high.

- **Determining the Time-Frame:** The way forward should be to decide that in what time frame these aspirational districts will achieve their goals. A district shall not remain aspirational for a long time.
 - Consuming too much time in achieving goals will defeat the idea of these developmental plans.
- **Resolving Data Issues:** In order to resolve the issue of under-reporting or over-reporting of the data, the solution is to have third party evaluation so that there are two or three fold rounds of third party survey.
- **Assistance from Non-Governmental Bodies:** The Government systems can be very well supported by the NGOs and Civil Societies, channelising their energy to identify individual performances of the households.
 - Taking advantage of these organisations' reach, even the last household should be covered.
- **Building Monitoring Capacity:** For strengthening our monitoring system, we also need to focus on building capacity to undertake those monitoring.
 - So that the success of the scheme is ensured by more closed and rigorous monitoring.

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