

Aspirational Districts Programme

Balanced growth is the prerequisite for the overall development in a diverse country like India. Many programmes have been formulated by the policymakers to address the issue of widespread disparity in the indicators of development in different regions of the country. Nonetheless, the programmes launched earlier lacked centralized monitoring mechanisms, were infested with loopholes, lack of convergence, lack of availability of real-time data etc. Above all, a “one size fits all” approach was adopted, which resulted in the programmes, not yielding the desired results.

Overview of the Aspirational Districts Programme

In order to effectively and quickly transform the chosen districts (that have witnessed least progress among certain parameters of development), the government launched the Aspirational Districts Programme. The Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) is a quintessential retreat from India's previous development strategies in its ownership, scope, and scale. It is implicit in the plan of the programme that the Indian economy could sustain growth only by improving human development for all its citizens.

- 115 districts from across 28 states have been chosen. They constitute about 20% of the population of India and cover about 8,600-gram Panchayats.
- The progress under the programme is tracked through the data collected on a real-time basis. A dashboard has been created by the NITI Ayog to track the real-time progress. This, in turn, enhances accountability and transparency.
- Statistics have been collected on 49 indicators on 5 core dimensions (education, financial inclusion, agriculture and water resources, skill development and basic infrastructure) in order to provide an initial benchmark for the programme.
- It is important, however, to note that all the dimensions are not considered equal in constructing a composite index for every district, taking cognizance of the nature of development challenges in India.
- The focus, under the programme, is shifted from the outputs to the socio-economic outputs.
- The programme is a positive shift towards cooperative federalism, as the districts and the states have a greater voice in their development.

Core Strategy of the Programme

The broad strategy of the programmer is as follows:

1. Convergence
2. Collaboration
3. Competition

The states are the main drivers of this program and it will focus on the strength of each district, that will

identify low-hanging low-fruits for immediate improvement, measure progress and rank districts.

The 115 districts were identified from 28 states, at least one from each state, in a transparent manner by a committee of Senior Officers to the Government of India, in consultation with State Officials using a composite index of key data sets that included deprivation enumerated under the Socio-Economic Caste Census, key health and education sector performance and state of basic infrastructure.

What will be the Focus Area of the Programme?

The Government is committed to raising the living standards of its citizens and ensuring inclusive growth for all – "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas". To enable optimum utilization of their potential, this program focuses closely on improving people's ability to participate fully in the vibrant economy. Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure are this programme's core areas of focus. After several rounds of consultations with various stakeholders, 49 key performance indicators have been chosen to measure progress of the districts. Districts are aspiring to first catch-up with the best district within their State, and subsequently aspire to become one of the best in the country, by competing with, and learning from others in the spirit of competitive & cooperative federalism.

Candidates can check out the relevant links given below to prepare for the upcoming exams even better-

