

Aspirational District-Gajapati

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The Prime Minister launched the ‘**Transformation of Aspirational Districts**’ programme for transforming 115 backward or aspirational district in the vision of ‘**Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas**’, to raise the living standards of its citizens and to ensure inclusive growth for all. The districts were selected from all 28 states in a transparent manner. There are three core aspects that frame the structure of the programme – Convergence, Collaboration and Competition.

The baseline ranking for the 115 Aspirational Districts is based on 49 indicators across five sectors that include health & nutrition, education, agriculture & water resources, financial inclusion & skill development, and basic infrastructure. There is an annual ranking of the performance of districts that are to be benchmarked as the best-performing districts in India.



Site visit at Gajapati

Integrative Design Solutions Pvt. Ltd. (IDSPL) always aspires to work for rural development, and this program provided a vital opportunity to work in rural areas. After many rounds of discussions with various stakeholders, we decided to work in the Gajapati district of Odisha State. This district was ranked 113 (Jan-2019) out of 115 districts.

After acquiring permission from Additional District Magistrate (ADM), IDSPL did a ground survey to find about the current situation and the findings were concerning. The district was affected by tropic cyclones every year, whereas recent cyclone caused immense damage to the infrastructure of the district. In the survey, major issues that were overlooked were electricity, drinking water, proper sanitation in health and educational institutions. The schools as well as, health institutions lacked basic amenities such as desk, benches, science & computer lab equipment and medical equipment. The number of health institutions was also less; therefore, people have to travel a large distance to get proper access to medication. For instance, people from a certain village of Rayagada block had to travel around 65 km to go to a Community health centre, that resulted in difficulty, especially for pregnant women and small children.

Following the survey, a meeting was held with the ADM and IDSPL decided to work in two plain blocks and one tribal block of the district. The company decided to work on two areas; Health and Education based on the resources available. IDSPL is working on various strategies that will provide solutions against the alarming indicators present in the district; thereby trying to improve its present ranking.