



**Research Unit**  
Press Information Bureau  
Government of India

## **Good Governance: Change & Empowerment at the Last Mile!** *Aspirational Districts Programme Heralds Transformation*

December 11, 2024

December 11, 2024, is etched in Rekha's memory. She woke up with a palpable excitement as she awaited recognition of her efforts. She was awarded *Miss Haemoglobin* by the Department of **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)** in Guna, Madhya Pradesh, for her commitment to improving her health. Rekha has consistently focused on a balanced diet, taking iron and folic acid pills, and overcoming the initial discomfort they caused. Her hard work paid off, and she was applauded for promoting healthy nutritional practices. This acknowledgement is part of the **POSHAN Abhiyaan**, aimed at making India **anaemia-free** by encouraging healthier habits, particularly among adolescent girls.



Stories of Change from India's Aspirational Districts

The **Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP)**, launched in 2018, aims to transform **112** of India's most underdeveloped districts, such as **Guna**, into centers of sustainable growth. Focused on **convergence** of government schemes, **collaboration** among officials, and **competition** through monthly district rankings, the ADP addresses key areas like **health, education, infrastructure,**

and **financial inclusion**. Rooted in the principles of **Good Governance**, it emphasizes **transparency, accountability, and citizen participation**.

For districts like **Guna**, the ADP encourages local, innovative solutions to improve community well-being. Rekha's recognition is part of the broader goal of empowering women and children to combat anemia and promoting healthier habits in communities.

In Pauri Garhwal, another district under the **ADP**, a similar transformation is happening. Kavita, an adolescent girl from the region, had struggled with anemia due to low adherence to iron and folic acid pills. Many women faced similar challenges, as inconsistent messaging, fear of side effects, and lack of proper counselling made it difficult to form healthy habits. To overcome this, counselling cards were introduced for **frontline workers (FLWs)**, offering guidance on the benefits of IFA pills, managing side effects, and reinforcing healthy habits. This initiative led to a marked increase in adherence to IFA supplementation across the district.



At the same time, a local solution emerged in Pauri Garhwal in the form of iron-rich **Jhangora laddoos**, made from **barnyard millet**, a **nutritious** and locally available resource. These laddoos provided a tasty, convenient alternative to traditional **Take Home Rations (THR)**, which many women found unappealing. The initiative not only tackled anaemia but also empowered women by forming self-help groups that produced laddoos at scale, creating new business opportunities and boosting local **entrepreneurship**.

These stories highlight the positive impact of **community-driven** solutions in tackling health issues. They are closely aligned with the Aspirational Districts Program's goals, which focus on **innovative solutions, empowering individuals, and inclusive growth**.

The Government of India further underscores its commitment to effective governance during **Good Governance Week 2024** (December 19-24). This year, the **Preparatory Phase** is from **December 11-18**, with the launch of a dedicated portal, <https://darpgapps.nic.in/GGW24>, on **December 11, 2024**. The portal enables **District Collectors** to upload progress reports, share **Good Governance Practices**, and feature video clips during the campaign's preparatory and implementation phases, fostering greater **transparency** and **accountability**.

Thus, **Aspirational Districts Programme** is a prime example of **Good Governance** in action. It embodies the **8 Principles of Good Governance** outlined by the United Nations, including **participation** and **inclusiveness**, ensuring that all communities are involved in the decision-making process and benefit from the outcomes. The focus on **transparency**, **accountability**, and **responsiveness** ensures that district-level initiatives are executed with clear communication and efficient use of resources. Furthermore, emphasising **equity** and **effectiveness** ensures that no one is left behind, particularly the marginalized and vulnerable. The Aspirational Districts Programme demonstrates how good governance can lead to **inclusive growth** and **nationwide development**, empowering individuals and communities to thrive.

## References

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