

What is the 'Vocal for Local' Initiative?

June 30, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



About 'Vocal for Local' Initiative

- It is an initiative of **NITI Aayog** under its Aspirational Blocks Programme to encourage a spirit of self-reliance among the people and propel them towards sustainable growth and prosperity.
- As a part of this initiative, local products from 500 aspirational blocks have been mapped and consolidated under the Aakanksha brand.
 - Aakanksha is an umbrella brand, which could be supplemented into multiple sub-brands that have the potential to create an international market.
- In order to encourage these products, a dedicated window for the Aspirational Blocks Programme under the brand name Aakanksha has been established on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal.
- The partners will also provide technical and operational support for the facilitation of e-commerce onboarding, establishing linkages, financial/digital literacy, documentation/certification, and skill enhancement, among others.

Key Facts about Government e-Marketplace (GeM)

- It is an online platform for public procurement, launched in 2016 by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

- It is a one-stop portal to facilitate online procurement of common use Goods & Services required by various Government Departments / Organizations / PSUs.
- The purchases made through GeM by Government users have been authorised and made mandatory by the Ministry of Finance under the General Financial Rules, 2017.
- The platform is owned by GeM SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle), which is a 100% Government-owned, non-profit company under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Read more about [GeM](#)

Key Facts about Aspirational Blocks Programme

- It is on the lines of the **Aspirational District Programme** that was launched in 2018 and covers 112 districts across the country.
- This new programme is aimed at improving performance of blocks lagging on various development parameters.
- This will enable holistic development in those areas that require added assistance.
- The programme will initially cover 500 districts across 31 states and Union Territories.
- Over half of these blocks are in six states: Uttar Pradesh (68 blocks), Bihar (61), Madhya Pradesh (42), Jharkhand (34), Odisha (29), and West Bengal (29).

Source: [PIB](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/vocal-for-local-initiative/>

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