

NITI Aayog mulls using PSUs' CSR funds on 'aspirational districts'

Focus will be on health, nutrition and education

OUR BUREAU

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The NITI Aayog is seeking to realign the deployment of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) in accordance with the pressing requirements in aspirational districts.

An official statement said the realignment would be focussed on health, nutrition and education. It is expected to make a visible impact as the CSR funds of these enterprises are in the excess of ₹3,200 crore a year.

Flagship initiative

The transformation of aspirational districts is a flagship initiative of the Centre in partnership with State govern-

ments, anchored at the NITI Aayog.

"A concerted effort is being made to rapidly transform 117 aspirational districts, which have shown relatively less progress in health, nutrition, and education among others," the statement said.

Addressing a conference to deliberate on the way forward in this regard, Amitabh Kant, CEO of NITI Aayog, said that for India to capitalise on its demographic transition, it must improve its outcomes on the Human Development Index.

Preeti Sudan, Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, recommended various activities in the health sector, including Ayushman Bharat programme that could be funded by CSR.

Infra for education

Suggesting measures to re-deploy CSR funds, Rina Ray, Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy under



Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog

the Ministry of Human Resource Development, said that CPSEs should look to support infrastructure projects for education such as upgradation of lower primary to upper primary schools.

This will help in reducing

dropout rates resulting from constraints in existing infrastructure.

As a special measure to reduce dropout rates of girls, CSR can be used for providing bicycles to girl students, Ray added.