

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW**Ram Mohan Mishra**

Town Planner, Rourkela Smart City Limited (RSCL)



Rourkela City, the steel city of Odisha, located on the banks of river Koyal and Brahmani was shortlisted as one of the SMART Cities under the Government of India's SMART City Mission. Under this Mission, Rourkela is required to prepare a SMART City Plan and formulate its own unique vision and strategies through active consultation of its citizens and all stakeholders.

As Rourkela Smart City Limited (RSCL) plans to transform Rourkela into a smart city in phases using smart technologies such as surveillance systems, traffic analytics, e-Governance, and solid waste management, GIS becomes a key enabler.

Let's understand the role of GIS in transforming Rourkela from a steel city to a smart city through a conversation with [Ram Mohan Mishra, Town Planner, Rourkela Smart City Limited](#).

What's the Mission of Rourkela Smart City Limited (RSCL)?

The mission of RSCL is to provide the people of Rourkela a healthy and hygienic life in the city. We are making efforts to provide a smart solution to every problem of the people of Rourkela. We are addressing all issues from A to Z - such as traffic management, sewage, drainage, firefighting, solid waste management, electricity distribution, and restructuring/redevelopment of old buildings, as well as the construction of the new infrastructure.

Is it advantageous to use GIS in city development planning (CDP)?

Yes, definitely, there are many advantages. Location plays a crucial role in every aspect of city development planning. To better the quality of life of the citizens, GIS provides an IT infrastructure where all the stakeholders are involved in every activity starting from planning and conceptualization to development, monitoring, and maintenance.

I experienced this when I was preparing the CDP for Rourkela. Earlier, whatever we were doing, we were doing manually. So, I have prepared Master plans for the cities manually as well as in digital mode. i.e., using the GIS platform. The use of GIS has expedited the process significantly.

Earlier we used to take four to five years to prepare one Master plan but now that can be done within four to six months. This was beyond imagination for us.

How is GIS aiding in the transformation of Rourkela from a steel city to a smart city?

Rourkela is among India's oldest planned cities and the third largest urban agglomeration in the eastern state of Odisha after Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. The city is known for India's first integrated public sector steel plant, set up in the 1960s with German collaboration and technical expertise. The township in the vicinity of the steel plant city was also designed by German planners. This is one of the reasons why that area is better developed than adjoining localities. While the infrastructure available in the steel township is very good, the infrastructure of the civil township is not at par. It is not as planned as the steel township. There is a discrepancy in the facilities available as well.

Using the latest technologies, we are trying to address this gap. We want to ensure that equal facilities are available for all the citizens of the city. There's no disparity.

Geospatial data plays a vital role here. With the help of GIS, planners collect the required data, tally it with the grievances/queries, build capacity to address the needs, and develop infrastructure based on the demands and requirements.

Esri India has done good work in Bhubaneswar and Varanasi. We also aim to achieve excellence in our smart city efforts and thus are using Esri India's technology in our urban infrastructure projects, smart city projects and other Rourkela Municipal Corporation projects.

“ We are using Esri India's Urban Management Solutions to provide the people of Rourkela a healthy and hygienic life in the city. GIS is helping in addressing all issues from A to Z. ”