

1. What is the Viability Gap Funding (VGF) Scheme? Discuss. Why is it important?

Approach - A direct question divided into two parts where the first part requires discussion on what is Viability Gap Funding (VGF) scheme and in the second part, you need to elaborate upon why it is important.

Introduction

The main constraint in India's infrastructure sector is the lack of source for finance. Some projects may not be financially viable though they are economically justified and necessary. This is the nature of several infrastructural projects which are long term and development oriented. For the successful completion of such projects, the government has designed Viability Gap Funding (VGF).

Body

- Viability Gap Finance means a grant to support projects that are economically justified but not financially viable. The scheme is designed as a Plan Scheme to be administered by the Ministry of Finance and amount in the budget are made on a year-to-year basis.
- Such a grant under VGF is provided as a capital subsidy to attract the private sector players to participate in PPP projects that are otherwise financially unviable. Projects may not be commercially viable because of long gestation period and small revenue flows in future.
- The VGF scheme was launched in 2004 to support projects that comes under Public Private Partnerships. VGF grants will be available only for infrastructure projects where private sector sponsors are selected through a process of competitive bidding. The VGF grant will be disbursed at the construction stage itself but only after the private sector developer makes the equity contribution required for the project.
- The usual grant amount is up to 20% of the total capital cost of the project. Funds for VGF will be provided from the government's budgetary allocation. If the sponsoring Ministry/State Government/ statutory entity aims to provide assistance over and above the stipulated amount under VGF, it will be restricted to a further 20% of the total project cost.
- The lead financial institution for the project is responsible for regular monitoring and periodic evaluation of project compliance with agreed milestones and performance levels, particularly for the purpose of grant disbursement.

Recently, the government has expanded the provision of financial support by means of viability gap funding for public-private partnerships (PPPs) in infrastructure projects to include critical social sector investments in sectors such as health, education, water and waste treatment. Also, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved continuation and revamping of the Scheme for Financial

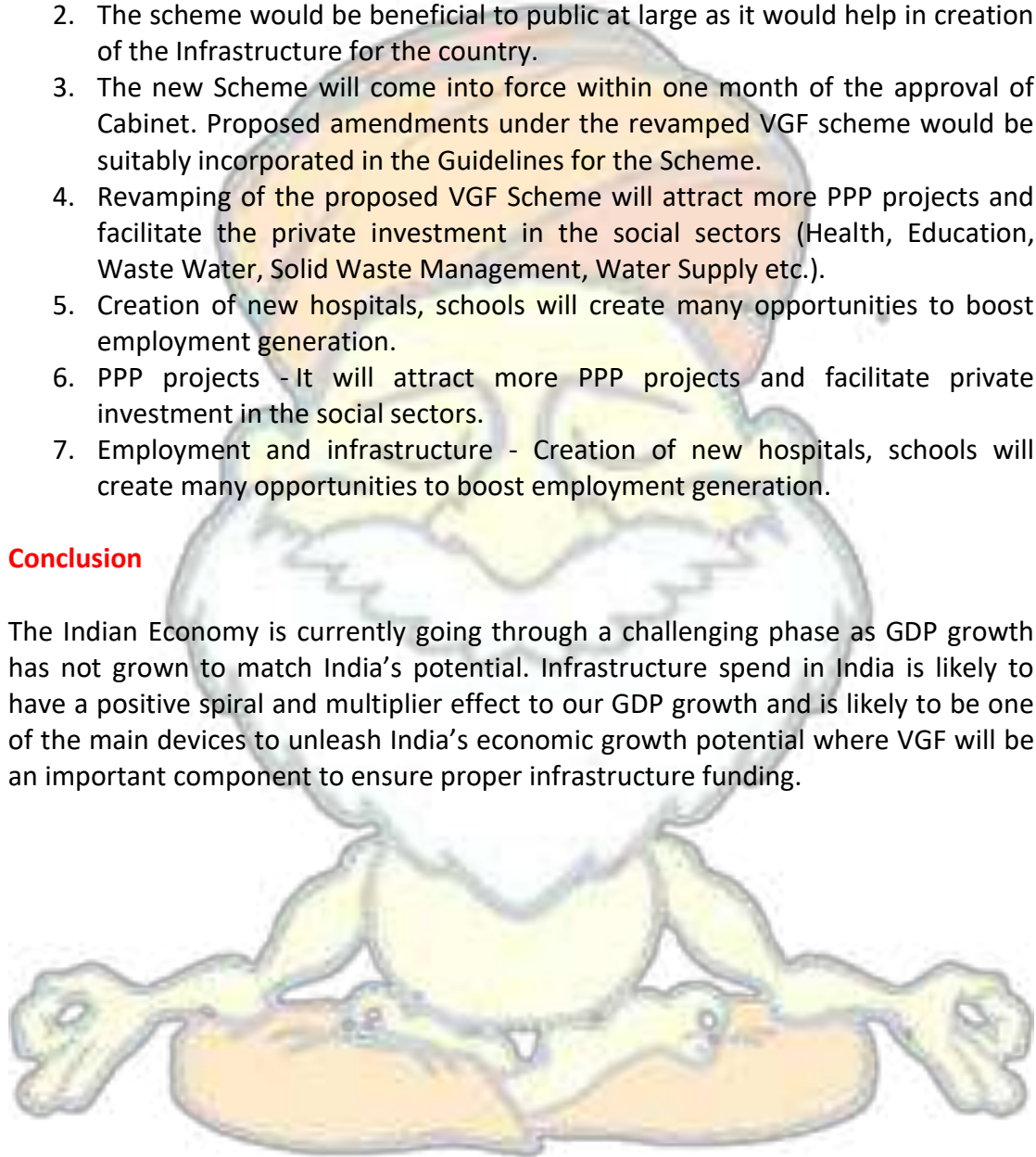
Support to Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Infrastructure Viability Gap Funding (VGF) Scheme Till 2024-25.

The importance of VGF scheme can be understood from the following points:

1. To promote PPPs in social and Economic Infrastructure leading to efficient creation of assets and ensuring their proper Operation and Maintenance and make the economically/socially essential projects commercially viable.
2. The scheme would be beneficial to public at large as it would help in creation of the Infrastructure for the country.
3. The new Scheme will come into force within one month of the approval of Cabinet. Proposed amendments under the revamped VGF scheme would be suitably incorporated in the Guidelines for the Scheme.
4. Revamping of the proposed VGF Scheme will attract more PPP projects and facilitate the private investment in the social sectors (Health, Education, Waste Water, Solid Waste Management, Water Supply etc.).
5. Creation of new hospitals, schools will create many opportunities to boost employment generation.
6. PPP projects - It will attract more PPP projects and facilitate private investment in the social sectors.
7. Employment and infrastructure - Creation of new hospitals, schools will create many opportunities to boost employment generation.

Conclusion

The Indian Economy is currently going through a challenging phase as GDP growth has not grown to match India's potential. Infrastructure spend in India is likely to have a positive spiral and multiplier effect to our GDP growth and is likely to be one of the main devices to unleash India's economic growth potential where VGF will be an important component to ensure proper infrastructure funding.



2. Examine the recent improvements introduced to the Integrated Child Development Services and Mid-Day Meal schemes.

Approach

Students are expected to write about the recent improvements introduced to the Integrated Child Development Services and Mid-Day Meal scheme in the first part and examine its implications in the second part.

Introduction

Paediatric malnutrition has always been a matter of national concern. Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which India is a party, India has committed to yielding "adequate nutritious food" for children. The formulation of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme is one of the most prestigious and premier national human resource development programs for children under 6 years of age and their mothers. To follow it for further age group GOI introduced Mid-day Meal Scheme (MDM), which supplies free lunch on working days for children in primary and upper primary classes.

Body

Recent improvements in Mid-day meal scheme:

- Inclusion of Pre- primary class (Bal Vatika) children under MDM: MDM has been proven to attract children from disadvantaged sections (especially girls, Dalits and Adivasis) to school. The revised National Education policy has proposed that prior to the age of 5 every child will move to a "preparatory class" or "balavatika". The mid-day meal programme shall be extended to the preparatory Classes in primary schools to avoid classroom hunger and Reducing malnutrition.
- Inclusion of simple and energetic breakfast under MDM: Children are unable to learn optimally when they are undernourished or unwell. Hence, the nutrition and health of children will be addressed, through healthy meals. New National Education Policy (NEP) has noted that morning hours after a nutritious breakfast can be particularly productive for the study of cognitively more demanding subjects and hence recommended expansion of the mid-day meal scheme to include provisions for breakfast in schools. In locations where hot meals are not possible, a simple but nutritious meal-- groundnuts or chana mixed with jaggery and local fruits may be provided.

Recent improvements in Integrated Child Development Services:

- Digitisation of Anganwadi Centres: The Ministry of WCD has conceptualized a digital platform, " Poshan Tracker", which will be an overarching system,

providing facilities, services and interlinkages, and thereby also promote real time data with analytics.

- Non-formal Pre-School Education in Anganwadi Centres: Children (3-6 years) are provided non-formal Pre-School Education service in all AWCs. The child beneficiaries under the Anganwadi Services Scheme are also provided Supplementary Nutrition as per the guidelines of the Scheme. Monthly Village Health and Sanitation Day and Community Based Events are organised to improve status of nutrition of children.
- Poshan Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission): Poshan Abhiyaan targets to reduce the level of stunting, under-nutrition, anemia and low birth weight babies by reducing mal-nutrition/under nutrition, anemia among young children as also, focus on adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana: Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) scheme provides cash incentive amounting to Rs.5,000/- in three instalments directly to the Bank/Post Office Account of Pregnant Women and Lactating Mother in DBT Mode during pregnancy and lactation in response to individual fulfilling specific conditions. The eligible beneficiary also receives the remaining cash incentive as per approved norms towards maternity benefit under Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) so that on an average, a woman gets Rs.6,000/-.
- Out of school Adolescent Girls: Scheme for Adolescent Girls aims at out of school girls in the age group 11-14, to empower and improve their social status through nutrition, life skills and home skills. The scheme has nutritional and non-nutritional components which include nutrition, iron and folic acid supplementation, health check-up and referral services. Mainstreaming out of school girls to join formal schooling bridge course/skill training, life skill education, home management etc.

Constraints in implementation of Integrated Child Development Services and MDM:

- Under performed ICDS: Despite increasing funding over the past three decades, the ICDS fell short of its stated objectives and still faces a number of challenges. Also, though it has widespread coverage, operational gaps mean that service delivery is not consistent in quality and quantity across the country.
- Child hunger in India: Despite the success of the program, child hunger as a problem persists in India, 42.5% of the children under 5 are underweight. Some simple health measures such as using iodised salt and getting vaccinations are uncommon in India. Many children don't get enough to eat, which has far-reaching implications for the performance of the country as a whole.
- Implementation issues: Several media reports have highlighted implementation issues, including irregularity, corruption, hygiene, caste discrimination, etc.

- Poor food quality: Poor food quality is a major concern, affecting the health of children. There are provisions for regular social audit, field visits and inspections but these are seldom carried out.

Conclusion

The various vertical health programmes initiated by the Government of India (GOI) from time to time did not reach out to the target community adequately, even though ICDS are there. In order to change this and strengthen the Mid-Day Meal Programme to bring uniformity across the nation, monitoring and evaluation need to be improved, and this requires to be a part of the budget allocation. An enhanced budget that supports the MDM Scheme and the various components associated with the holistic development of the school ecosystem will eventually result in making a positive impact on education.



3. What are the key components of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for electronics manufacturers? Discuss. What sort of economic potential does this scheme hold?

Approach:

It expects students to write – in first part write about key components of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme – in second part write about what economic potential holds by PLI scheme – in end write challenges which needs to be addressed.

Introduction:

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) notified PLI scheme on April 2020. Global electronics companies like Samsung, Pegatron, Flex, and Foxconn are in final stages of negotiations to benefit from the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for making mobile phones and certain other specified electronic components in India.

Body:

Key components of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme:

- It offers a production linked incentive to boost domestic manufacturing and attract large investments in mobile phone manufacturing and specified electronic components, including Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) units.
- It will extend an incentive of 4% to 6% on incremental sales (over a base year) of goods manufactured in India and covered under target segments.
- It will be active for five years with the financial year (FY) 2019-20 considered as the base year for calculation of incentives.
- It will be implemented through a Nodal Agency which shall act as a Project Management Agency (PMA) and be responsible for providing secretarial, managerial and implementation support and carrying out other responsibilities as assigned by MeitY from time to time.
- Eligibility for the scheme- All electronic manufacturing companies which are either Indian or have a registered unit in India will be eligible to apply for the scheme. These companies can either create a new unit or seek incentives for their existing units from one or more locations in India.
 - Any additional expenditure incurred by companies on the plant, machinery, equipment, research and development and transfer of technology for the manufacture of mobile phones and related electronic items will be eligible for the incentive scheme.
 - The investments done by companies on land and buildings for the project will not be considered for any incentives.

Following economic potential holds by PLI scheme for electronics manufacturers:

- The government estimates that with the PLI scheme, domestic value addition for mobile phones is expected to rise to 35-40% by 2025 from the current level of 20-25% and generate additional 8 lakh jobs, both direct and indirect.
- The scheme will generate approximately 3 lakh direct employment opportunities in next 5 years.
- Additional indirect employment will be nearly 3 times the direct employment.
- PLI scheme and other initiatives to promote electronics manufacturing will help in making India a competitive destination for electronics manufacturing and give boost to AtmaNirbhar Bharat.
- Creation of domestic champion companies in electronics manufacturing under the Scheme will give fillip to vocal for local while aiming for global scale.
- The scheme is expected to promote exports significantly.
- Out of the total production of INR 11,50,000 crore in the next 5 years, more than 60% will be contributed by exports of the order of INR 7,00,000 crore.
- The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme is designed to incentivise incremental production for a limited number of eligible anchor entities in each of the selected sectors.
- These selected entities will invest in technology, plant & machinery, as well as in R&D.
- The scheme will also have beneficial spill over effects by the creation of a widespread supplier base for the anchor units established under the scheme.
- Along with the anchor unit, these supplier units will also help to generate massive primary and secondary employment opportunities.
- The sectors for PLI have been shortlisted on the basis of their potential for economic growth, extent of benefit to the rural economy, revenue and employment generation.
- A key benefit of the PLI Scheme is that it can be implemented in a very targeted manner to attract investments in areas of strength and to strategically enter certain segments of global value chains (GVCs).
- This will help bring scale and size in key sectors and create and nurture global champions.

However, there are few challenges which needs to addressed:

- It's difficult to build a manufacturing nucleus around R&D of semiconductors and compete with MNCs overnight, including high-value components like displays, camera modules and memory chips to be part of India's manufacturing nucleus; as opposed to assembly and packaging, which is quite doable.
- Many more companies would like to move their supply chains to India, at least partially if not fully. But, higher employment and economic activity will happen if we start moving the component manufacturing across the value chain, like plastic moulding, metal products etc.
- Companies may face issues like congested ports, slow turnaround times.
- India doesn't have international transshipment points, it's one of the reasons why exporting from India can be expensive.

Conclusion:

Given the scale of incentives, the electronics manufacturing sector of the country is set to transform in the next few years. Its contribution to the GDP will significantly improve, leading to unprecedented investment and job creation.



4. Mission Karmayogi is a crucial step towards the modernisation of civil services in India. Comment.

Approach:

It expects students to write about – in first part write about need of the mission – in second part write about why it is crucial step towards the modernisation of civil services – in end write challenges before it.

Introduction:

The Union Cabinet has approved 'Mission Karmayogi' - the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB). It is meant to be a comprehensive post-recruitment reform of the Centre's human resource development. Similar to pre-recruitment changes in the form of the National Recruitment Agency.

Body:

Need of The Mission

- There is a need to develop domain knowledge besides administrative capacity in the bureaucracy.
- There is a need to formalize the recruitment process and match the public service to a bureaucrat's competence, so as to find the right person for the right job.
- The plan is to begin right at the recruitment level and then invest in building more capacity through the rest of their career.
- As the Indian economy grows, it will get more complex to govern; the governance capacities will have to be enhanced proportionately which this reform undertakes.
- The reforms in the Indian bureaucracy is the need of the hour and It is a major reform undertaken in recent years to transform it.

It is crucial step towards the modernisation of civil services because:

- Tech-Aided: The capacity building will be delivered through iGOTKarmayogi digital platform, with content drawn from global best practices.
 - The platform will act as a Launchpad for the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB).
- Shift from Rules to Roles: The programme will support a transition from "rules-based to roles-based" Human Resource Management (HRM) so that work allocations can be done by matching an official's competencies to the requirements of the post.
 - Apart from domain knowledge training, the scheme will focus on "functional and behavioural competencies" as well, and also includes a monitoring framework for performance evaluations.
- Rule Based to Role Based: The programme will support a transition from rules-based to roles-based HR management, so that work allocations can be done by matching an official's competencies to the requirements of the post.
- Domain Training: Apart from domain knowledge training, the scheme will focus on functional and behavioural competencies also.

- It will provide an opportunity for civil servants to continuously build and strengthen their Behavioural, Functional and Domain Competencies in their self-driven and mandated learning paths.
- Uniform Training Standard: It will harmonise training standards across the country, so that there is a common understanding of India's aspirations and development goals.
- Vision for New India: Mission Karmayogi is aimed at building a future-ready civil service with the right attitude, skills and knowledge, aligned to the vision of New India.
- On Site Learning: It will emphasize on 'on-site learning' to complement the 'off-site' learning.
- Adoption of Best Practices: It will encourage and partner with the best-in-class learning content creators including public training institutions, universities, start-tips and individual experts.

However, there are few challenges before it:

- John Maynard Keynes, the economist, once said that "The difficulty lies, not in the new ideas, but in escaping from the old ones."
- There is a tendency in the Bureaucracy to resist the change which challenges their status quo.
- The bureaucracy too must understand the need of domain knowledge and the importance of moving away from generalist to specialist approach.
- In today's world the governance is getting technical with each passing day and hence it's important that the person in authority too should have the requisite skill and experience in that particular area.
- Thus, there should be a behavioural change in the bureaucracy too and they must embrace the change as a need of the hour and not an attack on their status quo.
- Moreover, these online courses must not become another opportunity for the officers to go for the sabbatical leaves.
- It must be ensured that they are actually attending the courses and participating in it so that the purpose doesn't get defeated.

Conclusion:

To conclude, the ultimate aim of Mission Karmayogi is to ensure "Ease of Living" for the common man, "Ease of Doing Business" and Citizen-Centricity that is reducing the gap between the government and the citizens. This can only be achieved by regular and constructive involvement by the government and civil servants.

5. What is the Ayushman Sahakar Scheme? Can it transform the status of healthcare in the rural areas? Examine.**Approach:**

As the directive here is examine, it is necessary to find out cause-effect relationship between two things. In the introduction you need to mention in brief about Ayushman Sahakar Scheme, you can state who launched the scheme or who is implementing the scheme or who are targeted beneficiaries. In the main body part, you need to explain about the features of scheme in first half, whereas in the second half you need cover various angles related to the question that whether it can transfer the status of healthcare in rural areas or not. Here you can cite cause effect relationship by stating how and why rural healthcare in the rural areas is lacking and how it will get benefited by the Ayushman Sahakar scheme. In the conclusion, you can show in brief how it will transform healthcare in rural areas in particular and at pan India level in general.

Introduction:

Ayushman Sahakar, a unique scheme to assist cooperatives to play an important role in creation of healthcare infrastructure in the country formulated by the apex autonomous development finance institution under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC). The scheme is expected to revolutionize the way healthcare delivery takes place in rural areas.

Body:

As per NCDC, there are about 52 hospitals across the country run by cooperatives. They have cumulative bed strength of more than 5,000. Hence, utilisation of this kind of large health care facility seems a right move. Following are the features of the scheme:

- NCDC would extend term loans to prospective cooperatives to the tune of Rs.10,000 crore in the coming years. The NCDC fund would give a boost to provision of healthcare services by cooperatives.
- The scheme also provides working capital and margin money to meet operational requirements.
- Any Cooperative Society with suitable provision in its byelaws to undertake healthcare related activities would be able to access the NCDC fund.
- The scheme covers establishment, modernization, expansion, repairs, renovation of hospital and healthcare and education infrastructure.
- NCDC assistance will flow either through the State Governments/ UT Administrations or directly to the eligible cooperatives.

Status of healthcare in Rural areas:

- Healthcare is the right of every individual but lack of quality infrastructure, dearth of qualified medical functionaries, and non- access to basic medicines and medical facilities thwarts its reach to 60% of population in India.

- Sixty per cent of primary health centres (PHCs) in India have only one doctor while about five per cent have none, according to the Economic Survey 2018-19.
- A majority of 700 million people live in rural areas where the condition of medical facilities is deplorable.
- In rural India, where the number of Primary health care centers (PHCs) is limited, 8% of the centers do not have doctors or medical staff, 39% do not have lab technicians and 18% PHCs do not even have a pharmacist.
- India also accounts for the largest number of maternity deaths. A majority of these are in rural areas where maternal health care is poor.
- If we look at the health landscape of India, 92 percent of health care visits are to private providers of which 70 percent is urban population. However, private health care is expensive, often unregulated and variable in quality. Besides being unreliable for the illiterate, it is also unaffordable by low income rural population.
- CAG's report on reproductive and child health highlights the dysfunctional aspects of the medical system in rural areas.

To control the spread of diseases and reduce the growing rates of mortality due to lack of adequate health facilities, special attention needs to be given to the health care in rural areas. The need to improve health care sector in Rural areas becomes more critical in the light of Covid-19 like pandemic. However, the Ayushman Sahkar scheme addresses some of these challenges in following ways:

- The scheme aligns itself with the focus of the National Health Policy, 2017, covering the health systems in all their dimensions- investments in health, organization of healthcare services, access to technologies, development of human resources, encouragement of medical pluralism, affordable health care to farmers etc.
- It has a comprehensive approach in which hospitals, healthcare, medical education, nursing education, paramedical education, health insurance and holistic health systems such as AYUSH will get covered
- . Ayushman Sahakar scheme fund would also assist cooperative hospitals take up medical / Ayush education there by it will address the issue of low doctor to patient ratio in rural areas.
- It is line with National Digital Health Mission. NCDC's Ayushman Sahakar would bring transformation in rural areas. By virtue of their strong presence in rural areas, cooperatives utilizing the scheme would bring revolution in comprehensive health care services.
- Any Cooperative Society with suitable provision in its byelaws to undertake healthcare related activities would be able to access the NCDC fund. NCDC assistance will flow either through the State Governments/ UT Administrations or directly to the eligible cooperatives. Subsidy/ grant from other sources can be dovetailed.

- Ayushman Sahakar specifically covers establishment, modernization, expansion, repairs, renovation of hospital and healthcare and education infrastructure encompassing various fields of health sector in rural areas.
- The scheme also provides working capital and margin money to meet operational requirements. The scheme provides interest subvention of one percent to women majority cooperatives.

Thereby it is clear that the scheme encompasses an all comprehensive approach to address the issues with respect to health care in rural areas. However, issues with respect to corrupt practices, diversion of funds i.e. cut practices, awareness generation require a focused attention for the success of this scheme. Hence, its implementation at the ground level in an organised and more transparent manner is fundamental to success of this scheme.

Conclusion:

Cooperatives have a strong presence in rural areas, thus, the launch of Aayushman Sahakar scheme to improve healthcare in rural areas is a masterstroke by the government which has a strong potential to utilise the real potential of cooperatives which have a wide scale presence in rural areas. If implemented in its letter and spirit the scheme would revolutionize the way healthcare delivery takes place in rural areas in particular and at Pan-India level in general.

