

REVIEW ARTICLE:

Revolutionizing Indian Healthcare: The BPHU Initiative under PM-ABHIM and XV-FC

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the *Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission* has emerged as a pivotal initiative in augmenting India's healthcare landscape. This article delves into the mission's core components, with a particular focus on the establishment of Block Public Health Units (BPHUs), designed to bridge the gap between urban and rural healthcare disparities. Furthermore, it elucidates the symbiotic relationship between the mission and the recommendations of the Fifteen Finance Commission, which provides a robust financial framework for healthcare development. The confluence of these two initiatives presents a transformative approach to healthcare delivery, characterized by decentralization, tailored interventions, and comprehensive health infrastructure development.

Key Words: BPHUs, PM-ABHIM, National Health Policy

Introduction

Access to timely, quality, and affordable healthcare is a fundamental right of the people.¹ Unequal access to health care is an issue that still persists in India.² To address this, India has taken a multi-faceted endeavour to revamp its healthcare infrastructure through the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM).³ All the components of PM-ABHIM are in line with the goals and objectives of National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 and Sustainable Development Goals 3 (SDG).^{4,5} It is a centrally sponsored scheme with some central sector components which emphasises the need to strengthen the healthcare system. At its core, the mission aims to establish Block Public Health Units (BPHUs) as decentralized healthcare hubs, strategically positioned to cater to diverse healthcare needs. Concurrently, the Fifteen Finance Commission's recommendations facilitate the financial requirements necessary for translating these aspirations into tangible improvements.⁶

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Block Public Health Units: Pioneering Grassroots Healthcare

The current public healthcare structure at Block level is strengthened but not enough to tackle public health emergencies. Block CHCs are mostly focused on delivering the clinical services. Thus, BPHUs emerge as a distinctive feature of the PM-ABHIM. They encompass a comprehensive spectrum of medical services, ranging from preventative measures to primary care. This approach will not only disseminate healthcare to remote areas but also enable early detection and intervention strategies. These units are being established to bridge the gap between rural and urban healthcare access. The vision of PM-ABHIM is to create a Community Health Centre (CHC)/ Block Primary Health Centre (PHC)/ Sub District Hospital as the Block Headquarter (HQ), which will serve as a hub for referral centre from the Sub Health Centres and PHCs of every block. BPHUs will be situated at blocks and will operate as decentralized centres for healthcare. The components of BPHU will be the

1. Block Public Health unit/Facility (PHC/CHC/SDH)
2. a Block Public Health Laboratory, and
3. a Block HMIS Cell.⁷

The Fifteen Finance Commission: Reinforcing Healthcare Investment:

The Fifteen Finance Commission is playing a crucial role in channeling financial resources towards healthcare development in all 28 States. By facilitating the distribution of funds between the central government and states, the commission ensures that individual states can tailor healthcare initiatives to their unique circumstances. This bespoke approach acknowledges the heterogeneity of health challenges across the nation, enabling states to craft targeted solutions.⁶

Synergy for a Resilient Healthcare Ecosystem

The convergence of the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission and the Fifteen Finance Commission yields a synergistic dynamic with far-reaching implications. The financial sustenance provided by the commission empowers states to implement the mission's objectives effectively. This collaboration exemplifies the need for a holistic healthcare model that resonates with local contexts while adhering to a broader national framework. National, State and District Level Committees will be set up for administration of Health Sector grants. Definitive role of State health department, State Panchayat department, Urban development department, rural and urban local bodies are also described. Details on State-wise and year-wise budget allocation is given for award period 2021-2022 to 2025-2026.^{6,7} The trajectory of these initiatives warrants continuous scrutiny to assess their trajectory and impact. Regular evaluations of the efficacy of Block Public Health Units and the allocation of funds guided by the Fifteen Finance Commission will guide future interventions. This iterative approach will ensure that the initiatives remain responsive to dynamic healthcare challenges.

Conclusion

The confluence of the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission and the Fifteen Finance Commission signifies a transformative juncture in India's healthcare narrative. The strategic establishment of Block Public Health Units, fortified by the financial support outlined by the commission, epitomizes a comprehensive approach

to healthcare enhancement. As India strides forward, these initiatives collectively epitomize the nation's commitment to equitable healthcare access and a healthier future for its populace.

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