



The National Rural Health Mission launched on 12th April 2005, seeks to provide effective, efficient and affordable health care to rural population in eighteen states with weak public health indicators.

One of the key components of the mission is creating a band of female health volunteers, appropriately named "Accredited Social Health Activist" (ASHA) in each village within the identified States. These ASHAs would act as a 'bridge' between the rural people and health service outlets and would play a central role, in achieving national health and population policy goals.

ASHAs are to be selected by community, out of residents within the community. They would work on voluntary basis, although compensation would be provided to them for specific activities and services. ASHA guidelines clearly lay down the accountability mechanisms. The induction training for ASHA would be completed in 23 days spread in five rounds over a period of 12 months to be followed by periodic re-training for about two days once every alternate month.

Equipping ASHAs with knowledge and skills required to perform the assigned roles will be crucial element in the programme. The training programme for