

A Legitimate Aspiration

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Abstract

Medical and Dental Council of India very recently made a provision for a single eligibility examination test named National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to medical and dental course. The Supreme Court of India has repealed the NEET dealing a jolt to uniform admission norms for medical, dental and postgraduate seats in medical and dental schools of the country.

Keywords: Admission criteria, dental education, medical education

Medical and Dental Council of India, 2010 with the approval of the Central Government amended the regulations on Graduate Medical Education Act 1997 and BDS Course Regulations Act 2007 to make provision for a single eligibility examination test named National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to medical and dental

course. Central Board of Secondary Education was notified to be the organization to conduct NEET. The NEET would give students an all-India ranking and a state ranking and students could be admitted either on the basis of their all-India or the state performance if they were to opt for the state quota. The state quota can be used by only those who meet the domicile criterion.

The Supreme Court of India, 2013 has repealed the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) dealing a jolt to uniform admission norms for medical, dental and postgraduate seats in medical and dental schools of the country. A three-Judge bench by two to one majority struck down the NEET as unconstitutional and ruled that the Medical Council of India (MCI) had no authority to issue notifications as given in 2010 to regulate admissions to 371 medical colleges offering 31,000 MBBS and 295 dental colleges offering 30,000 BDS as well as 25,000 postgraduate seats. (Times of India, 2014) Approximately more than 60% of medical and 95% of the dental colleges are private in India.

It was a controversial judgement that brought down the curtain on the tenure of the former Chief Justice of India Altamas Kabir the very same day. Justice Dave one among the jury dissented, saying the NEET was valid and it was good for the students and society at large. He hinted that he was rushed into the judgement by the imminent departure of the Chief Justice of India and that prior to the preparation of the draft judgement the three judges had no discussion due to the lack of time. (One India News, 2014) The judgement

permits private medical and dental colleges to frame their own admissions norms and fees structure.

The single window NEET was framed and implemented based on the patterns and success of the single exam conducted in United States and few other developed country. The NEET had been welcomed by all including the students, parents, medical teachers and general public at large. The rationale behind conducting one single test was to bring relief to the students who had to appear for multiple number of examinations which were conducted in different colleges at separate times making the students run to multiple cities and states. Equally important is the issue of difficulty in getting admissions to these private medical schools who set their own examination and admission models which are of exceedingly dubious nature and one that promotes a culture of beyond imagination immensely huge capitation fees. The deserving students with humble financial background have no option remaining apart from applying for the limited number of government colleges thereby reducing their chances of a medical seat. The picture gets even more alarming when we preview at the post graduation seats within the country.

A common test ensures that those who get admitted will have an aptitude for the subject. Also significant is the coinciding of many examination dates and the inability of students to appear for the same. The cost of appearing in several examinations and the associated reservation regarding the veracity of them poses a legitimate aspiration of a single test under the government's control. NEET could have completely scuttled the

money laundering mills and the associated black market within the private schools.

NEET is the need of this time and its reimplementation will be a positive step in a forward direction. The Supreme Court judgement gratifies the private management and offends the aspiring medical students and their parents. For stream lining professional exams common entrance test is an excellent idea worthy of implementation. *The government has challenged the scrapping of a common NEET for medical and dental programmes.* The Supreme Court has agreed to reconsider its judgment quashing single window common entrance test for government and private medical colleges. Hope better sense prevails on this occasion and the students deservingly obtain what legitimately is there right.

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