

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Association of Healthcare Providers in India (AHPI). AHPI is an organisation representing over 4000 leading hospitals of our country.

Few months ago I met one of my seniors who always dreamed of becoming a surgeon. I assumed that he became a surgeon after completing his surgical training program. I was shocked to hear that he was still trying to get a PG seat. He was shattered, depressed and broke. He was clear that with over a lakh people competing for a few hundred PG seats, he'd never get one. His main concern, however, was not a PG seat anymore, it was about the guilt of continuously having to ignore a family of three unmarried sisters and old, ailing parents. I still remember his parting statement, "I can't afford to live anymore; unfortunately I can't afford to die due to my family.." I haven't been able to sleep well after that meeting. It could be me or any one of us in that position three years from now, broke, shattered and nowhere to go.

One year compulsory rural posting has only added fuel to fire. My desire to do DM will take me nearly 13 years! I don't think my parents can support me for so long. It is impossible. I have to look at alternatives; maybe I am not destined to become a super specialist. If only rural posting becomes part of internship and PG courses, we will be exposed to rural healthcare at the appropriate time and we will not lose one precious year to start earning our living.

Today, I am writing to you about not just MD and MS seats. I am writing about the future of our nation's healthcare system. The way things are going, we can bet that when senior surgeons retire in the future, we'll be importing surgeons from other countries!

Like us Brazilian doctors were very proud of their medical education and health system. Unfortunately, they failed to train adequate number of medical specialists. Due to recent public uproar Brazilian resident agreed to import 6000 Cuban specialist doctors. Brazilian doctors had scorned at the quality of Cuban medical education. Now, they have to swallow their pride and work under Cuban doctors !

Civil society must understand that outstanding doctors who can perform miracles with their hand generally come from a deprived background with fire in belly to slog for 18 hours a day. Unfortunately, those children are not opting for a medical course any more due to uncertainty. In the past when you were an undergraduate student and if you worked hard you were guaranteed to pass the exam. However, today PG selection process has little to do with hard work. Due to limited number of seats, it has become a zero sum game. Someone is always going to work harder and longer than you to get one of those rare seats.

Please don't think we are the only ones suffering due to shortage of PG seats. Millions of poor people pay with their lives due to lack of PG seats for training. We will narrate one example. India has one of the highest incidences of MMR (Maternal Mortality Rate) in the

world. Every 10 minutes one young woman dies somewhere in India while giving birth to a baby. She is not a patient and pregnancy is not a disease!!!

Our government is spending billions of dollars to reduce MMR without great success. What people and policy makers fail to realize is that it's not due to lack of money that pregnant girls are dying, we simply don't have enough gynaecologists to conduct deliveries!

As a young medical student and now as a doctor I have only been observing increasing competition to secure a PG seat year on year. Situation has now reached a point of crisis. It is now or never. I can guarantee that no one can change the status quo apart from one person.

AND THAT PERSON IS YOU !!

Yes, you can rewrite the course of medical education in India. All we need to do is to get united and work towards a single objective EQUALISE UG AND PG SEATS. As of now, there are 45,600 UG seats and only 12,000 PG seats in clinical subjects of our interest. Equalizing UG and PG seats will definitely give us an interim relief. We understand that there are over 1.5 lakh doctors mugging MCQs in various coaching centers away from patients for over few years struggling to get those few seats. For your information, USA has 19,000 UG seats and 32,000 PG seats. This is the situation across the developed world. Never underestimate the capability of a medical student or a young doctor. World changing events never happened due to the power of individuals, they only happened due to the "Power of purpose". This must be done for the future of our great nation. No army of the world can guarantee security of a nation where every 10 minutes a young woman dies during childbirth, where over few lakh children die the day they are born.

We simply can't allow people to suffer and die in pain when lakhs of passionate doctors are waiting for a license from the authorities to heal them. Our purpose is so lofty that the whole nation will support us, politicians cutting across party lines will stand behind us; after all we are the future of our great nation.

Please spend 15 minutes a day on internet contacting your friends and relatives and ask them to endorse the "Save the Doctor" appeal available on the website www.savethedoctor.in. Please wear SAVE THE DOCTOR T-Shirt or the badge which is available online or at least wear a black ribbon on your white coat pocket. Please download the poster from 'Gear' section of the website and display it at prominent places in your campus.

Do you have to do it? I think you should, because, no one else is going to do it for you! Also remember THE WORLD IS NOT RUINED BY THE ACTIVITY OF BAD PEOPLE, BUT BY THE INACTIVITY OF GOOD PEOPLE. For too long a time we kept quiet silently suffering and allowed the situation to reach the crisis point.

In the end when you achieve your goal, never forget how you reached there. It is the tears and blessings of millions of poor and marginalized which gave you the strength to conquer

the world. Ultimately your greatness is not judged by getting what you want, but by what you did after that.

Good luck !

Let us Save the Doctor,

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