

'Create more seats without compromising on quality'

healthcare

PART-III

India is in an urgent need of doctors to attend to its rapidly increasing population but ironically the number of students taking up medicine as a career is falling each year. Youngsters are keeping away from the profession due to years of rigorous study and training, as against streams like finance, engineering and technology, which demand lesser time and ensure better earnings. Dr KK Talwar, former chairman, Board of Governors of the Medical Council of India, tells HT about how opportunities can be created in the field of medicine to make it an attractive career option for youngsters.

How can we create more specialist doctors?

Increasing PG seats is a solution but a lot of factors need to be considered before it can be done. India needs to expand medical education without compromis-

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ing on overall quality. Increasing seats means having well-trained faculty, better infrastructure and use of newer technologies. Also, private colleges would benefit more from increasing of PG seats as they currently have more PG seats than government colleges.

Are you highlighting the capitation fee versus merit debate?

Precisely. Capitation fee culture often mars merit; why should a meritorious student lose out on an opportunity to get a specialisation for lack of money? If PG seats are increased mindlessly, then it could affect meritorious students. We need to actually strengthen our

government-run colleges.

Are you in favour of compulsory rural posting for students after completing MBBS?

Yes. In fact, one year of rural posting post MBBS internship is ideal as it will not only benefit the rural population but will also expose students to the rural set-up. However, the government should ensure such areas have adequate infrastructure for doctors to work.

How can we deal with shortage of doctors in government hospitals?

Lack of funds and inadequate infrastructure are why government hospitals, health centres and dispensaries are short-staffed. Private sector offers better infrastructure and three to four times more money to a surgeon than what the government offers. India has to improve its public healthcare delivery system as well to ensure treatment reaches everyone who needs it.