



**DOCTORS UNITE:** Association of Healthcare Providers India state president Dr Naresh Shetty, National vice president Dr Alexander Thomas, Narayana Hrudayalaya CEO Dr Devi Prasad Shetty and others at the 'Save the Doctor' campaign in Bangalore on Monday. DH PHOTO

## Equalise number of UG, PG medical seats: Dr Shetty

**BANGALORE, DHNS:** The Indian Medical Association (IMA) and the Association of Healthcare Providers India (AHPPI) have written to the Ministry of Health demanding equalisation of medical seats in undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) courses.

At a press conference on Monday, AHPPI treasurer Dr Devi Shetty said the number of UG seats were likely to reach the 50,000 mark from the current 45,600, while there were only 12,000 PG seats that most doctors preferred to choose.

"It is a sad plight that nearly two lakh young doctors in our country, at the peak of their youth, spend quite a few years in coaching classes mugging multiple choice questions rather than treating patients and learning the art of healing. These doctors, under the right circumstances, can significantly improve the quality of healthcare. Every Indian household once dreamed of making their child a doctor, but today, it is considered as a costly and te-

dious process," he said.

As part of a 'Save the Doctor' campaign, the two associations, along with a large number of medical students, have sought that rural posting be made a part of internship and postgraduate training.

"Pursuing a PG course in any stream of medicine is essential for a doctor to become a specialist such as a gynaecologist, neurologist, surgeon, radiologist and so on. Today, India lacks specialist doctors due to the less number of PG seats in medical institutions. Though India has the largest number of medical institutions, the disparity in the number of seats allotted for PG and UG students and the mandatory rural posting are affecting young doctors and they end up spending 13 years merely studying. This also means that the future of our healthcare system is at a huge risk if things continue to remain the way they are. As senior specialist doctors/ surgeons retire, there will be a dearth of specialist doctors and surgeons in the country," Shetty said.

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Dr Narendra Saini, secretary-general, IMA, said, "The Indian Medical Association supports rural posting. But in the present situation, making it compulsory is not feasible because there is no structured posting in rural areas. Every PG student must do six months of rural posting as part of their course/internship."

"Every medical officer during his/her tenure is entitled to at least 4-5 promotions. For every promotion, one-year rural posting can be made mandatory."

The doctors referred to the World Health Statistics which has pointed out that India has 0.9 beds per 1,000 people, which is way below the global average beds of 2.9 beds.

Shetty added that recalling of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test was unfortunate. He said the Supreme Court's decision on scrapping the single entrance examination had demoralised students who did not want to attend multiple exams.