

01.11.2017

TIMES CITY

THE TIMES OF INDIA, MUMBAI  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2017

## Not enough posts for rural service, complain doctors

### But Over 1,000 Vacancies In Govt Hosps

Yogita Rao & Sumitra Deb Roy | TNN

**Mumbai:** While the state has passed a diktat that MBBS students won't be allotted PG seats unless they have completed their rural bond service, figures suggest the state may not be able to accommodate all students even if they apply to complete bonds. The state had to twice recall a similar decision taken earlier as it failed to allot postings to all doctors in public hospitals within a stipulated time.

The GR was issued by the medical education department on October 12 barring MBBS graduates from appearing for NEET-PG in January unless they have served the bond.

The state's 18 public medical colleges produce around 2,400 MBBS and 900-odd post-graduate students every year. While every candidate is supposed to fulfil the mandatory one-year bond soon after comple-

### IN A BIND OVER BONDS?

MEDICAL STUDENTS PASSING OUT ANNUALLY IN MAHARASHTRA

MBBS 2,400 PG 900



#### What Bond Service Means

Every student graduating from the 14 government or 5 BMC medical colleges have to serve for a year after MBBS, PG and super-specialty courses

**Public Health Department** (Includes rural, district hospital & primary health centres)

Vacancies 1,102

Vacancies In Medical Education Department (Includes 14 medical colleges in state) | 250 (approx)

Vacancies In BMC Medical Colleges & Peripheral Hospitals | 100 (approx)

#### What Govt Says

- It's the only way doctors can give back to society
- Students are informed about bond service in first year
- Students can pay indemnity money, a small amount compared to amount spent by state on their education
- Students can also apply in all-India quota seats for post-graduation

### Govt to retrospectively implement mandatory stint for medical grads

The Maharashtra government plans to retrospectively implement the mandatory rural service bond for MBBS students who took admission to the course in 2010, state medical education minister Girish Mahajan has said. The state government has made it mandatory for doctors in government medical colleges to work in rural areas for a year. Mahajan said a list would be compiled online of students completing their medical education, for their requirements in rural, semi-rural and tribal areas. "The state government is also working on shifting the entire allocation online. The plan is to implement the mandatory service for students who took the admission in 2010. Those who have not yet completed their mandatory service will be given the next two years to complete it," he said in a statement.

"The bond is necessary so that newly graduated students get an experience of working in rural areas. It will also benefit rural areas where medical services are required," the minister said.

**TIMES VIEW:** The excuse of medical graduates that there aren't enough posts to serve a one-year stint in a rural area is absurd, considering more than two-thirds of them flout their obligations. There are over a thousand junior-level posts in state-run hospitals currently vacant. Doctors passing out of government colleges must make good for the excellent subsidized education they receive by doing their bit in places with poor healthcare. Yes, the state needs to expand hospitals and provide more posts. But that should not stop the bulk of doctors from keeping their end of the bargain.

tion of their courses, it has now emerged the state can hardly accommodate more than 2,000 in any given year.

In another move, around 4,500 doctors face the possibility of losing their registration after being cornered by the state for not serving their bonds. The state's dual action has not gone down well with the community which blamed the government agencies for a flawed implementation of the bond scheme and claim they are be-

ing made to pay for the demand-supply mismatch. Many are contemplating legal recourse.

"No doctor is averse to serving the bond. The doctors have willingly signed the bond and anticipated working for a year in rural areas. The GR requires authorities to allot postings to doctors within a specified duration after declaration of their results. However, a majority of doctors did not receive any communication regarding postings and eventually went their

way," said Dr Deepak Chaturvedi, president of Being Doctors, an NGO.

Interestingly, the state on two occasions in 1996 and 2006 had issued similar GRs stating students won't qualify for PG seats if they have not served bonds. "The state had to recall both GRs as there were no posts available to accommodate the graduates. All candidates were eventually allowed to appear for post-graduate entrance examination without serving

bonds," said Dr Pravin Shingare, director, Directorate of Medical Education and Research.

But Amrut Bang of NGO NIRMAN, who has been a staunch supporter of doctors serving in rural areas, said there is a strange situation in Maharashtra, where there are lots of vacancies in government hospitals and primary health centres despite a large number of young medical graduates legally available for service every year. Numbers suggest over

1,100 posts of medical officers, which are mainly filled up by MBBS graduates, are currently vacant in the state.

Dr Satish Pawar, head of the Directorate of Health Service, said merely 500 medical graduates approach them for rural posting every year. "Out of the 2,500 undergraduate and post-graduate candidates that pass out, merely 500 come to us for bond service allotment. We don't know where the remaining 2,000 students go," he said.

He added of the 7,232 sanctioned posts, the department requires around 5,000 MBBS graduates to work in primary health centres, rural, district and sub-district hospitals.

Dean of KEM Hospital Dr Avinash Supe said last year 275 MBBS graduates joined bond service. "Every year we get around 50% bond candidates of what we ask from DMER. But more candidates are willing to join BMC hospitals due to steps by the government," he said.