

# NMC BILL 2019: A GAME CHANGER FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION?

In an attempt to reform India's current medical educational system, the Government of India, in an unprecedented move, has decided to replace the Indian Medical Council Act (1956) with the newly approved National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill, 2019. NMC will be a central authority that will be responsible for regulating medical education in the country.

The bill aims to address several concerns including medical education, provide strategies to address shortage of trained doctors and medical care givers and restructure the medical regulatory authority of the country that clearly defines jurisdiction and responsibilities. The bill also aims to eliminate all corruption in medical regulatory bodies. But despite of all these, the bill has drawn protests from doctors across the nation.

While the National Medical Commission Bill aims has brought about some major reforms in medical education and aims at improving quality of education and reduce the shortage of doctors in the country, it is being criticized by the majority of medical fraternity and appreciated by some.

Reacting to the government's move, **Dr H Sudarshan Ballal, President, NATHEALTH** said "Medical education in India needs continuous reforms and the NMC Bill was the first step in that direction. The Bill has now got Parliament's approval and we



hope to achieve better coverage and health outcomes mainly in the rural and semi-rural areas where there has been a huge dearth of medical doctors by effectively utilizing health care professionals, other than doctors in primary and preventive health care. Though this has met with some resistance from medical bodies it is certainly worth a fair trial."

He further said, "The government's move to create the National Medical Commission (NMC) is progressive. It will bring in transparency, accountability and quality in the governance of medical education in the country. This will reduce the burden on students by not only increasing the



number of medical seats but will also reduce cost of medical education to many students. It will also ensure uniformity of standards for all doctors coming out of the medical colleges. The NMC will establish a robust system that improves access to quality and affordable medical education and also ensure availability of adequate and high quality medical professionals in all parts of the country. This bill will also free the medical colleges from the license raj without affecting the standards. All in all a landmark bill by the government."

Sharing her thoughts **Dr Kanika Chandra, Associate Consultant, Department of preventive health & wellness, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital** said "Change is inevitable we agree, but not the way government is planning



for doctors. There is not an iota of doubt that the road to becoming a doctor is one of the toughest. Graduating itself means not much in this day and age, what further is required is specializing and superspecialising. The objective of the Government to bring in NMC bill is to bring in transparency to this noble profession which in the recent past has been in murky situations (read scams like vyapam, large capitations fees, back door entries to medical colleges etc). We appreciate the efforts being made for cleaning up the profession in certain aspects and there are certain loop holes that the government of India must definitely look into in order to address the apprehensions of protesting doctors at large."

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