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NMCâ??s decision to reduce number of non-MBBS posts sparks fear of job losses

08 December 2020 | News

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The National Medical Commission (NMC) recent decision to reduce the number of posts for non-MBBS teachers in medical institutions has sparked fear of job losses among currently employed teachers. According to the website of the Medical Council of India (MCI), which was recently replaced by NMC, in 2017, around 13% of the teaching faculty in medical colleges are 'non-medical' degree holders.

In a statement protesting this decision by the NMC, Dr Sridhar Rao, President, National MSc Medical Teachers' Association (NMMTA) pointed out that in the “Minimum Requirements for MBBS Admission Regulations 2020” released by the newly established medical education regulator last month, the permissible intake of non-medical faculty has come down from 30% to 15% in anatomy and physiology, from 50% to 15% in biochemistry, and from 30% to 0% in microbiology and pharmacology.

Dr Rao said, “India's clinical scientists with medical MSc postgraduate degrees are now facing an existential crisis of the highest magnitude. A hostile MCI turned NMC and an indifferent government that is rife with policy paralysis are making matters worse. Those pursuing medical MSc courses in medical colleges are trained and skilled to render their services as consultants in diagnostic laboratories, teachers in the non-clinical disciplines of the medical curriculum and scientists in research establishments.”

The teachers have accused the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) of not displaying any interest in dealing with the crisis being faced by the non-MBBS teachers. NMMTA said, “This policy paralysis has existed since several decades with no interest among successive governments to address the issue.” It added, “The medical colleges and universities that have conducted these courses for years/decades and profited from such courses have never stood up for their alumni and have not supported the roles played by the medical MSc person,” and pointed out that the present and future of the clinical scientists with medical MSc qualifications in teaching, laboratory diagnostics and research are uncertain.

"We are wrongly called non-medical teachers; we have been awarded Medical MSc degrees under the faculty of Medicine by the health universities", said Arjun Maitra, General Secretary, NMMTA.

"Instead of shunting us out, there must be more efforts to train and integrate us. We can consult the clinical colleagues for inputs on the horizontal and vertical integrations,” added Dr Rao.