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New docs' body to fight denial of license renewal


Being Doctors to approach MMC, HC against govt.'s move to penalise doctors who avoid rural service

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Being Doctors, a newly formed doctors body, will take on the State government for refusing to renew registrations of doctors who haven't served their bond of rural service. According to the Directorate of Medical Education and Research (DMER), nearly 4,000 doctors across the State have not served their bonds at various levels, ranging from MBBS and post-graduation to super-speciality degree holders.

City-based physician Dr. Deepak Chaturvedi, president of Being Doctors, said they are in the process of filing a legal appeal with the Maharashtra Medical Council, and will also approach the High Court. "The picture that the government is presenting is not correct. It's not that doctors don't want to serve the bond; the government has, time and again, failed to give postings to doctors who opted to serve the bonds."

He said they want the court to form a committee to work out a permanent solution. "The government can't wake up suddenly and say they will not renew licences." Being Doctors, with

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DR. DEEPAK CHATURVEDI
President, Being Doctors

around 500 members, was formed only after the government threat to stop renewing registrations.

As government-run medical colleges offer subsidised education, doctors are expected to serve a mandatory one-year posting in rural areas after completing the four-and-a-half-year MBBS course and a year-long internship. However, if the student plans to study further, he or she can serve two years in rural areas after post-graduation, or three years after a super-specialisation degree.

However, DMER officials said most doctors have been evading the bond on the pretext of preparing for further studies, and often join private hospitals or start their own setups. To curb this, the government has introduced a fine of ₹10 lakh for those who evade the bond after MBBS, ₹50 lakh for post-graduates and ₹2 crore for super-specialisation degree holders. Till

2010, fines were ₹1 lakh, ₹5 lakh and ₹10 lakh respectively. The amount was revised in 2012 to exert pressure on doctors to serve their rural bond. When nothing worked, the government finally decided to stop renewing registrations, so that doctors cannot practice legally. The government has also tried to attach properties of doctors to recover the bond money.

2010 is cut-off year

The government is planning to retrospectively implement the mandatory rural service bond for MBBS students who joined the course in 2010, State Medical Education Minister Girish Mahajan said. He said an online list of students completing their medical education would be compiled for their requirements in rural, semi-rural and tribal areas.

"The State government is also working on shifting the allocation of rural areas to students online. The plan is to implement the mandatory service for students who took admission in 2010. Those who are yet to complete mandatory service will be given the next two years to do so," he said in a statement. — With PTI inputs