

## Indian medical aspirants find Belarus alluring

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■ R. RAVIKANTH REDDY

When the World Health Organisation (WHO) prescribes the doctor-patient ratio to be at 1:250, Belarus stands far ahead with a ratio of 1:200 indicating the quality of medical facilities. So, when an opportunity to study medicine in such a space comes, and that too at a cost of ₹21 lakh for the six-year course - much lower than what is collected by the private medical colleges here - it certainly looks attractive.

"Medical education in Belarus is not just 1/3rd of the cost incurred in India but also puts up a unique brand for high quality education in Europe," said Dr. Ihar Paltsau, vice-dean of Gomel State Medical University, Belarus,

in an interaction. The European country, very close to the former Soviet Union, implements the European system of education and maintains prescribed standards.

Dr. Paltsau said, right since the Soviet era, Belarus has been a preferred place for Indian students due to its high standards of teaching as well as the recognition awarded by the Medical Council of India in the Part II of Third Schedule to the Act. So far, about thousand Indian students have graduated from the medical universities of Belarus.

A middle class that aspires to see a doctor in their family has little options in India with 14 lakh students competing for 61,000 medical seats. And with B category



Gomel State Medical University, Belarus.

seats collecting ₹11 to 15 lakh per annum the options are almost closed. So countries in former Soviet Unions have been the favourite destinations, agrees Rajaram V of Medico Abroad.

What separates Belarus is the high literacy rate of 99.7%, human development index ranking at 53rd position among 187 countries, 14 noble prize award winners

and more than 30,000 professor rank teaching faculty, higher education is sought after and 10,700 foreign students going to Belarus only indicate it.

Dr. Paltsau says the Gomel State Medical University established in the year 1990 is located in Gomel, the second largest city. With 5 campus buildings, 36 departments, 25 specialities, 370 profes-

sors & lecturers and 18 large clinics having 5000-bed fund, one can expect a high grade medical education. In fact, in 2010, the university achieved ISO 9001:2008 certification for international quality.

About 540 foreign students from 26 countries pursue medical education in the varsity where Indian students are about 200.