

Courts clear way for admissions to Chinese medical varsities

By Arun K Bhandari

Beijing, Sep 18 (UNI) A Delhi High Court order and Andhra Pradesh High Court verdict, in favour of Indian students seeking admission to Chinese medical universities, have brought cheer all around as Damocles' sword no longer hangs over youngsters' ambitions to don the doctor's coat.

The Medical Council of India's sudden decision derecognizing Chinese medical degrees, had proved a "speed breaker" to the rush of Indians wishing to realize higher education goals in China and return home to mould careers.

More than 6,000 Indians are studying in 20 Chinese medical institutions.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman told UNI that the outcome testifies the courts' impartiality and sanctity. "The wrong has now been undone," he said while pointing out that long-awaited justice had been delivered.

Exuding confidence that the admission process of Indians to Chinese medical colleges would restart soon, putting an end to a three-month-long uncertainty, he made it clear that -- as a goodwill gesture -- admissions might be allowed to these varsities until end of this month. "The students should hurry up in obtaining eligibility certificates from MCI."

About 2,000-3,000 students annually seek admission to various Chinese medical institutions from southern India, particularly Andhra Pradesh. Most of them belong to the middle class and have been availing education loans.

Will the confidence of students and teachers be restored after the High Court verdict? "What about the lost prospects of the huge number of students who dropped off or diverted their careers? More importantly, will the banks begin sanctioning education loans for China's MBBS course," asks a vexed parent.

Hyderabad-based firm 'Medico Abroad' Chief Executive V R Ram told UNI, "one of the students -- a Banjara tribal named R Sharda -- has already received an eligibility certificate on September 15. She is the first to be thus benefited after the MCI controversy erupted in June. Banks need not worry now (about advancing education loans). About five vexed parents approach me daily."

The next hearing of the Delhi High Court is on September 27.

Chinese medical colleges have been an attractive viable option, with very low tuition fees, for Indians who fail to gain admission to their country's institutions.

The MCI recently imposed restrictions on admissions to Chinese universities and derecognized degrees in the wake of complaints by some students about deficient infrastructure and on the report of the then Indian ambassador to China, based on complaints of non-availability of properly qualified English-speaking lecturers in some Chinese colleges.

The introduction of English as a medium of instruction and opening of varsities for international students since 2004 triggered the rush from India.

The turnout from Indian institutions is very low and will be unable to meet a shortfall, therefore the move by foreign medical institutions to admit Indians will help ease the situation to a considerable extent. A spokesman quotes a study saying that international standards place the doctor to patient ratio at 1:250, whereas it is 1:3,500 in India.

"Our institutions are recognized by WHO, which indicates the high quality education we are offering," the spokesman claims.

Besides, several Chinese institutions are much better equipped than most Indian medical colleges, many of whom allegedly secured recognition on considerations other than merit. Chinese authorities are also attempting to secure the best faculty from across the world, including India.

While maintaining high global standards in medical education -- this attracts students from as many as 50 countries -- the course is affordable in China, costing about Rs 10 lakh inclusive of tuition fee, hostel fee and living expenses against Rs 30 lakh for a management seat in India.

The fee alone is Rs 1.38 lakh in China and Ukraine, Rs 1.13 lakh in Russia as against Rs 2.76 lakh in India.

Besides the fee package, admission to Chinese varsities is simple and smooth coupled with proper guidance and an easy visa procedure. Yet another advantage is that China is culturally and climatically similar to India.