

Additional weightage for doctors with rural service

For postgraduate admissions from next academic year

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: An additional weightage of 10 per cent for each year of rural service will be given to doctors applying for postgraduate entrance examinations from the next academic year.

Announcing this here at a press conference, Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad

said this weightage will be subject to a maximum of 30 per cent for three years, though a doctor could serve in rural areas for as many years as he chose to after completing the internship.

Similarly, 50 per cent of seats in postgraduate diploma courses have also been reserved for medical officers in government service who have served for at least three years

in remote and inaccessible areas.

"This will be a major incentive for doctors and paramedical staff to serve in the rural areas," Mr. Azad said.

In order to facilitate the increase in the number of medical specialists, the government has also decided to increase the enrolment of postgraduate students. The existing 1:1 ratio will be enhanced in broad specialities for professor and in super specialities to 1:2.

The rise in the number of postgraduate doctors will au-

tomatically increase the number of teachers due to the multiplier effect. Thus, without substantive additional resource and infrastructure requirement, the number of postgraduate specialists would dramatically increase annually by almost 5,000 from the existing 13,000.

Further, Mr. Azad said land requirement for setting up medical colleges was also being relaxed from the current 25 acres to 20 acres throughout the country. However, with respect to hill States,

northeastern States, Empowered Action Group (EAG) States under the National Rural Health Mission and Union Territories of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, two parcels of land separated by a distance of not more than 10 km will be allowed.

Due to non-availability of land in the metropolitan and A grade cities, medical colleges could have multi-storied buildings with the required floor area. In such cases the land requirement would be

10 acres instead of 20 acres, the Minister said.

State governments will also be allowed to enter into private partnerships to set up medical colleges where district hospitals can be used as public components. Now, companies registered under the Companies Act will also be allowed to establish medical colleges as against the existing rules that allowed only universities, autonomous bodies, registered societies and religious and charitable trusts to establish medical institutions, Mr. Azad said.