



# SC lets 10 OCIs attend MBBS/BDS counselling in all categories

## Their admission subject to be final outcome of case: Apex Court

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed 10 Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs) to participate in counselling to be organised by Karnataka on August 17 for admission to MBBS/BDS seats in all categories.

A three-judge bench presided over by Justice Dipak Misra passed an interim order, providing relief to candidates who challenged the High Court's order of July 7. The HC had declared OCI card-holders who cleared NEET- 2017 eligible for admission to various categories other than government

seats. The court took into consideration the policy adopted by Delhi, Maharashtra, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and other states for granting them permission.

"It is directed that the petitioners, who are ten in number, are permitted to participate in the second counseling which is going to be held on August 17. We are sure the State of Karnataka shall not deviate to follow the order in letter and spirit," the bench, also comprising Justices Amitava Roy and A M Khanwilkar, said in its order.

"No High Court shall entertain any prayer of any candidate who had not approached

the court," the bench added.

Additional Solicitor General P S Narasimha, appearing for the union government, said the Centre had ended the discrimination between NRIs, OCIs and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs). Once the candidates belonging to these categories cleared NEET, they were entitled for admission to only 15% seats in all-India quota, he said.

Narasimha, however, said the states were free to formulate their own rules in terms of the seats in other categories, including government seats.

Senior advocate Basava Prabhu Patil, representing Karnataka, said OCI candidates

cannot be granted admission in government seats. Out of 10 petitioners, only nine are OCI cardholders. They have already participated in counselling and have been allotted seats. Seven of them had already accepted the seats, he said. "If these candidates are allowed admission in government seats, it would create chaos. The only difference for them is in terms of fees," he said.

Senior advocate Rajeev Dhawan, representing the petitioners, submitted that OCI candidates must have access to all category of seats. He said the petitioners participated in the previous counselling as

they did not have any choice.

The court put the special leave petition filed by the candidates for consideration on November 7 to adjudicate on the principle to be adopted by states for admission of OCI cardholders.

In the instant case, the court said the petitioners have to satisfy the eligibility criteria for participation in counselling. It, however, clarified no other candidates from OCI category would be granted the benefit of the order. The court said the admission of the 10 candidates would be subject to final outcome of the case.

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