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Barred from NEET, open school students explore legal option

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BENGALURU: The decision of the Medical Council of India (MCI) to bar students of open schools from writing the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to MBBS, BDS and AYUSH courses will affect several students in Karnataka.

According to an official at the regional centre of National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) in Bengaluru, about 1,500 candidates from Kar-

nataka have registered themselves for the class 12 examination to be held in April 2018. While all the 1,500 will not be writing the NEET exam, those who intend to do so are panicking about the last-minute bar.

Parvatharaj from Mangaluru chose NIOS for his son because he thought it would give him more time to prepare for NEET.

But the MCI decision has left Parvatharaj and his son shattered and disappointed. "He has dedicated two years of his life to prepare for NEET. Now

he does not have time even to prepare for engineering exams," Parvatharaj said.

Every day is stressful as the March 9 deadline to register for NEET draws closer.

"I am thinking of approaching the court in Karnataka or joining other parents who plan to file a petition in Delhi," Parvatharaj said.

A parent from Puttur said he chose the open school route for his daughter since as a central government employee, he was expecting to be transferred to a different state. "If they had an-

nounced it in 2015, I would not have opted for open school. My daughter has worked hard and now if they say that she is not allowed to write, what can we do?" the parent sought to know.

Students use NCERT textbooks and they have practical lab sessions conducted at the study centre assigned to them so that they are on a par with candidates from other boards, he said. He too is looking at legal options.

The HRD minister Prakash Javadekar had met the Union health minister urging a rever-

sal of the decision. However, when the notification regarding the exam was issued by CBSE, there was no change in the status of open schools.

Parents say that the state government should intervene and push for allowing open school students to write NEET. However, state minister for medical education Dr Sharanprakash Patil said that the state government had not been consulted when this decision was made and there was not much it could do.

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