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Govt not inclined to back TN bills on NEET

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NEW DELHI: The Centre is in no mood to back the two Tamil Nadu Bills exempting students from the state from appearing for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) to get admission into medical and dental colleges in the state.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is understood to have indicated to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami that the state should consider other ways to help the students clear the NEET, as mandated by the judgement of the Supreme Court.

One of the suggestions

mooted by the prime minister was that the state government could consider organising special coaching facilities for students from the weaker sections of the society.

This was in response to the Palaniswami's argument that the state law should get the Centre's support, as bulk of students appearing for the examination come from rural areas, and due to strained economic conditions, they do not have access to coaching classes to equip themselves for the examination.

The Centre's view was that the apex court judgement presented an opportunity to "clean up" the system of admission by the states.

Besides, any state law would not stand scrutiny if it was challenged in the apex Court.

In 2016, the Supreme Court mandated a uniform entrance test for admission to medical courses, saying the examination will be conducted by the Central Board of School Education for undergraduate course and by the National Board of Examinations for postgraduate courses.

Although state-run institutions were exempted from the examination last year, the apex court said it would be mandatory for 2017.

Claiming that Tamil Nadu has a fair and transparent medical admission policy, Palaniswami had urged Modi

to approve the two bills.

Palaniswami also pointed out that various political parties in Tamil Nadu were seeking the Centre's nod and the presidential assent for the two bills passed unanimously in the state Assembly seeking to exempt Tamil Nadu from the purview of the NEET.

He said the state had taken the decision to continue the present procedure of admissions to MBBS and BDS courses on the basis of the marks obtained in the higher secondary examination (Class XII).

For the post graduate admissions, the state will admit students based on an entrance examination.

DH News Service



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Dr. M.R. Jayaram
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Pvt research plays down risk from mobiles: Study

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New Delhi: Is radiation from mobile phones harmful? Multiple studies globally have not conclusively reached an answer. But an analysis by AIIMS of all research on the subject has found an interesting pattern — government funded studies show increased risk of brain tumour on long-term exposure to mobile phone radiation while industry-funded research tends to underestimate the risk.

“We found that industry-funded studies are not of good quality and tend to underestimate the risk. Government funded studies show in-

PHONE TROUBLE

- **1.33 times higher risk of brain tumour due to mobile use**, according to average of all studies
- Mixed-funded (govt, industry, mobile makers) research says **risk much lower, at 1.05 times**
- Studies funded by phone industry and mixed sources have **low quality score of 5-6**
- Score of govt-funded research **higher at 7-8**

creased risk of brain tumour on long-term exposure,” said Dr Kameshwar Prasad, head of neurology at AIIMS, who is lead author of the study.

► **Brain tumour risk, P 12**

'Long cellphone use ups brain tumour risk'

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Dr Prasad said, based on studies on long-term use of mobile phone (10 years or longer or more than 1,640 hours), it can be said that such exposure increases the risk of brain tumour by 1.33 times. In other words, if 100 people suffer from brain tumour, factoring in long-term mobile radiation exposure increases the number to 133.

The AIIMS professor and his team of neurologists recently analysed results of 22 case-controlled studies conducted globally on 48,452 participants from 1966 to 2016 that reported the results for the risk of brain tumour.

Of this, 10 were funded by government, seven had mixed-funding from phone industry, government and mobile manufacturers and at least three studies were solely funded by the phone industry. Results of this analysis, which has been

published in journal Neurological Sciences, states that while government funded studies have a quality score of 7 or 8, all studies by phone industry and mixed sources have a score of 5 or 6.

AIIMS research shows studies with higher quality score show a trend towards harm, while lower quality score studies show a trend towards protection. "It is baffling how certain studies even propound that mobile phone use can protect against brain tumour," said a researcher.

Dr Prasad said the association between mobile phone use and the risk of brain tumour is beset with controversies. The AIIMS paper provides an insight into the underlying reasons for this. "Our aim is not to denigrate the technology that has revolutionised the way we communicate. We want people to avoid non-essential use to reduce the risk of health hazards," he added.