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Over 100 in-service doctors vie for 25 PG diploma seats

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Bengaluru: Doctors in Karnataka may have cheered the number of postgraduate medical degree and diploma seats going up to 2,345. But this came at the cost of PG diploma courses getting scrapped, hurting doctors in government service who have 50% reservation.

Of the 720 PG diploma seats, 180 were available for in-service doctors earlier, but it shrank to 100 as several PG diploma courses were upgraded to degree courses. Out of these 100 seats, 50% go to all-India quota. Of the remaining 50 seats, 50% is kept aside as in-service reservation quota. This means, 25 seats are kept for doctors in the state and central government posts with a minimum of three-year experience.

There are more than 100 qualified doctors with three years of continuous experience waiting to pursue higher studies and seek expertise in specialties and return to government service.

In March 2018, the Supreme Court had quashed the in-service quota in PG medi-

Efforts to fill specialist posts go in vain

In Karnataka, there are 1,019 specialist posts vacant in medical services. Efforts of the health department to fill up these posts through bidding have turned out to be futile.

Doctors in government services and working in remote areas find it difficult to deliver public health services and prepare for the NEET examination at the same time. "Fresh medical graduates take up coaching classes and prepare for the entrance exam, where as the doctors in government service have to manage patient care, implement

national health programmes, take care of administrative work, perform autopsies, attend to medico-legal cases and hence they cannot easily compete with fresh graduates. Those who are selected through PG NEET hardly come to work in rural areas or in government service. The only way to solve the problem of lack of specialists is to encourage in-service doctors to take up higher education," said Dr Sreenivas Gulur, president, Karnataka Government Medical Officers' Association (KGMOA).

cal degree courses and currently there is in-service quota reservation only for PG diploma courses.

On March 14, the medical education department wrote to the Medical Council of India (MCI) seeking retention of the earlier system of quota for government medical officers in PG degree courses too. The letter from Jawaid Akhtar, principal secretary, medical education, explained the present sy-

stem of incentive is not adequate to help doctors in government service and those working in remote rural areas.

"Though the MCI has retained the 50% quota with respect to postgraduate diploma courses from 2018-19, many have been upgraded to PG degree courses. Hence, the provision has become redundant," said the letter. Akhtar was not available for comments.