



Online Newspaper Clipping Service
Dtd- Tuesday, 9th, April- 2019

Page No.09

THE NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS

One medical college in every district in 5 years

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THE Bhartiya Janata Party seems to have chosen a tall target of opening one medical college or postgraduate college per district in India by 2024 in its manifesto released on Monday.

At present, there are nearly 470 medical colleges in the country— both government and private — but a large number of these colleges are concentrated in southern states and Maharashtra with six states accounting for over half the medical colleges in the country.

The ruling party, in the manifesto, claimed that it has successfully established a medical college in every third parliamentary constituency and will now set up a medical college or post-graduate college in each district through public or private participation in next five years.

“To start with 75 such medical colleges will be set up by 2022,” the manifesto read. The party also vowed to increase the doctor population ratio which currently

stands at 0.7: 1000 for India against WHO recommendation of 1:1000.

Public health experts meanwhile said that if the saffron party was looking to establish more medical colleges, it must be welcomed but cautioned against allowing mushrooming of private medical colleges. “In the lightly regulated medical education sector, it could be terrible if only private medical colleges are permitted to be opened every-

where and it should be done only as a gap-filling measure to ensure the quality of doctors being produced,” said Oommen C Kurian, a health policy expert. “However, as the manifesto is completely silent on government health expenditure it looks inevitable that major investment in the medical education sector could come from the private sector.”

On eliminating tuberculosis, the BJP said that the disease is mainly found among the poor and malnourished. The party will roll out a special mission to eliminate TB from India by 2025.

