



REGIONAL COMMITTEE

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IMPORTANCE OF POST-GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION WITH REFERENCE
TO THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND SPECIALISTS

(Paper Submitted by the Government of India)

Medical education in India began about the middle of the 19th Century with the opening of medical colleges at Calcutta and Madras in 1835, at Bombay in 1845 and at Lahore (now in West Pakistan) in 1860. Since then, the development and expansion of medical colleges have increased manifold.

In 1946 there were only 19 medical colleges and 19 medical schools. By 1947 there were 25 medical colleges, with 1 987 annual admissions to the M.B.B.S. Degree courses. This number swelled to 66 medical colleges and 6 846 admissions by 1961, and by the end of 1962 there were 71 medical colleges with admissions exceeding 7 000. Side by side with the establishment of new medical colleges was the expansion of existing ones, which scheme, started in the Second Five-Year Plan period, is continued in the Third Plan. It is estimated that by the end of the Third Five-Year Plan there will be about 80 medical colleges with 10 000 admissions.

This rapid expansion in the realm of medical education in a decade and a half has led to a terrific strain on the teachers, resulting in a demand for more and more teachers both at undergraduate and post-graduate level. Specialists are also needed for manning the various medical colleges and hospitals at headquarters, district and rural levels.

It is not possible to cope with this great demand for teachers and specialists. The deficiency in 44 undergraduate medical colleges in India, studied in 1962, is serious both in clinical and non-clinical subjects. In 1962, the number of sanctioned strength for clinical teachers was 2 299, whereas the actual number was 1 853, giving a deficiency of 446. Similarly, at the same time, in non-clinical subjects the sanctioned strength was 1 767 and the actual number in position was 1 365, with a deficiency of 402. The Post-graduate Medical Education Assessment Committee, 1959-1961, estimated a staff deficiency of about 2 000 teachers in medical colleges. The Post-graduate Committee also estimated that the country required 17 000 specialists.

India is faced with the tremendous problem of getting medical men for all its services. Working out a ratio less than the one proposed by WHO for each category of medical personnel, the requirements for India alone are 146 211 general practitioners, 21 830 general surgeons, 14 596 E.N.T. surgeons, and so on. Briefly, we want 242 409 doctors to man our services. These are India's needs, and those of the rest of the South-East Asia Region must be proportionate.

To meet these heavy demands for teachers for undergraduate and post-graduate requirements, special departments were upgraded during the First and Second Five-Year Plans periods, as recommended by a Committee (1948/49) with Dr Mudaliar as the Chairman. Government of India fellowships amounting to Rs.200 per month are given to post-graduates for the duration of the post-graduate course.

To augment further post-graduate training, selected hospitals in Delhi with adequate facilities were brought into a co-ordinated federation for post-graduate studies. In 1959, training facilities were started, and later on, a "300" Stipends Scheme, to give the training campaign further momentum, was started for such students as were undergoing training in various specialties. In addition, the Government of India has agreed to assist State Governments in developing a number of departments (the selection being left to the discretion of the State Governments concerned). Twenty-one such departments are intended to be developed, with financial assistance from the Government of India during the Third Five-Year Plan. The All-India Institute of Medical Sciences, the Institute of Post-graduate Medical Education and Research, with S.S.K.M. Hospital, Calcutta, and the Post-graduate Institute for Medical Education and Research at Chandigarh are some of the institutions more recently developed for post-graduate medical education, training and research.

Despite the efforts made by the Government of India to bridge the gap between demand and supply of teachers and specialists, it is apparent that this demand can better be met if international agencies come forward to help meet the deficiencies of teachers and specialists by providing competent services, fellowships and equipment to set up broad training programmes in this country. This is a matter of great urgency, as the future of the medical care and medical educational programme depends upon post-graduate institutions.