

Editorial

Updated data displayed on the web of Dental Council of India has some interesting figures. I have been following the statistics since last 5 years. One may wonder as to what this data has to do with the Journal of Orofacial Research! This issue of dental education in India is a burning issue among the innumerable young dental graduates.

The present data shows that there were 292 colleges last year and seven new dental colleges have been established from 2012 to 2013. Now, there are 299 colleges. Combined admission strength earlier was 23,810 and it is now 24,630, an increase of 820.

One hundred and sixty-nine institutions were conducting MDS courses from 2011 to 2012 with a total annual intake of 3,363. Whereas 195 institutions are permitted to conduct MDS course from 2012 to 2013 with total annual intake of 4,477. Thus, additional 1,114 seats are made available in 26 additional colleges this year.

There is substantial increase in MDS seats and dental colleges. The figures may appear good and encouraging for few but bad for few others. It is good for those who view them as progress in dental education and awareness of dental care in India and availability of increased avenues for the aspiring students.

On the other hand, others may feel the growth as growing beyond saturation point leading to sharp decline in the standards and growth in unemployment.

There is acute need to control and channelize the unplanned growth. I have no supportive study/data to say that 'India has exceeded the requirement of general dental graduates and shortage of postgraduates degree holders'. It appears that, statistically, we are far behind the target but ground level facts show saturation of dental manpower.

One solution, I feel, may be that if Central Government brings an ordinance or parliamentary Act to put a ceiling on maximum admission strength in BDS to 50 in all old existing and new colleges in future. The quality of training and teaching will definitely improve. The problems of shortage of teaching faculty, infrastructure and clinical materials will also be taken care of. This step will drastically reduce BDS seats by 10,000 per annum. Then, statistically about 5,000 seats in MDS will be available for about 15,000 dental graduates in the years to come. It means that the competition ratio will be down to 3:1 or little more, considering the reservation policies.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'NS Yadav', written in a cursive style.

NS Yadav
Editor-in-Chief