

Recruitment and permanent commissioning of women officers

*102. SHRIMATI JHARNA DAS BAIDYA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that army is likely to recruit more than 200 women and grant them permanent commission in various branches;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that this will end the grievances of women officers who have to quit the army after 15 years of services as Short Service Commission officers; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR): (a) to (d) Women are inducted as Short Service Commissioned Officers (SSCOs) along with men SSCOs in Army with a tenure of upto 14 years within the overall authorized strength of the officers' cadre. Women SSCOs are presently eligible for consideration for grant of permanent commission along with Men SSCOs in specific Branches in the three Services viz. Judge Advocate General (JAG) and Army Education Corps (AEC) of Army and their corresponding branches in Navy and Air Force; Naval constructor in Navy and Accounts, Technical, Administration, Logistics and Meteorology Branches in Air Force.

Implementation of decision on NEET

*103. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has received any representation from any State regarding deferment of implementation of National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for getting admissions into medicine courses in the States, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) what are the objections raised by different States in the meeting held recently with regard to implementation of NEET across the country and the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA): (a) to (c) Hon'ble Supreme Court *vide* its orders dated 28th April and 9th May 2016 in WP No. 261/2016 directed that NEET shall come into effect immediately for UG admission. However, some State Governments indicated that it would be in the larger interest of the students' community across the country to hold NEET for undergraduate

admission from the year 2017-18 onwards instead of 2016-17 due to the following reasons:

- (i) State Level examinations for admissions have already been conducted and students will have to appear for a second examination;
- (ii) State examinations are also conducted in regional languages. It is not appropriate to make all students to take examination in Hindi and English, particularly when only two months are left for NEET Phase-II examination; and
- (iii) The syllabi for the State level examinations are different from the AIPMT, which is going to be the basis for NEET [Phase-II] examination.

In the meeting held with State Health Ministers on 16th May, 2016, the State of Tamil Nadu informed that they have discontinued common entrance examinations as it favours the urban students. Admission to medical/dental colleges in the State is instead granted on the basis of Class XII marks. Andhra Pradesh informed that they grant admission through merit prepared on the basis of State Exam (75%) and Class XIIth Exam (25%). The States of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana also raised the issue of regional language, variable State Board syllabi and their special status under Article 371 D of the Constitution.

The Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Ordinance, 2016 and the Dentists (Amendment) Ordinance, 2016 were promulgated on 24th May, 2016 to amend the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 and Dentists Act, 1948 respectively to provide for a Uniform Entrance Examination for Undergraduate and Post Graduate admissions with the option to the States to fill up the Under Graduate seats for 2016-17 in respect of State Quota seats as per existing arrangement or by adopting NEET. This exception does not apply to management quota seats of private medical colleges which shall fill up the Under Graduate seats only on the basis of NEET.

Standardising costs of healthcare

*104. SHRI SANJIV KUMAR: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) what steps are being taken to check the exorbitant costs of healthcare in private hospitals in India;
- (b) whether Government is working towards standardising cost of healthcare so that poor can also afford quality healthcare at a reasonable cost; and
- (c) what steps are being taken by Government to regulate the cost of essential life saving drugs?