Shortage of Doctors

The current doctor-population ratio in the country is estimated to be around 1:2000. Though, there are no specific standards/norms which prescribes doctor-population ratio, the High Level Expert Group on Universal Health Coverage for India constituted by the Planning Commission in its report, has inter-alia recommended increase of availability of doctors to 1:1000 population.

There are various factors, including shortage of doctors, which impact the mortality rate in the country. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) have declined over the past few years. IMR has come down from 58 per 1000 live births in the year 2005 to 47 per 1000 live births in the year 2010. Similarly, MMR has also come down from 254 per lakh live births in 2004-06 to 212 per lakh live births in 2007-09.

The Government has already taken a large number of steps to address shortage of doctors, specialists and faculty in the country which include:

(i) Relaxation in the norms for setting up of a medical college in terms of requirement for land, faculty, staff, bed/bed strength and other infrastructure.
(ii) Relaxation in teacher-student ratio to increase the seats at Postgraduate level.
(iii) Enhancement of maximum intake capacity at MBBS level from 150 to 250.
(iv) Enhancement of age limit for appointment/extension/re-employment against posts of teachers/dean/principal/director in medical colleges from 65 to 70 years.
(v) Financial support to State medical colleges, under the scheme of “Strengthening and Upgradation of State Government Medical Colleges”, to increase postgraduate seats in various disciplines or to start new postgraduate medical courses
(vi) Financial support under National Rural Health Mission for engagement of staff on contractual basis.
(vii) Approval for establishment of eight AIIMS-like institutions (six in first phase and two in second phase) in the country under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yozana (PMSSY).

The above information was given by the Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha today.

BN/ls