

FOUNDER EDITOR  
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## Rationale for more private medical colleges

### Dearth of faculty a major impediment

THE present government in its current term had already approved 24 private medical colleges. Now it is giving permission to open up an additional 11 such colleges. The question that comes to mind is why so many private medical colleges at this stage, especially when we have serious concerns about lack of requisite medical teachers to man these institutions?

Yes, we need to turn out more medical graduates given the extremely adverse doctor to patient ratio. But do we need to take a plunge in hot haste? In fact, closer scrutiny of rules and regulations governing the granting of permission to set up such institutions reveal that not all aspiring colleges meet requirements pertaining to infrastructure and other issues. Are we to assume that the purpose of the proposed colleges is to generate substantial admission fees, as had been witnessed last year? With rules on paper and little oversight, the admission fees galore exacted by some private medical colleges worked out to huge sums last year.

Even if the new medical colleges meet all necessary criteria with regards to land and building, the question of maintaining teaching standards including ancillary hospitals remains. With the number of private medical colleges set to rise to nearly 90, they will inevitably draw upon doctors, nurses and paramedics from government-run institutions. The bigger question at this juncture for policymakers, therefore, is that a balance should be struck between the public and the private medical colleges and hospitals in terms of their operational feasibility and efficacy.