

Tamil Nadu's case against NEET

Why in news?

The latest Bill passed by Tamil Nadu Assembly exempting the State from the NEET for admission to UG medical courses was returned by the President of India without his assent.

What is the background of NEET?

- The **Indian Medical Council (IMC) Act** states that there shall be a uniform entrance examination to all medical educational institutions at UG level and PG level through such designated authority.
- Union government issued an Ordinance in 2016 postponing the introduction of NEET to 2017 due to the opposition from many quarters.

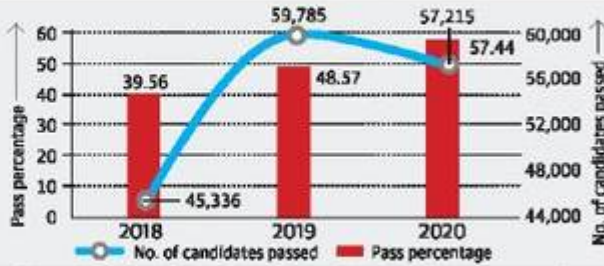
What is Tamil Nadu's stand on NEET?

- Tamil Nadu government issued an order in 2017 providing for the reservation of 85% of the seats for students passed out from the State board which was struck down by the Madras High Court.
- Later the State government had brought in a law providing 7.5% reservation in medical seats, but with NEET as a criterion.
- Tamil Nadu government had appointed a committee under **Justice A.K. Rajan** to look into the question of desirability of having an examination as a prerequisite for MBBS admissions.
- **Views of the committee:**
 1. Majority were not in favour of the NEET requirement
 2. Higher secondary examination of the State board itself was good enough for the selection of students for MBBS seats.
 3. NEET only worked against underprivileged government school students, and had profited coaching centres and rich.
- So, Tamil Nadu government amended the central act assuming that medical college admissions will come under Concurrent List (Entry 25 of List III) for which assent has not been given by the President.

Pass percentage up, participants down

Tamil Nadu's pass percentage in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test grew year-on-year for the second consecutive year and crossed the national pass percentage in 2020

The graph on the right shows the growth in pass percentage and the total number of candidates who cleared the exam in the last three years. The absolute number of qualifying candidates, however, came down marginally this year

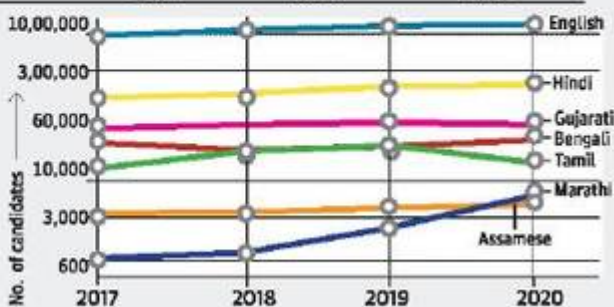


The year 2020 also witnessed a decline in the number of registered participants. Tamil Nadu was the only major State to witness a significant decline. Kerala saw a marginal decline

The graph below shows the number of registered and appeared candidates from Tamil Nadu since 2018



The number of participants who took the exam in Tamil also came down in 2020, in contrast to other languages. The graph on the right shows the number of participants who took the exam in different languages. Languages that drew at least 5,000 participants have been included in the graph (Graph in log scale)



Source: Data released by the Central Board of Secondary Education and the National Testing Agency

What is the dilemma now?

- The question is whether the State government can exempt Section 10D of the IMC Act, which is a parliamentary law that falls under the Central List (Entry 66).
- The introduction of internal reservation for government school students is also under challenge before the Madras High Court.
- No other State in India has sought an exemption from NEET and therefore the possibility of exempting Tamil Nadu is low.
- Also, if exempted, the fate of **all-India quota of 15%** and the condition of Tamil Nadu students who do not avail this quota by not writing the exam is a question.
- Tamil Nadu government is of the view to conceive a better system with a fair admission process preserving merit and preventing rampant commercialisation.

Source: The Hindu



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