



## NEET & Tamil Nadu's Protest

**For Prelims:** NEET, Powers of Centre and State

**For Mains:** Consequences of States breaking Central Law

### Why in News?

The legal fight against NEET continues to this day for Tamil Nadu since the [Supreme Court](#) refusal to grant further exemption from NEET in 2017.

### What do we need to know about NEET?

#### ▪ About:

- [The National Eligibility Entrance Test \(NEET\)](#), formerly the **All India Pre-Medical Test (AIPMT)**, is the qualifying test for **MBBS** and **BDS** programmes in **Indian medical and dental colleges**.
  - It is conducted by the [National Testing Agency \(NTA\)](#).

#### ▪ History:

- **The Medical Council of India (MCI)** (since replaced by the [National Medical Commission](#)) had mooted the NEET in 2009.
- The following year the MCI had issued a notification to regulate **MBBS and BDS** admissions in the country through a common entrance test.
  - In 2013, the Supreme Court had **struck down the NEET as unconstitutional** and ruled that the **MCI had no powers** to issue notifications to regulate admissions in medical/dental colleges.
  - In April 2016, a **five judge bench** headed by Justice Anil. R. Dave (who delivered the dissenting verdict in 2013), recalled its 2013 judgment and eventually **mandated the conduct of NEET**.
  - Following requests from certain stakeholders, the **Union Government promulgated an ordinance** in May 2016 **exempting** State-run medical colleges from the ambit of the Supreme Court mandate for a year.
  - NEET was introduced across the country based on a Supreme Court ruling in 2016.
    - The Tamil Nadu government vociferously opposed the entrance test from the beginning and initially got exemption from NEET-based admissions.

### Why is Tamil Nadu Against NEET?

- Tamil Nadu constituted a [committee](#) headed by retired [High Court](#) judge **Justice A. K. Rajan** to study the effects of the NEET-based admission process.
  - **Justice A. K. Rajan reported that:**
    - Introduction of NEET as sole criterion for admissions into medical colleges has **adversely affected the share of seats** that were historically enjoyed by

students who passed the **Tamil Nadu Board of Secondary Examination (TNBSE)**.

- It worked to the advantage of the **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)** students.
- Majority of students, who got admitted in medical colleges post-NEET, had gone for **coaching**.
  - Coaching focuses only on **preparing students to answer questions asked in the particular exam** as opposed to learning a subject.
- NEET was introduced to ensure that **only meritorious students seeking medical seats get admission** into medical colleges as well as end the practice of collecting capitation fees, which stoked corruption.
  - However, it **assumes** that all aspirants are competing from the same position and with the same constraints.
    - **The Rajan report highlights this as a flawed approach.**
- **Politicians argue that:**
  - The percentage of students gaining medical college admission from repeat attempts at NEET **rose from 12.47% in 2016-17 to 71.42% in 2020-21.**
  - Taking the **test for a second or third time** to try and get the coveted medical seat calls for financial and social resources.
    - This is way beyond the reach of families from poorer social backgrounds.

## What are the possible Challenges in NEET?

- **Coaching Industry:**
  - The NEET **overshadows students' efforts** in their higher secondary education and has been known to **spawn multi-billion dollar coaching centres**.
    - It has **shifted the focus** more on cracking the **'be-all-end-all'** examination instead of mastering the subjects at the higher secondary level.
- **Conduct:**
  - There have been **discrepancies in the conduct** of NEET with cases of impersonation being reported.
  - Even in the NEET examination conducted recently, the **CBI** unearthed an impersonation racket and arrested eight persons.
    - Such racketeering challenges the very concept of merit.
- **Economic Inequality:**
  - While it has ensured **merit-based admissions in state-run institutions** where the fees are affordable.
    - In deemed universities and private colleges, students with poor NEET scores with rich economical backgrounds continue to edge out meritorious aspirants belonging to poor, lower- and middle-class families.

## What is the Current Status of the Issue?

- **The President** refused **assent** to two Bills adopted by the **Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly** unanimously in 2017 **seeking exemption from NEET-based admissions** for undergraduate and postgraduate degree medical courses.
- In 2021, a **fresh Bill to admit students for MBBS/BDS courses only on the basis of their class XII board examination scores** was adopted by the Legislative Assembly.
  - In February 2022, after the **Bill was returned by the Governor**, the Bill was **readopted** by the House and sent back to the Governor.
  - The Bill has since been forwarded to the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** for Presidential assent.
  - The **Minister of State for Home Affairs** informed the **Lok Sabha** that clarification has been sought from the Tamil Nadu Government on the Bill seeking to dispense with the NEET.
  - **The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of AYUSH** had furnished comments on the Bill which have been shared with the state government of Tamil Nadu for their comments and clarifications.

[Source: TH](#)

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