

NATIONAL

Published: July 27, 2016 01:30 IST | Updated: July 27, 2016 01:30 IST New Delhi, July 27, 2016

After MCI revamp, high-level panel to recast UGC, AICTE

- Special Correspondent

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has directed the high-level committee, headed by Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Arvind Panagariya, to prepare a road map for reforming the two regulatory bodies in the field of education — the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) — as well as the board looking after Homeopathy and Ayurvedic education in the country.

The panel is already set to recommend the scrapping of the Medical Council of India (MCI) and replacing it with the National Medical Commission (NMC).

Four Boards — Under Graduate Medical Board, Post Graduate Medical Board, Accreditation and Assessment Board and a board for registration of medical colleges as well monitoring of the ethics in the profession — will be set up under the Commission.

Other members of the panel are Prime Minister's Additional Principal Secretary P.K. Mishra, Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant and Health Secretary Bhahanu Pratap Sharma.

The committee is also debating if a universal exit exam should be introduced for medical students to make the medical education system merit-based. "The quality of outcomes of the colleges, the performance of the students itself will become evident if exit exams are introduced," an official source at the Aayog told reporters on Tuesday.

The NMC will become the main regulatory body and will take over all roles and responsibilities of the MCI, the source said. "The main objective of the reform is to end the Inspector Raj in the medical education sector."

For allowing private medical colleges, the reformed system will strive to be more assessment-based, focussing on outcomes rather than relying on the inputs-based eligibility criteria in the present system.

The National Medical Board (NMB) will be subsumed into it to neutralise the conflict in recognition of degrees between the MCI and the NMB. The proposed Commission will have 19-20 members, comprising eminent doctors and experts from related fields, who will be selected by a government-appointed search committee, rather than elected as is the case in the MCI.

The work on the draft for a new legislation governing the sector to be introduced in Parliament after repealing the MCI Act is at an advanced stages, said the source.

A Medical Advisory Council (MAC), with members representing States and two members from the union territories, will advise the Commission.

The committee has relied on the report of a parliamentary committee that had earlier this year called for revamping the MCI saying it has failed in its role as a regulator, leading to a collapse of India's medical education system.

Printable version | Jul 27, 2016 9:45:04 AM | <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/after-mci-revamp-highlevel-panel-to-recast-ugc-aicte/article8902720.ece>

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