

DNA India

Gujarat has 4th highest vacancies of specialist doctors

For a state that is economically one of the better offs among the larger states in India, Gujarat's poor performance in health indices is known. But it is not just the maternal and infant mortality rates that show the state in poor light. It is also among the top 5 larger states of the country to have the highest number of vacancies as far as specialists in district hospitals is concerned.

As per Healthy States, Progressive India: Report on the Ranks of States and Union Territories by Niti Ayog, Gujarat has 55.5% vacancies of specialist doctors in a district hospital. In fact, the number of vacancies for specialist doctors saw a surge from 51% from 2014-15, the base year for comparison to 55.5% in 2015-16.

Those who have worked at addressing the shortage of doctors particularly at rural levels in the state attributed a host of reasons for the shortage of specialists in government hospitals.

"The primary reason is infrastructure shortage. If a specialist has to work in absence of required medical infrastructure he/she will not be interested in joining a government set up," said Dr Pankaj Shah, managing trustee of Sewa Rural in Jhagadia that provides medical facilities to the rural population. The organisation is also known for attracting and retaining some of the best medical talents.

Dr Shah said another reason is the working atmosphere in government hospitals where doctors may not have the supportive environment. "Another reason is the preferential treatment as far as rural postings are concerned. Usually, in other states, when one completes certain years in rural postings, one gets promoted and posted at cities too. But in Gujarat there is no uniform rule for the same," said Dr Shah. He said many states also offer preferential Post Graduate opportunities to in-service doctors. "Gujarat has now started it and it will show results," said Dr Shah.

He said the entrepreneurial streak among Gujarat doctors is also another reason why many choose to work in private sector than government ones.

Chhattisgarh 77.7%

Bihar 60.6%
Uttar Pradesh 60.3%
Gujarat 55.5%
Telangana 54.8%