

MED-ED SEATS FOR SALE

Applicants To Private Medical Colleges Are Being Offered Seats Even Before Entrance Test Results Are Out

Yogita Rao | TNN

Students who have filled up forms for medical entrance exams of private colleges and deemed universities in the state are being offered a shortcut to success. But it comes at a steep price: Rs 12-16 lakh, besides regular fees.

Even before the results are out, with some exams yet to be conducted, SMSes are raining down on candidates, promising them a place on merit lists. It is not clear how touts obtained the candidates' cellphone numbers, but collusion of college authorities is evident. The racket is being carried out blatantly, as the touts, who call themselves education

consultants, issue post-dated

cheques as securities for taking an advance from willing candidates. "I started receiving the messages just the day after submitting my form. Till now, I have received more than 15 messages and all of them look like they have been sent using a website. I initially thought they were spam, but friends who called up the numbers told me they were for real," said a student from Matunga.

Among the students TOI spoke to, some said they were confident about making it to the colleges on their own and have ignored the messages. But many have fallen for the touts. TOI

obtained the numbers of a few touts from the students and called up (see transcripts in graphic), posing as a candidate. Almost all said appearance in the entrance tests is a prerequisite for them to ensure a seat. One of them claimed he would be able to ensure admission in 10 days.

"You need to pay an advance. I will take care of things after that. You need to make the final payment to the owner or the trustee of the college; it should be at one go. And yes, the annual tuition fee would be higher than the regular fee. The amounts will be higher if you score very low in the entrance test," said a tout, who maintains an office in Pune. He said the admission would be provided under the 15% NRI quota.

When TOI contacted a college mentioned by a tout, an official said: "Admissions to all our group colleges are done completely on the basis of merit. The NRI quota is the management's prerogative, but that too is filled on the basis of merit."

Kamal Kishore Kadam, president, Association of Managements of Unaided and Private Medical and Dental Colleges, which conducts the entrance exam ASSO-CET, said: "Students should not fall prey to such messages. They should approach the police and file a complaint. It should be clear to students that admissions depend solely on performance in the entrance test."

TOUT TRANSCRIPTS REPORTER | I have received this message about admissions. I am not confident about scoring well. Do you really offer seats in top-rung medical colleges? TOUT ONE | Have you appeared for any private medical college exam?

R | Yes T | The donation is Rs 12 lakh. In the first year you will have to pay Rs 4.8 lakh as tuition fee and in consecutive years Rs 4.4 lakh. Rs 2-3 lakh is the advance. You will get a seat within 10 days after the results are declared

R | Is it negotiable? T | The price is fixed for the college you are seeking admission to **R | How do I hand over the money to you? Will I be given a receipt? T |** We will give you a post-dated cheque of the same amount as security **R | Who do I have to hand over the money? T |** One of the owners of the institute **REPORTER | I have received this message about admissions. Are you really offering seats in top medical colleges? TOUT TWO |** Seats are over

R | Are there no seats available in any of the colleges now? T | You will have to wait for the results of the entrance

exam

R | What about other private colleges? I have appeared for one entrance test T | Have you written the paper with pen or pencil?

R | Of course, pen. How does that matter? T | Nothing. We will have to wait till the results are out. About the other college, you can appear for their test. Then we will take care of it **R | What is the donation like? T |** Rs 16 lakh, our commission included. But the fee for NRI quota students would be Rs 7.5 lakh. It might go up if you score less **R | Ok. Is it negotiable? I will not be able to manage the big sum. T |** No it is not. Give me your number. I will get back to you with details

BILL COUNTER

Rs 0.5-1 lakh | Tout's commission Rs 2-3 lakh | Advance Rs 9-14 lakh | Capitation fee, negotiable Rs 4.5-7.5 lakh | Annual tuition fee for management category seat

MARKET

MECHANISM

Touts obtain cellphone numbers of candidates who register for medical entrance tests to private colleges in the state

A tout may tell a candidate to mark the answer sheet with pencil, implying that it can be altered. Some touts also contact candidates after the tests are over. The implication is that answer sheets are redundant, not even needing alteration to secure a candidate a place on the merit list

A tout tells a willing candidate to pay an advance as token money. He gives the candidate a post-dated cheque of the same amount as security

After the results are out, the tout fixes an appointment with a trustee or the owner of a college

The candidate completes the joining formalities and pays a capitation fee to the trustee or the owner. He also pays the tuition fee

The body which conducts the entrance exam ASSO-CET has cautioned candidates against touts on its website

QUOTA SYSTEM

Fifteen per cent of seats in private medical colleges in the state are reserved under the NRI quota. These seats come at a premium, but are supposed to be filled up on merit. However, practice often deviates from procedure

QUOTE UNQUOTE SMSes from touts to candidates

Dear (candidate's name) get confirm admissions in MBBS/BDS in top private colleges in Maharashtra under management/NRI quota

Very few seats vacant at (name of college). 11.75 lakh plus fees. Contact immediately

MBBS/BDS/BAMS/BTech admission. Bookings open for 2011-12, across India. Low package available. For more details: call on (number)

MBBS Admission-2011, total package 19 lakh (Medical Council of India Recognised). Lowest package. Last two days left. Golden chance

	ASSO-CET institutions		Other private colleges/varsities	
	Total	Quota*	Total	Quota
MBBS	700**	105	500	75
BDS	1,500	225	400	60

*NRI category. **Figures approximate

