



EDITORIAL

The Impact of National Healthcare Policies on Increasing NBEMS-Accredited Hospital Space & Improving Public Healthcare Outreach

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Over the past decade, India's healthcare reforms have increasingly recognised that expanding medical education capacity and improving healthcare access are interdependent goals. The policy ecosystem led by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has created favourable conditions for the expansion of accreditation by the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences, thereby strengthening both postgraduate medical education and healthcare service delivery. NBEMS accreditation has emerged as a strategic mechanism for converting service-delivery hospitals into training institutions, particularly in underserved regions.

Policy Shift: From Medical Colleges Alone to a Distributed Training Ecosystem

Historically, postgraduate medical education was concentrated in government and private medical colleges. National healthcare policies have increasingly promoted a broader training architecture by recognizing:

- District hospitals
 - Corporate hospitals
 - Trust hospitals
 - Specialized institutions
 - Public sector hospitals
- as potential postgraduate training sites.

Impact on NBEMS Accreditation

- Significant increase in DNB and DrNB training institutions.
- Expansion of training opportunities beyond traditional medical colleges.
- Improved geographic distribution of specialty training.

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Public Health Impact

- Specialists are trained closer to the populations they serve.
- Improved retention of healthcare professionals in non-metropolitan regions.
- Strengthening of secondary and tertiary care services.

Expansion of Medical Education Capacity Through National Policies

Several national initiatives emphasised increasing the healthcare workforce

Policy Drivers

- Expansion of postgraduate seats.
- Strengthening district hospitals.
- Promotion of competency-based education.

- Public-private partnership models.

NBEMS Contribution

NBEMS offers a flexible accreditation framework allowing hospitals with adequate patient load and faculty to become teaching institutions without requiring full-fledged medical colleges.

Outcomes

- Rapid expansion of postgraduate training capacity.
- Reduced dependence on conventional medical colleges.
- Enhanced utilization of existing healthcare infrastructure.

In the last 10 years, NBEMS accreditation has evolved from an educational mechanism into a powerful instrument of healthcare system strengthening.

National healthcare policies that expand accreditation opportunities simultaneously increase specialist training capacity, improve hospital quality, strengthen district-level healthcare services, and enhance public access to advanced medical care.

As India moves toward universal health coverage and a larger healthcare workforce, NBEMS-accredited hospitals will remain critical pillars linking education, service delivery, quality improvement, and public health outreach.

Every new NBEMS-accredited hospital is not merely a training centre—it is a multiplier of healthcare capacity, quality, and access for the nation.

District Hospitals as Academic and Service Hubs

NHM guidelines and recent healthcare strengthening initiatives have emphasised district hospitals as:

- Centres for secondary care.
- Training sites for doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals.
- Referral hubs within integrated healthcare networks.

Impact on Accreditation

NBEMS accreditation has enabled district hospitals to initiate:

- DNB programs
- Diploma programs
- Fellowship programs

Public Healthcare Benefits

- Improved specialist availability at district level.

- Reduced referral burden on tertiary hospitals.
- Lower out-of-pocket expenditure for patients.
- Enhanced emergency and trauma care services.

Ayushman Bharat and Increased Clinical Exposure

The implementation of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana substantially increased access to secondary and tertiary care.

Impact on Accredited Hospitals

- Higher patient volumes.
- Greater case diversity.
- Improved opportunities for clinical training.

Educational Impact

NBEMS trainees gain exposure to:

- Complex disease management.
- Surgical procedures.
- Critical care services.
- High-volume clinical practice.

Public Outreach Impact

- More patients receive specialist care.
- Enhanced quality of treatment in accredited centres.

National Digital Health Ecosystem and Accreditation

The emergence of digital health initiatives has improved institutional readiness for accreditation.

Benefits for NBEMS Hospitals

- Electronic health records.
- Digital logbooks.
- Online assessments.

- Tele-education.
- Quality monitoring systems.

Public Health Impact

- Better continuity of care.
- Improved referral pathways.
- Enhanced data-driven quality improvement.

Emergency and Trauma Care Strengthening

Recent national initiatives to strengthen emergency and trauma care at district hospitals have created new opportunities for accreditation.

Emerging Areas

- Emergency Medicine
- Critical Care Medicine
- Trauma Surgery
- Anaesthesia
- Emergency Nursing

NBEMS Role

Accreditation provides:

- Structured specialist training.
- Faculty development.
- Quality assurance mechanisms.

Public Health Impact

- Better management of time-sensitive emergencies.
- Reduced mortality from trauma, stroke, cardiac emergencies, poisoning, and obstetric emergencies.

Public-Private Partnerships and Corporate Hospital Accreditation

National policies increasingly encourage public-private collaboration in healthcare delivery and education.

Advantages

Corporate hospitals often possess:

- Advanced technology
- High patient volumes
- Specialized expertise
- Strong quality systems

- Development of super-specialty programs.
- Enhanced exposure to advanced clinical practice.

Impact on NBEMS Accreditation

- Significant expansion of DNB and DrNB seats.

Public Healthcare Benefits

- Increased national specialist workforce.
- Dissemination of best practices across the healthcare system.

Strategic Outcomes for India

Healthcare Workforce

- Expanded specialist production.
- Increased availability of trained healthcare professionals.

Healthcare Access

- Enhanced access to specialty care outside metropolitan areas.

Quality

- Standardization of training and clinical practice.

Equity

- Reduced urban-rural disparities.

System Strengthening

- Integration of service delivery with education and research.

Improving Healthcare Outreach Through Academic Accreditation

A frequently overlooked benefit of accreditation is its impact on service quality.

Accredited hospitals are required to maintain:

- Faculty standards.
- Clinical protocols.
- Academic activities.
- Audits and quality assurance systems.

Result

Training requirements drive service improvements.

Public Impact

Patients benefit from:

- Better clinical governance.
- Evidence-based care.
- Improved patient safety.
- Continuous quality improvement.

Key takeaways:

1. Universal DNB Accreditation Pathway

All eligible district hospitals and large public hospitals should be encouraged to pursue NBEMS accreditation.

2. Explore Accreditation Incentivisation feasibility.

Provide financial and infrastructure support for first-time accredited institutions.

3. Integration with National Workforce Planning

Use NBEMS accreditation as a tool to address speciality shortages.

4. Digital Accreditation Platform

Create real-time monitoring of training quality, outcomes, and workforce deployment.

5. Academic Health System Model

Develop a national framework linking:

- **Medical colleges**
- **NBEMS hospitals**
- **District hospitals**
- **Corporate hospitals; into a unified academic healthcare network.**