



Indian Radiologists Crave for Foreign Degrees

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There was a time when very few medical colleges existed in India. Most students completed their formal education with an MBBS degree. A few would pursue “higher studies” either here or abroad.

With time, as more medical colleges came up and opportunities for postgraduate studies increased, one felt that the need for a foreign qualification would reduce.

It, is therefore, surprising that even today, our students long for a foreign certification. They spend huge sums of money on exam fees and attend expensive courses to pass these exams. Unfortunately, many of our learned teachers, by actively participating in these programs, unknowingly downgrade our qualifications in the impressionable minds.

The pursuit of multiple exams leaves little time for practical training. The precious years of residency are forever lost. The opportunity to acquire hands-on skills, develop confidence, and gain experience, the mainstay of medical practice, is frittered away.

Why then do our students pine for foreign degrees? Are they made to think that our degrees are inferior? Is there a deficiency in the curriculum, which needs looking into? A postgraduate curriculum can never be limited by boundaries? Postgraduation is meant to advance knowledge, not merely to pass an exam!

Look, we have the best of teachers, an unlimited variety of clinical material and no dearth of equipment. If one wants to pursue knowledge, then we have excellent conferences, courses, and workshops! Our fellowship programs by both public and private institutions are no less than foreign ones. We invite foreign experts all the time, to our conferences to learn from them. There are opportunities galore if one wants to learn and attain hands-on experience.

I think we need to introspect. Our course curriculum and teacher training have to be periodically upgraded. The student’s competence has to be assessed frequently, knowledge deficiencies exposed and filled. Students need wise mentoring, so that they do not waste precious time giving multiple exams, rather than utilizing it by becoming “astute clinical radiologists.”

I have not seen any other professional giving foreign exams unless there is an understandable plan of settling abroad or taking business overseas. I have yet to see an American, Japanese, German, or British, having acquired local qualifications, scurrying about for a foreign postgraduate degree.

Having said that, there is no gainsaying that all of us must carry on with lifelong learning and training without an exam being the driving force. Knowledge and skills gained through daily hands-on experience add confidence and scale up self-esteem. Certainly, spending time and money acquiring degrees merely for the sake of it is foolhardy. Sufficing a few alphabets after the name, if not backed by competence, is of no use anyway, unless there is an intention of settling somewhere, where these degrees count.

We have been independent for 75 long years. Is not it time to take pride in our degrees, and institutions, rather than craving for a foreign certification of our competence? Let us think it over!

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