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MCI still corrupt, lacks formal and ethical structure: member

Staff Reporter

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Shedding light on the corrupt practices of the Medical Council of India (MCI), the highest medical regulatory authority in the country, one of its members Balbir S. Tomar said that the MCI lacks a formal and ethical structure of nominating its members.

Addressing a seminar in the city on Sunday on medical negligence, Dr. Tomar said the nomination procedure to the MCI got over in just 10 minutes against the two-day procedure stipulated by the government.

The members were pre-decided and the nomination procedure was merely eyewash, he said.

Dr. Tomar was inducted into the newly-formed MCI in December 2013 after the body was dissolved in 2010 by the then President of India, Pratibha Patil, following the arrest of the MCI president, Ketan Desai.

Dr. Desai was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation for accepting a hefty bribe from a medical college in Punjab for granting it recognition.

Although Dr. Desai's medical licence was suspended, he was later appointed as a member of the Gujarat Medical Council and currently serves as the head of the urology department at B.J. Medical College in Ahmedabad.

Referring to the landmark judgment of medical negligence resulting in the death of U.S.-based doctor Anuradha Saha, for which her husband

Kunal Saha was awarded a compensation of Rs. 5.96 crore (India's highest compensation package), Dr. Tomar said, "I heard that the medical licence of renowned physician Sukumar Mukherjee [one of the three doctors found guilty in misdiagnosing Anuradha Saha] was suspended for three months after the verdict was passed. However, he was appointed advisor to the West Bengal government's health department."

"When the MCI itself is corrupt, how do you expect victims and kin of victims of medical negligence to get justice in this country," he asked.

Talking about the death of former Chief Justice J.S. Verma due to alleged medical negligence, his daughter Subhra Verma said, "We thought we were insulated from such things due to my father's position and our good contacts with doctors. But, after my father's death, we were advised not to file a complaint with the Delhi Medical Council, as it would not yield any result."

Elaborating on the fight for justice for her father's death, Ms. Verma said, "While the doctors admitted their mistakes to us over phone, none of them owned them when the proceedings were going on. However, we will continue our fight for justice."

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