

Submissions for Honorable President of Pakistan

PMDC Ordinance and the Ground Realities

Honorable President of Pakistan, Dr Arif Alvi, has promulgated the new PMDC Ordinance. Unfortunately, this PMDC Ordinance is not in consonance with the Health Requirements of Pakistan and has already been rejected by many stakeholders.

Pakistan Dental Association, also, cannot accept this PMDC Ordinance, on many accounts.

But instead of discussing the demerits of this Ordinance, Pakistan Dental Association will focus below on the real issues which PMDC should be addressing:

Need for Separate Pakistan Dental Council:

In 1962, when then President Gen Ayub Khan promulgated Ordinance for establishing Pakistan Medical and Dental Council, the profession of Dentistry was clumped with medical, in view of the handful of dentists at that time.

In 2019, Pakistan has almost 30,000 qualified dentists and about 50 Dental Colleges. Hence there is a dire and immediate need for a separate Pakistan Dental Council to focus and regulate the affairs of Dentistry, Dental Public Health and Dental Education in Pakistan.

Almost all countries of the world, including our neighboring and peer countries have full fledged Dental Councils to look after Dental Health Affairs in their respective countries.

Even Pakistan has separate Nursing, Homeopathic, Tibb, Veterinary etc Councils but no separate Pakistan Dental Council!

Need for PM/DC Restructuring and importance of Health Planners:

During the last two decades, with the mushroom growth of Private Medical and Dental Colleges in Pakistan, PMDC, due to various vested interests, lost its main objective of being a Health Regulatory Authority for the people of Pakistan, and instead became primarily Private Medical and Dental Colleges Regulatory Authority.

Private Medical Colleges have rightly been termed as “Most Lucrative Business in Pakistan” churning out hundreds of Doctors and Dentists in large cities whereas rural/remote areas of Pakistan still woefully lack qualified doctors and dentists. As such, PMDC’s rationale of more doctors needed is illogical considering the fact that on the one hand we are producing a glut surplus of doctors and dentists in the cities, where the doctor and dentist ratio to population mimics that of First World Cities, albeit without any matching jobs and facilities for these for these doctors. On the other hand, doctors and dentists ratio to population in vast Rural Pakistan is woefully dismal.

Hence, PMDC should not be comparing apples with oranges while taking “credit” for reducing Doctor to Patient ratio in Pakistan, which of course is misleading keeping in view the vast difference between Doctors availability in cities and rural areas.

Similarly, PM/DC’s rationale that Pakistan needs to compete with big countries and hence produce more and more doctors, is beyond any concepts of Contemporary Health Planning for any individual country, **which should follow its own National Health Goals.**

President of Pakistan is humbly requested to kindly consider the following ground realities:

- It must be realized that merely producing doctors will Never Solve Pakistan’s perennial health problems like Malnutrition, Child Mortality, Stunted Growth, Insanitation, Water Borne Diseases, Dental Decay and Gum Diseases etc. **Only proper Health Planning will.**
- It must also be realized that Academicians and Subject Specialists are not trained for Health Planning purposes, as it is altogether a different Specialty. How can PMDC’s current focus only on Medical/Dental Colleges faculty requirements, lecture halls, canteen, play areas, relate to Pakistan’s Perennial Health issues, **which even after opening of hundreds of Medical and Dental Colleges in the last two decades, have only increased manifold.**
- It must also be realized that a further irony is that out of the hundreds of doctors and dentists produced every year, 80% are females, and out of these, **80% do not pursue their chosen profession of Medicine or Dentistry.** The only gainers are the Private Colleges who take exorbitant fees from their students, without caring whether they enter the profession or not. Hence, Pakistan loses.
- It must also be realized that it is extremely naïve and wishful thinking to assume that a product of Private Medical and Dental Colleges from cities after spending almost **10 Million Rupees for becoming doctors will go to Rural Areas to practice.** Pakistan and the rural masses lose again.

Restructuring of Pakistan Medical Dental Council:

- Ideally PMDC should be bifurcated into Pakistan Medical Council and Pakistan Dental Council, as enunciated above.
- **The top tier of PMDC Structure should consist of Qualified Health Planners**
- The main job of PMDC should be Health Planning for Pakistan like in other civilized countries of the world and role of their Health Regulatory Bodies.
- Health Planning for Pakistan in the Short, Medium and Long Term should be devised by proper, internationally trained Health Planners, in the light of an authentic Health Survey analysis of all Districts/ Cities/ Provinces of all Pakistan and thus determine and establish Pakistan’s Health goals

- Academicians/Vice Chancellors, Private Medical Colleges Association, Pakistan Medical Association and Pakistan Dental Association and Parents' Body should be incorporated in PMDC structure, being relevant stake holders.
- The Academicians/ Vice Chancellor jobs should be to implement Pakistan's laid down Health Goals in their respective Universities
- PMA and PDA serve as the eyes, ears and watch dogs of People's Health and Medical and Dental Students interests.
- All decisions by PMDC should be taken strictly taken in accordance with Pakistan's Health Plan, and not by sheer majority or strong lobbies in PMDC.
- PMDC should announce the number of Medical/Dental Colleges which can be opened each year in various Districts/ Cities/ Provinces, according to this Health Survey Analysis and Pakistan's Health goals.
- Whimsical opening of more Medical/Dental colleges, in a vacuum situation, should be strictly prohibited.
- Areas having adequate Doctor to Population Ratio should not be allowed any further colleges, unless Health Indicators allow.
- Reputed Audit Firms should determine the cost of Student Training in Private Colleges, and determine Fair fee structure per year for Private Colleges
- Fool proof measures should be made by Chartered Accountants/Audit firms to ensure that no additional donations and monies in any other forms are taken from hapless students in their course of study in MBBS and BDS.

PMDC Elections:

- Qualified Health Planners should be nominated by Federal and Provincial Health Ministries, purely on their qualifications and portfolios. This should form the top of the PMDC Pyramid
- Medical and Dental Academicians, with their PMDC role defined above, should be inducted through Elections.
- It must be pointed out that even holding PMDC Elections under the present structure and form will only replace one set of learned Academicians with another set of learned Academicians, with Physicians giving Medical Solutions and Surgeons giving Surgical Solutions to Pakistan's myriad Health Issues. With some cosmetic changes, we will find PMDC slowly but surely revert back to the current system which has only taken Pakistan's Health Sector dismally backwards.
- Similarly, merely producing more Doctors/Dentists and Fighting the Fire is not the answer to Public Health issues. Health Planning and systematic implementation of National Health Goals is.

In view of all of the above, it is earnestly and humbly requested that The Honorable President of Pakistan, will consider these submissions on Merit and in the interest of Public Health, and Re-promulgate PMDC Ordinance and restructure Pakistan Medical/ Dental Councils as a truly Contemporary Health Regulatory Authority, capable of giving Pakistan its General and Oral Health goals, and then monitoring and implementing them.

PMDC Elections should be held soon after this restructuring of PM/DC on Modern and Contemporary lines, so that Pakistan's Public Health benefits in a true sense and PMDC delivers what it is meant to do – ***Improve Public Health.***

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President

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