NEET Impersonation Scam

What is the issue?

- There was an exposure of a NEET examination scam recently.
- A couple of mails sent to the administrators of the Theni Government Medical College, Tamil Nadu blew the lid off the scam with far-reaching consequences.

What did happen?

- A student of the Theni Government Medical College had gained his seat through ploy — by having someone impersonate him at the NEET.
- This turned out to be only the tip of the iceberg, and as investigators began unravelling the spool, more skeletons tumbled out.
- A number of students and their parents were investigated for possible impersonation fraud in the NEET.
- They were investigated for operating with the help of middlemen to hire a medical student to write the test for them, for a hefty consideration.
- This required spinning a careful web of deception.
    1. Submitting photos of the impersonator in the NEET application forms to appear for the examinations and for single-window counselling for admissions.
    2. Submitting the application with the original student's photo at the allotted college.
- Further probe cast a shadow on the admission of more students, including in private medical colleges.
- With the CB-CID tasked with investigating the case, bits and pieces of the puzzle are falling in place, revealing a multi-State operation.
- **Larger picture** - With all its many nuances, larger picture is not clear.
- It's evident that fraud has been committed and serious lapses in procedures and processes were exploited by students eager to score a medical seat.
- They might have gotten away with it, for an anonymous tip-off.

What could be done?

- Given that NEET was intended to standardise testing for admission into medical colleges and ensure a certain minimum quality, such lapses erode the very core of its raison d'étre.

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the National Testing Agency are the agencies which conducts the examination.
- They must exhibit **zero tolerance to such attempts** to frustrate the integrity of the test.
- They must immediately set their energies to **identify gaps** in the existing system.
- They must ensure that a **foolproof testing methodology** is in place.
- Using **biometrics** to identify students taking NEET has been suggested, and its value in adding a further layer of checks and balances is indisputable.
- Parents and students too would do well to temper their vaulting ambition for an MBBS seat with a measure of rationality.
- There are only a limited number of MBBS seats available, and while that number is slowly growing, it will never equal the demand.

Source: The Hindu

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