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National Dental Commission Replaces Dental Council of India — A New Era for Dental Regulation

21 March 2026

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▼ On this Page

01 What Is the National Dental Commission?

02 Structure of the NDC

- Three Autonomous Boards

03 Key Functions and Mandate

04 Why Was DCI Replaced?

05 India's Dental Health Landscape

06 Comparison: NDC vs NMC

07 Significance for UPSC

📌 WHY IN NEWS

The Government of India formally constituted the National Dental Commission (NDC), dissolving the Dental Council of India (DCI) effective March 19, 2026. The Dentists Act, 1948, has been repealed and replaced by the NDC Act, 2023, marking a major overhaul of dental profession regulation in India.

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL DENTAL COMMISSION?

The **National Dental Commission (NDC)** is a statutory body established under the **NDC Act** to regulate dental education and practice in India. It replaces the **Dental Council of India (DCI)**, which had been the regulatory body for dentistry since 1948 under the **Dentists Act, 1948**.

The NDC mirrors the structure and intent of the **National Medical Commission (NMC)**, which replaced the Medical Council of India (MCI) in 2020 under the **NMC Act, 2019**. Both reforms were driven by the need for greater transparency, reduced corruption, and modernisation of professional regulation.

STRUCTURE OF THE NDC

Dr. Sanjay Tewari has been appointed as the **Chairperson** of the NDC, with **Dr. Mousumi Goswami** as Part-Time Member.

Three Autonomous Boards

Board	Function
Undergraduate and Postgraduate Dental Education Board	Oversees dental curriculum, education standards, and recognition of dental qualifications
Dental Assessment and Rating Board	Institutional accreditation, assessment, and quality assurance of dental colleges
Ethics and Dental Registration Board	Professional conduct, registration of dentists, and disciplinary proceedings

KEY FUNCTIONS AND MANDATE

The NDC is tasked with:

Framing regulations for dental education at all levels

Conducting institutional rating and assessment — transparent grading of dental colleges

Evaluating human resource needs — assessing India’s dentist-to-population ratio and planning workforce requirements

Promoting dental research — encouraging evidence-based dentistry

Regulating fees in private dental colleges — preventing capitation and commercialisation

Establishing standards for community dental care — bringing dental health into primary care

WHY WAS DCI REPLACED?

The Dental Council of India, established under the Dentists Act, 1948, faced longstanding criticism:

GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Allegations of **corruption in college approvals** — reports of bribes for granting or maintaining recognition

Lack of transparency in inspection processes

Slow response to quality concerns in dental education

Conflicts of interest — members simultaneously serving as college owners and regulators

STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS

No separation between regulatory, academic, and ethical functions

Outdated curriculum that didn't reflect modern dental science

Inadequate mechanisms for addressing student and patient grievances

PARALLEL WITH MCI

The Medical Council of India faced identical problems. The **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health** (2016) had recommended replacing MCI, leading to the NMC Act, 2019. The NDC follows the same template.

INDIA'S DENTAL HEALTH LANDSCAPE

Indicator	Value
Dentist-to-population ratio	~1:10,000 (WHO recommendation: 1:7,500)
Dental colleges in India	~300+
Annual BDS seats	~26,000+
Annual MDS seats	~6,000+
Oral disease burden	~95% of adults have dental caries

KEY CHALLENGES

Urban-rural divide — most dentists concentrated in metros; rural areas severely underserved

Preventive vs curative — focus remains on treatment rather than prevention

Oral health not integrated into primary healthcare — Ayushman Bharat HWCs do not routinely include dental services

Unregulated quackery — unlicensed dental practitioners operate in many areas

COMPARISON: NDC VS NMC

Feature	NMC (Medical)	NDC (Dental)
Replaced	Medical Council of India	Dental Council of India
Year of replacement	2020 (NMC Act, 2019)	2026 (NDC Act)
Repealed Act	Indian Medical Council Act, 1956	Dentists Act, 1948
Autonomous boards	4 (UG, PG, Medical Assessment, Ethics)	3 (UG+PG combined, Assessment, Ethics)
Fee regulation	Yes (50% seats in private colleges)	Yes (guidelines for private dental colleges)
NEXT exam	Proposed (National Exit Test)	Expected to be introduced

SIGNIFICANCE FOR UPSC

This reform is significant across multiple dimensions:

Governance reform — demonstrates the Centre’s approach to modernising professional regulation

Federalism angle — health is a State List subject; professional regulation is on the Concurrent List

Right to Health — better dental regulation supports the broader right to healthcare under Article 21 (NLSA v. Union of India)

Comparison question — NDC vs NMC structure is a likely Prelims factual question

UPSC RELEVANCE

NDC replaces DCI (Dentists Act 1948 repealed), NDC Act, three autonomous boards, Chairperson Dr. Sanjay Tewari, NMC replaced MCI in 2020 (NMC Act 2019).

MAINS GS2:

Regulatory reform in professional education; comparison of NMC and NDC; governance challenges in medical/dental councils; role of statutory bodies.

MAINS GS4:

Ethics in professional regulation — conflicts of interest, corruption in medical/dental councils.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA
NATIONAL DENTAL COMMISSION:

Established under: NDC Act (replaces Dentists Act, 1948)

Replaces: Dental Council of India (dissolved March 19, 2026)

Chairperson: Dr. Sanjay Tewari

Part-Time Member: Dr. Mousumi Goswami

Three autonomous boards: UG & PG Education Board, Assessment & Rating Board, Ethics & Registration Board

Functions: education regulation, institutional rating, HR evaluation, research promotion, fee regulation, community dental care standards

PARALLEL — NATIONAL MEDICAL COMMISSION:

Established: 2020 under NMC Act, 2019

Replaced: Medical Council of India (Indian Medical Council Act, 1956)

Four autonomous boards: UG Board, PG Board, Medical Assessment & Rating Board, Ethics & Registration Board

Key feature: NEXT (National Exit Test) proposed

INDIA'S DENTAL HEALTH:

Dentist-to-population ratio: ~1:10,000 (WHO recommends 1:7,500)

Dental colleges: 300+; Annual BDS seats: 26,000+

~95% of Indian adults have dental caries

Health: State List (List II, Entry 6); Medical/dental profession regulation: Concurrent List (List III, Entry 26)

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health (2016): recommended replacing MCI

Ayushman Bharat HWCs do not routinely include dental services

Oral health not part of India's primary healthcare package

Sources: [PIB](#), [The Hindu](#), [GKToday](#)

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