

NURSING: WHAT IS NEW? IT IS NEWFANGLED! NEXUS WITH HEALTHCARE PROFESSION REQUIRED!

You are a human being first, nurse next. Realize “service to humanity is service to God”.

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Recent changing trends in the nursing and nursing profession require rethinking to find out what is new in the profession. It shows that the nursing profession has become a specialty of medical profession. Nurses see their job as newfangled, novel and challenging, assuming increased leadership in managing the patients, however critical they may be. Nursing profession has emerged to re-emphasize that it has a nexus with medical profession for better patient care. Nurses began undertaking more and more responsibilities in controlling emerging situations and guiding other professionals working with them. This in turn eased the medical profession with routine burden giving an opportunity to spend more time to research.

Nursing Profession- Traditions:

Historically a review of literature shows that the origin of nursing profession began from the time of Hippocrates (fifth century BCE). At that time nursing profession was mainly taken up by men and therefore nurse was known as “male attendant”. However the foundation for modern nursing was laid down by missionaries and monks. Nurse is generally respected by calling her as ‘sister’ and male nurse as ‘brother’. They are kept in high esteem by the society. In the past, mostly nurses were unmarried until they are “paid pension and asked them to get marry and stay at home”.

However there was a setback for the profession for over 200 years until the light was lit by Florence Nightingale who was an ‘influential figure for the birth of modern nursing’. The Nightingale model of nursing professional’s education spread widely in Europe and North America after 1870.



Florence Nightingale (1820-1910)

Florence Nightingale

Today, the Indian scenario for nursing is still primitive, due mostly to non-implementations of policies and various recommendations by the expert committees. India has a severe shortage of human resources for healthcare. Qualified healthcare workforce is concentrated in urban areas. Government though lays down the rules and regulations for the institutions to follow, monitoring has become cursory. However it is acknowledged that the problem is challenging, and the Government is unable to bring the qualified healthcare workers to rural and underserved areas. Thus the rural population mostly depends on their unqualified healthcare workers available in their villages.

Nurses Migration and Shortages:

The migration of qualified doctors and nurses leading to shortages is enormous that is affecting the healthcare services in India. There is no consistent plan to encourage serving in the underserved areas at least for a period of time by rotation. The worst victims are qualified nurses, who are troubled due to corruption. Lack of incentives leads nurses to migrate to corporate hospitals and other foreign destinations. A workable comprehensive national policy for human resources especially in healthcare sector must be implemented to achieve universal health care. This must include drastic changes in the service conditions that should promote local community members to take up nursing profession and serve in their areas to solve the shortage problems in the area.

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Nurses Stand: Trained Nurses Association of India (TNAI)

“There is always that one special patient that you will remember forever.” -----Author unknown

The Trained Nurses Association of India (TNAI) wants the voice of nurses must be heard. It claims that, “lack of adequate Nursing input in the existing health care policy of the Government is one of the factors responsible for the disparity that exists between poor and rich”. The TNAI further claims that; “since nursing is predominantly a ‘Caring profession’ in promoting the health of an individual and thus the societal health, a nurse has a right to contribute in formulating health related policies.” It further rightly claims that the information provided by nurses must be consumed “for formulating a realistic national health policy”. Thus it implies to draft nurses “to various positions at all levels for a meaningful improvement of overall health care service system of the nation.”

However, the TNAI failed to appreciate and mention that nurse being the first line of contact in emergency situations; where the patient may be collapsing, say due to a Cardio-Vascular accident or other life threatening conditions. The nurse having been trained should have the right to manage and try save the life until the physician arrives by prescribing and administering standard medications. The TNAI has also not underlined that the shortage of manpower in some specialties like Anesthesiology, Operating Rooms, Psychiatric, and Geriatric wards nurses must be trained as in the West, and allowed to function as a physician under the supervision of a Physician anesthetist. In some universities, a graduate nurse is allowed to pursue part-time medical course and become a doctor, too.

Nursing Profession- Global Scenario:

Historically the nursing profession has been playing important role besides taking care of the sick and suffering in hospitals, nurse also takes care of the individual and families. In the developed world the role of nurses is being expanded to administration, education, and research. They also supervise health and hygiene projects to promote preventive medicine. Therefore in India, in view of the changing trends and introducing innovative plans for promoting health, like “Swatch Bharat” programs, a nurse

can be a better supervisor in achieving ‘Health for Quality of Life’.

In the United States, United Kingdom and in other developed countries nurses have assumed critical positions and have become Clinical Nurses. In some case the advance training, that they undergo, they are virtually discharging the duties of medical specialists managing independently under a medical specialist who supervises 6-8 Clinical Nurses, virtually wiping off the need for more medical specialist. This not only eased the burden of recruiting physicians but has reduced the operating costs drastically.

A Clinical Nurse earns decent wages equivalent a physician’s beginning salary, having prescribing authority. Even a Nurse Assistant is better trained and equipped to manage patients unlike in India. Nurses are researchers, academicians and even assuming administrative roles at National and International levels. The role of Nurses functioning as counsellors, technicians, dieticians etc. is remarkable. There is nothing like trained birth attendant as it still exists in many developing countries. Another changing trend is that more and more men are entering the nursing profession. Male nurses perhaps better suited for say, outdoor emergencies.

A consistent and powerful policy for National Community Health Nursing Services must be evolved. The National Center for Health Workforce Analysis of USA in their data analysis in 2013 brought out interesting points. In USA at least 16 percent of the Registered Nurses (RN) workforce and 24 percent of the Licensed Practitioner Nurse (LPN) workforce are located in rural areas. Growth in the nursing workforce outpaced growth in the U.S. population. The number of RNs and LPNs per capita has increased by about 14 percent and 6 percent respectively. Currently, about 55 percent of the RN workforce holds a bachelor’s or higher degree. This analysis helped formulation of ‘The National Nursing Policy’ that suggested; in order to for providing sustainable for healthcare services, more facilities are offered for Nurses to pursue their academic career and course like Master’s and Doctoral degrees and facilities to do research and obtain MPhil and PhD are provided.

There is increased concern about the ethical aspects of global health worker migration. The World Health Organization (WHO) prescribed principles and practices to follow in International

recruitment. It directs to follow strict ethical practices and prescribes the norms of wages and working conditions. In order to prevent shortages of nurses, a country should plan and project supply and demand. It further says that it is possible only when 'the bureaucracy realizes that nursing profession is, indeed, indispensable and is highly technical job'. The Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) created a 'Health Workforce Simulation Model' for the nurse requirements for USA. It concluded that the supply of nurses between 2012 and 2025 will outpace demand, even though there is a 33 percent growth in production. This demand is mainly due "to greater focus on managing health status and preventing acute health issues"

Nursing Specialties and Technology

It is emphasized that in the changing demographic scenario there is increased need for nurses in managing chronic diseases, cancer, obesity related diseases, trauma, rehabilitation, health and hygiene etc. Therefore, in order to balance the supply and demand of nurses, the Govt. must ensure adequate funds for nursing education and improving the teaching and training. Innovative methods on par, those already in practice for decades must be introduced.

Saying:

"Don't mess with me — I get paid to poke people with sharp objects."

Nursing students may be granted with adequate scholarships, loans, and easy repayment facilities. Incentives for nurses willing to work in critical units, remote areas, and also research projects related to health and hygiene must be provided.

In addition the recent technological developments in creating healthcare industry is challenging for nursing profession. Nurses have to be more skillful and computer literate to handle digital technology. It has become mandatory for nurses to be able to handle the obligatory and compulsory knowledge to manage and maintenance of Electronic Health Records. In order to be an expert in the field of Clinical Nursing one should be well versed with all the advanced technology taking place in instrumentation, minimal invasive surgery, robotics, and advanced technology used in the Neurosurgery, Cardio-Vascular and Thoracic surgery, Transplantations etc. The recent trends in daycare management of surgical cases

require skills for nurses to take decisions on the spot and advice.

Therefore it is essential to modify the existing Nursing Policies in teaching and training. The Government should look into its Healthcare Policy and change to keep in pace with the modern healthcare services. Reallocation of budget, therefore, becomes an essential arm to upgrade the nursing profession for achieving "Health for All" providing quality healthcare comparable to that in existence to advanced countries. The availability of sophisticated services in corporate hospitals is not enough but similar services must be made available from Primary Health Care to tertiary care facilities.

Nurse and Socio-economic conditions:

It is also important to discuss the attitude of the nurse towards the patient while attending. Equally, it is important, however sick the patient may be, and having confidence and faith in attending nurse will be beneficial. The service that a nurse provides also depends on her socio-economic conditions both at home and the community she lives in. Any disturbed situation at home reflects the services she provides to the patient and thus quality suffers. Therefore the essence of being psychologically strong will help nurse and the healthcare services provided. Therefore, the service conditions must be tuned to keep the psychological harmony of the nurse.

Nurse as a Leader

The domain of nursing specialty training should be of forward thinking. Nurse must be trained to handle the cutting-edge technology that is emerging. They must be trained to understand how digitally advanced technology that is vastly being used, works. This also implies training them in clinical and administrative fields also. The clinical training should focus on how to provide the immediate needs of the patients should they land in critical conditions. A nurse should have the ability to identify and monitor the impending complications that may arise. Therefore the nursing professionals should be able to take part in delivering the curative, promotive, preventive, and rehabilitative healthcare services. The aim should be to make the nurse to emerge as on-the-spot leader of the Healthcare practices.

A graduate nurse should be able to specialize in the fields like Pediatrics and its sub specialties