

Challenges of Nursing Education in India

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ABSTRACT

Healthcare industry in India is growing at a rapid pace. Both Government and the private sector have responded with significant investments in infrastructure and institutional mechanisms resulting in healthcare becoming one of the largest sectors. Nurses in India forms the huge segment of healthcare service and works as a backbone of hospital. Strengthening the nursing workforce in India is a need of the hour to provide holistic care to the patient and also render updated knowledge and skills to budding nurses. To make the nursing sector strong, it is suggested to enhance the quality of nursing education. In past few years, our world is exploded with advanced techniques and machinery. The nurses who are working in clinical set-up are expected to pace up with the new technologies and use them in the care of their patients. The aim of this paper is to put a light on the challenges of nursing education in India and strategies to overcome it in coming decades. The paper put forward the importance of Entrance exams to enter the nursing course, streamlining the nursing education, emphasis of research, requirement of demand and supply chain of nurses, importance of parent hospital, applying the knowledge of adult education to deal with Gen-Z in today's time, etc. The paper also tells the importance of Dual role of a nurse as tutor in a nursing institute and clinical nurse in the hospital to provide updated knowledge to their students about latest healthcare technologies and also aims to provide a roadmap to restore the prestigious position the nursing profession deserves in India.

Keywords: Challenges, Strengthening, nursing profession, Gen-Z, Dual-role, nursing education

INTRODUCTION

According to WHO, the vital role played by the nurse is in delivery of Primary Health Care worldwide. Today, the nurses are experts in countless skills e.g., disease prevention, its treatment, palliative care, critical care giving, leadership, educationalist and many more. Nurses are often called "The unsung heroes" in the health care industry all over the world.

In India, the first school of Health visitors was started in 1918 by Lady Reading Health School, Delhi. The first four-year Basic B.Sc. program was established in 1946 at RAK College of Nursing in Delhi and CMC College of Nursing in Vellore. In 1960, M.Sc. was established in RAK College of Nursing, Delhi. In 1951, a two-year ANM course was established in St. Mary's Hospital at Punjab. Now, we have many central, state and private nursing institutions which provides quality education with a good amount of clinical exposure. In India, 1996 nursing colleges are registered and working till now, out of which 1833 are private colleges and only 163 are government colleges. Thirty-seven more nursing colleges are going to start in future (According to GOI).

World Health Organisation (WHO) has dedicated the year 2020 as the "Year of the Nurse and Midwife", to give honour to the first nurse; Florence Nightingale. Indeed, it was the tremendous year for all the health care professionals to serve the people and apply the knowledge and skills they have. It was one of the challenging years for the world as the pandemic hit the world population and destroyed the world

population physically, mentally and economically. Many nurses worked more than 72 hours non-stop in various regions of the world. But what takes it to become a nurse like that? A degree, expertise, skills or knowledge?

THE SCENARIO IN INDIA

In India, students studying in higher secondary education have almost no knowledge of nursing courses offered by esteemed universities, but if they have, they just want to become a nurse for financial stability and job security. The concept of patient care is nowhere seen. Even if the nurse is dedicated and efficient in his/her profession, chances by the organizations are less. They have a lot of responsibility of patient care but with minimum authority. They have less opportunities to expand their limits as compared to other professions, and thus it becomes monotonous career for their entire lives. Most of the nurses are happy with this monotonous thing happening to them, because they are settled with handsome pay. This kills the enthusiasm to take up new roles, challenges or even new responsibility. Nurses are lagging behind in representing administration roles at the hospital. The voice should be raised in the favors of nurses by the nurses who are working in all settings.

Nursing is a vast concept comprises of Knowledge, skills, motive, Empathy, passion, etc. But most of the nursing colleges in India are not experts in providing all types of knowledge and exposure to clinicals with empathetical and motivational touch. To achieve the objective of leading the world in the field of Nursing, it is essential to strengthen the roots of this noble profession.

CHALLENGES IN NURSING EDUCATION

1. NO STANDARDIZATION IN NURSING COURSES- As India is a developing country, there are states which are quite good at providing nursing education, but few states are still

at progressing stage. Many of the states doesn't provide diploma courses in nursing (e.g., R.A.K College of Nursing, AIIMS, CMC Vellore, etc) but many other, mostly private colleges serve diploma as well as degree courses. India lags behind in streamlining the nursing education.

2. LACK OF PARENT HOSPITAL- Plenty of nursing colleges in India doesn't have a parent hospital especially many private colleges. Parent hospital is a requirement for any nursing college to train its student nurses in various procedures. It provides the students with real-life experiences which enhances the emotional intelligent in the students and refine the student's practice.

3. STANDARD ENTRANCE TESTS- To be honest, the selection of the students in the nursing school or colleges are not through any entrance exams. All the government colleges have NEET as entrance exam for nursing course, but we can raise a question on private nursing institutions. There is no standard in selecting students for any nursing course in many recognised private institutions. Indian Nursing Council (INC) recommends a curriculum for all the nursing courses available. The curriculum has meant to be enhancing and taking up the standards of nursing education and practice in the country. And students, who are studying under various nursing courses must have the potential to pace up with the given curriculum. No entrance tests for admission in the course doesn't assure a well-trained nurse from the nursing institutions.

4. STAFFS IN HOSPITALS AND NURSING INSTITUTIONS- We have hundreds of nursing institutions which are deprived of adequate number of staffs. Most of the colleges are having teachers who are tutoring subjects other than their speciality. Moreover, most of the teachers in nursing institutes are not progressive, lags behind in conducting

research, writing a review, or guiding students in their research projects. Many of them are just afraid of attempting one. Many experienced staffs who are working in clinics, hospitals and multi-speciality hospitals, encounter various issues and problems of nurses, but they straggle to come forward to raise the awareness or to write about it.

- 5. DEALING WITH GEN-Z-** Now we are dealing with Gen-Z (children born in 1997-2021), they are technologically equipped and expects the teachers to be the same. Gen-Z are creative, have a huge social network and also believe in realistic ideas. Today in nursing courses, it is thoughtless to teach them carbolization of the cot just to stick on to our nursing roots. Instead of those procedures which nurses are not doing these days, teaching them what is helpful, realistic and new to them is vital.

STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN THE PROFESSION

- 1. STREAMLINING THE NURSING EDUCATION-** In India, we have courses like ANM, GNM, B.Sc. (Hons) Nursing, M.Sc. Nursing, and Ph.D. And we all know, in a huge population to serve, we need more hands to work for clinics, hospitals and colleges. In India, nurses are produced by institutions as products which can be used during lack of supply i.e., in Indian nurses are working as machines in the hospitals and colleges. They do not have their unique identity, personality and also underconfident. There is a difference in the style of work of a GNM nurse and a B.Sc. nurse working in a same department. However, we call both of them a nurse, and treat them equally. But somewhere, it makes difference in treating the patient and observing things around. In order to blur the line between a GNM nurse and a B.Sc. nurse, streamlining the nursing education system in the country.

Now we have NEP (National Education Policy 2020) in India. It creates a differentiation in the course according to the year studied. It also opens a gateway for the students to leave the course at a certain year after obtaining the required points and continue it later. Streamlining nursing education with NEP 2020 can include a well-structured curriculum for 4 years with a gateway for the students, required credit points, chance for conducting a research project, placement assurance, etc. A 4-year course with solid structure including 2 years certificate course, 3 years diploma and 4th year dedicated to internship and research project is suggested.

- 2. PARENT HOSPITALS-** Having a parent or attached hospitals with the nursing colleges can ensure proper and continuous training. It gives a real-time experience to all the students right from the very first year. Many private nursing institutes doesn't have a parent hospital to practice and training. It makes the students fall back from other students studying the same course in other colleges with a parent hospital. Parent hospital provides an environment with real patients, management, staff and scenarios, which helps the students to enhance their emotional intelligent, skills in nursing and also the critical thinking skills. Student graduating from a college which has a parent hospital makes a huge difference during their job because many of the situations they have already practiced.

Therefore, it is suggested to have a parent hospital for all the nursing courses in the country to enrich the experience of nurse trainee.

- 3. ENTRANCE EXAMS-** As doctors are considered as the integral part of the healthcare system, likewise, nurses are the backbone of the healthcare in the country. In India, we have NEET to enter into the medical course (MBBS), some nursing colleges are keeping NEET marks to filter out the students in

nursing courses also. But it raises a question for numerous private nursing institutes. Nursing colleges are budding up are mushrooms in many of the developing states, to increase the number of admission of students, some colleges are taking up students without entrance exams.

Entrance tests are useful to filter out the deserving candidate to opt for the rich nursing curriculum. Nursing is not an easy job. We need a kind of future nurses who has the potential to absorb the curriculum, understand the details and also with good aptitude. We want our nurses to compete nurses from other countries, but what if we are not selecting a right candidate for our holy job. It will ultimately result in manufacturing the machines with no critical thinking, observation skills and many other technicalities. Hence, a standard entrance exam should be implemented for the streamlined nursing courses in the country at national or state level. It will aid the nursing society in India to progress with the right choice of students and to compete nurses of other countries.

4. CONTINUING AND IN-SERVICE EDUCATION-

The nursing workforce in India are focussed to get settled at one place with limited hopes and a continuous source of payment. To race up with developed countries, we need motivated nurses with a sight of improving themselves. Most of the nurses do not opt for higher education (because they are settling with the payment or just don't want to study). Continuing education can raise the intelligence in the nursing workforce and aware them regarding many advanced procedures.

In-service education is suggested to be provided to upgrade their knowledge and skills which they can use in their work-fields. Critical thinking, observation skills, soft skills (communications), computer

applications, Problem solving skills, etc are some of them. Today, we face many unsolved problems in nursing practice and education, with the help of continuing and in-service education we can find answers for them.

The nurse manager must arrange the sessions for In-service education from experts and also provide the nurse with certificates. Nurses should be motivated to attend these sessions and use its knowledge and skills in their daily practice.

5. RESEARCH-

Research is the most crucial part of Nursing curriculum. Basic B.Sc. Nursing course guides the student nurses regarding conducting, analysing and writing a research article. Research plays a vital role in expanding the knowledge of unknown and opens up gates for many thinkers. It gives everyone a chance to find out the answers to unsolved questions, generalised the findings and put in front of the whole world. All nurses are researchers in some way, they are creative thinkers. Honestly, they are innovative in solving the problems.

Research expands the area for thinking. We must encourage the nurses to write and conduct research in nursing to transform the current situation of nursing society in our country. The management should fund their studies and help them to publish it. They can present those articles in conferences, seminars, or use its finding in their daily work. The nurses should be motivated for Competency based education, outcome-based education, etc to take a one step ahead in learning.

Nursing research opens up new doors to explore problem statements, suggest different samples, compare populations, etc.

6. SINGLE AUTHORITARIAN-

Plenty of private nursing colleges are under embedded under group of institutions which have bifurcated authorities. The nursing college has to follow the

university guidelines (which is prescribed by INC) and also the specific group of institution guidelines. To make up for both the authorities, the faculties of the institution have to do plenty of clerical work. It consumes lot of time of the teacher, which results in less contribution in student's training. Single authority is suggested to ensure the fulfilment of the theory and practical hours, less clerical work and maximum input in student's professional training by the teachers.

7. **DUAL-ROLE-** For teaching trends in nursing, the nurse educator must have updated knowledge. Faculty, who doesn't have experience in hospital settings, who have less experience in handling a real patient, is less efficient in providing knowledge which is practically possible. For example- A teaching staff who has work experience both in clinical and teaching can provide better examples for the students to explain a concept as compared to a teacher who has the same experience or less but only in teaching side.

Thus, the dual role of clinical nurse and tutoring is suggested for better training of nursing students. It will help them to mould them into a better nurse with good understanding of latest technologies and issues in the society by a teacher who is working in both the settings.

8. **ADULT LEARNING-** The concepts of adult learning should be applied in the nursing education system. To deal with the Gen-Z, the faculties must understand that every student is unique and have their unique pace to study. The nursing tutor should never compare one student with another and encourage harmony between them. Real life examples should be provided to the students with situation analysis skills. It will trigger the critical thinking of the student and create interest in the subject.

The teacher should appoint the good learner as- student tutors (tutorship) and put slow learners in the group. Topics should be given for a specific time duration and assessment should be done for slow learners as well as fast learners. By suggesting tutorship, the author is motivating leadership, enhancing communications skills, spreading knowledge and building positive environment for learning.

CONCLUSION

In India, the nursing education need an upgradation in starting from selecting a right candidate in the course, providing right learning environment, experienced and learned teachers, conducting a research study, in-service education, etc. The ultimate goal of nursing service and education is to provide holistic care to the patient and also to render excellent nursing education in all the government and private institutes. Much time has already been passed already but we can expect a great nursing future in coming decades in India.

Conflict of Interest: None

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