The incidence of breast cancer in India shows a rising trend. It is the commonest cancer of urban Indian women and the second commonest in the rural women. Owing to the lack of awareness about this disease and in absence of a breast cancer screening program, the majority of breast cancers are diagnosed at a relatively advanced stage.

Breast Cancer awareness programmes are more concentrated in the cities and have not reached the remote and rural parts of the country. India having a heterogenous culture, increasing awareness of this disease through various channels of communication remains a daunting job. In most cases, female healthcare providers are the preferred source of information about breast cancer screening because women feel more comfortable being asked by ladies. Nurses and midwives are ideal health professionals who can increase public knowledge of breast cancer and encourage the practice of monthly breast self examination (BSE). The aim of the present study was to assess and compare the knowledge of BSN students regarding breast cancer.

Objectives
1. To assess and compare the knowledge of BSN students of private nursing college of Haryana and Government nursing college of Punjab regarding breast cancer.
2. To assess and compare the knowledge of BSN students with selected independent variables i.e. age, class, qualifying examination, and previous work exposure in oncology wing.

Materials and Methods
Research Design
Descriptive research approach was used in the study and randomisation was lacking in this study.

Research Tool
Final tool consisted of 2 parts. Part I: Sample characteristics; Part II: 50 multiple choice type questions with each correct answer carrying one mark.
1. Questions relating to Anatomy of breast (Questions 1-5)
2. Incidence of Breast Cancer (Questions 6-10)
3. Causes of Breast Cancer (Questions 11-20)
4. Types of Breast Cancers (Questions 21-26)
5. Sign and Symptoms of Breast Cancer (Questions 27-29)
6. Early Detection of Breast Cancer and its Importance (Question Number 30-34)
7. Breast Self examination BSE(Question Number 35-41)
8. Practices relating to BSE (Question Number 42-50)

Criterion measures: Excellent (>80), Good (61-80), Average (41-60), Below Average (<40) knowledge scores.

Sample size: Sample comprised of 150 students of BSc (Nursing) 2nd and 4th year.

Sampling technique: Purposive sampling method. Initially matching was done for all sample characteristics.

Data collection
Ethical considerations: Written permissions were obtained from Principals of both the Nursing colleges and written informed consent was obtained from all research participants.

Question papers (Research tool consisting of multiple choice questions) were administered simultaneously (on the same date and time, so that contamination of results did not take place) in both the nursing colleges and investigator was helped by another co-investigator in collecting the data from private college of district Ambala, Haryana as she was personally supervising the Government nursing college students in district Patiala, Punjab 45 minutes time was given to every student to complete 50 questions.

Date Analysis: The data anal-
sis was done by calculating the percentage, mean, standard deviation, and ‘z’ value.

**Results**

As per the first objective of the study, the mean knowledge score of B.Sc (Nursing) students of Government college was statistically significant as compared to private college at p<0.05 level as evident by their mean scores i.e. 23.05 and 21.02 (SD: 4.94 and ‘z’ - 2.96*). Hence it can be concluded that students of Govt College had high mean knowledge score than students of Private college.

As per the second objective of the study, lesser age and class (<20 years and BSN-II) had no impact on the knowledge levels of students in both government and private college at p<0.05 level as evident by their mean knowledge scores i.e. 21.16 and 22.13, whereas higher age and class (21-23 years and BSN-IV) had significant impact on knowledge level of BSN students at p<0.001 level as evident by their mean knowledge scores i.e. 24.79 and 20.02. Hence it can be concluded that BSN-IV students of 21-23 years of age of Government college had high knowledge score regarding breast cancer and breast self-examination compared to all the nursing students. As they are the future torch bearers of this education in the community, they save hundreds of women in terms of early detection and prevention of breast cancer.

2. Nurse administrators should encourage involvement of village Sarpanches (local village head), village school teachers and even health care workers in empowering the women regarding early detection and prevention of breast cancer. This can also be done by making local self help groups of women, headed by elderly educated women of village and for this help from nursing students and community health nursing teachers can also be taken as they work in community.

3. The study can be replicated on larger sample and a quasi-experimental study should also be carried out on nursing students so as to assess the level of knowledge after getting structured teaching programme on breast cancer and BSE.

4. Similar studies can be done on village women to assess their prevalent knowledge and practices regarding BSE and based on their findings mass media camps can be organised to impart them education regarding breast cancer and right technique of doing breast self-examination.

**Implications and Recommendations**

1. Basic knowledge about breast cancer and breast self examination be imparted to all the nursing students. As they are the future torch bearers of this education in the community, they save hundreds of women in terms of early detection and prevention of breast cancer.

2. Nurse administrators should encourage involvement of village Sarpanches (local village head), village school teachers and even health care workers in empowering the women regarding early detection and prevention of breast cancer. This can also be done by making local self help groups of women, headed by elderly educated women of village and for this help from nursing students and community health nursing teachers can also be taken as they work in community.

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**References**


