The entire staff of King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEM), Mumbai including the retired nursing personnel are to be commended for their noble spirit and exemplary and unprecedented dedication in taking care of Aruna for 37 years.

Aruna was a beautiful and hardworking nurse working in KEM Hospital, Mumbai and on the evening of 27 November 1973 she was attacked by a sweeper in the hospital who wrapped a dog chain around her neck, yanked her back and raped her. To immobilise her during this act he twisted the chain around her neck. It is alleged that due to strangulation by the dog chain the supply of oxygen to the brain stopped and the brain got damaged. Ever since Aruna is in a persistent vegetative state (PVS) and virtually a dead person. She has no awareness and her brain is virtually dead. There is no possibility of any improvement in her condition, her body lies on the bed in the KEM Hospital, Mumbai like a dead animal, and this has been the position for the last 37 years.

Euthanasia is one of the most perplexing issues which the courts and legislatures all over the world are facing today. As a matter of fact, the medical team constituted by our Hon’ble supreme court ruled out that Aruna is neither in a state of coma nor is brain dead. She is exactly in a state where the vital organs are functioning very normally but at the same time she meets most of the criteria for being in a permanent vegetative state.

We must put on record that in the world history of medicine there would not be another single case where such a person is cared and nurtured in bed for 37 long years and has not developed a single bed sore. The current record stands at 33 years. This speaks volumes of excellence of nursing care that KEM Nursing staff has given to her.

Kudos to the much awaited judgment by Mr Justice Markandey Katju and Ms Justice Cyan Sudha Misra of Supreme Court of India. Had the euthanasia been granted it would have not only led to massive resentment among all doctors and nurses of KEM Hospital but would have opened a new venture to all miscreants and unscrupulous people of our society who for the sake of property / money may go up to the extent of getting their parents and relatives killed by bribing and conspiring with unethical, immoral and greedy doctors.

Hence there were complete chances of euthanasia becoming prone and vulnerable to be misused. Moreover tomorrow there may be a cure to a medical state perceived as incurable today. We strongly oppose the writ petition by the practicing lawyer of Mumbai High Court. One must understand that as all these years the nurses caring for her are not tired, infact they feel great and privileged to care for her, then why the former is bothered, despite the fact that the person referred to, has not even cared her, for one single day. So there is no point in worrying unnecessarily for Aruna, writing a book on her life story or even paying casual visits to her as all these things cannot be a substitute for quality and holistic nursing care being rendered to her by our fellow nurses relentlessly day and night!

We nurses of India stand totally united and integrated for not only hundreds of Aruna’s struggling for their lives after attempts of rape, sexual assault, molestation, physical and mental trauma but also for scores of women and children who fall prey to unscrupulous and lecherous elements of our society. We request the nursing superintendents, matrons and nursing supervisors of all hospitals in India to ensure that safety measures are provided to all the staff nurses working at night duty shifts so as to rule out any incidence of foul play. Even though the scenario of nurses has changed since the 1970s still the crime against nurses goes unabated.

It’s our appeal to all the nursing superintendents and matrons of private as well as government hospitals in India along with managing committees of all semi government, corporate and mission hospitals in India to establish a grievance redressal mechanism for all nurses, in a way to enable the latter to voice their issues and concerns. Proper guidance and counselling services need to be provided to them so as to give them a sense of warmth and belongingness and by doing so, we will follow the unifying adage of “Universal Brotherhood”. But above all ensuring safety of nurses by all means is the need of the hour.

We pledge to commit to sacrifice our blood, tears and sweat for the sake of humanity and mankind! Once again TNAI salutes the spirit de corps of all nurses of KEM Hospital, Mumbai.

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