

Development of Nursing Education in India

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In 1857, the War of Independence turned Miss Florence Nightingale's interest to the health of the Army in India. It was for this purpose that the Royal Commission was appointed in 1859. In 1868, a sanitary department was established. In March 1888, 10 qualified British nurses arrived in India to look after the British Army in India. In 1905 (during the British rule in India), missionary nurses arrived as members of Missionary Medical Association. This was the very start of formalised nursing service in India.

Gradually, the increasing need of adequately trained nurses led to creation of South India Examining Board in 1911 and the North India Examining Board in 1912. It was the mission's hospital nursing leaders who laid the foundation of systematic Nursing Education in India. However, the mid India Board of Examination was started in 1934. But this was not regulated for registration. State-wise councils started developing from 1935 onwards. Indian Nursing Council (INC) Act was passed by the Parliament in 1947. The Nursing Council upgraded the educational requirements which permitted only matriculated candidates to seek admission to the schools. The Central Government granted an approval to the Bhore Committee's (1946) recommendations by starting two colleges of Nursing, in Delhi (1946) and Vellore (1947). This provided university degree level courses. With the efforts of Professor S Radhakrishnan (the then Chairman of University Education Commission), Nursing education in the country was integrated into the system of higher education. Over decades, there has been an improvement in the availability of nursing education in India.

On 15 August 1947 India became independent. Social changes were taking place rapidly but an alarming absence of public health and sanitary measures continued. The ratio of nurse to patient remained abysmally low. The opening of nursing schools associated with college gave nursing profession a higher social and economic status than it had previously known. The formation of many commissions and committees, es-

tablishment of INC and tremendous work of the Trained Nurses Association of India (TNAI) brought about change in nursing education post-independence. The TNAI made significant achievements in the field of nursing education. It creates awareness among nurses through its then monthly *Nursing Journal of India* and organising continuing education programmes. TNAI also offers scholarships to deserving candidates to take up studies within the country and abroad.

Establishment of Indian Nursing Council

The INC was constituted to establish a uniform standard of education for nurses, midwives, health visitors and auxiliary nurse midwives. The INC act was passed following an ordinance on 31 December 1947. The council was constituted in 1949.

Objectives of the Council

- ◆ To set standards and to regulate the nursing education of all types and levels in the country.
- ◆ To prescribe and specify minimum qualifications for a particular course in nursing.
- ◆ Perform an advisory role in the state nursing council.
- ◆ To collaborate with state nursing councils, schools and colleges of nursing and examination board.

Formation of State Nursing Councils

Further, each state / UT formulated a nursing council in pursuance of the objectives of INC in an effective manner. The state nursing council started controlling nursing activities of the state. The state registration council is an autonomous entity, however it has no power to prescribe the syllabi for nursing courses. The main functions of the state nursing council have been as follows:

- To inspect and accredit schools of nursing in their state.
- To conduct the examinations.
- To prescribe rules of conduct.
- To maintain registers of nurses, midwives, ANM

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and health visitors in the state.

To cope up with the nursing and midwifery needs several training and academic programmes are being conducted in the country. These can be broadly classified into two categories:

A. Basic General Nursing and Midwifery Education

1. Training of Dais (Birth Attendants)

The Dai training continued past Independence. The goal was to train one Dai in each village so as to train the entire practicing Dais in country. Duration of training was 30 days, and there was no age limit. The training include theory and practice and emphasis was on field practice. This training was done at sub centre and equipments provided by UNICEF.

2. Training of Auxiliary Nurse Midwife

In 1950 Indian Nursing Council came out with some important decisions relating to future patterns of nursing training in India. One of the important decisions was that there should be only two standard of training, nursing and midwifery. Subsequently the curriculum for these courses was prescribed. The first course was started at St Mary's Hospital in Punjab in 1951. The entrance qualification was up to 7/8 years of schooling. The period of training was 2 years which included 9 months of midwifery and 3 months of community experience. In 1977, as a result of the decision to prepare multipurpose health worker, and vocationalisation of higher secondary education, curriculum was revised and designed to have 1.5 years of vocationalised ANM programme and six months of general education. The entrance qualification was raised from 7th passed to matriculation passed. Under multipurpose scheme, promotional avenue was opened to senior ANMs for undergoing six months promotional training as per the course prescribed by INC.

3. Lady Health Visitor Course

Training of LHV course continued post independence. The syllabus was prepared and prescribed by INC in 1951. The entrance qualification was matriculation. The duration was two and a half years which was subsequently reduced to 2 years.

4. General Nursing and Midwifery Course

GNM course existed since early years of century. In 1951, syllabus was prescribed by INC. In 1954 a special provision was made for male nurses. In 1954 public health was integrated into basic nursing course. First revision of course was done in

1963. In 1964-65 Psychiatric nursing was included in curriculum. The duration of the course was reduced from 4 years to 3.5 years. With second revision in 1982 the course duration was further reduced to 3 years. The Midwifery training of one year duration was gradually reduced to nine months and then to six months. Finally a three-year integrated programme of GNM was prescribed in 1982.

5. Post-Basic/Post Certificate Short-Term Courses and Diploma Programmes

During 1948-50, four nurses were deputed by Government of India to the UK for mental health nursing diploma. During 1954, Manzil Medical Health centre, Lucknow conducted psychiatric nursing orientation course of 4 - 6 weeks duration. In 1951 a one-year course in public health was started at College of Nursing, Delhi. The first organised course for psychiatric nurses was conducted at All India Institute of Mental Health. In 1962 diploma in paediatric nursing was established at JJ Group of Hospitals, Mumbai. At present there are many other courses of three months duration which are monitored and recognised by INC. The ultimate aim of the entire post-basic/post certificate programme is improvement of quality of patient care and promotion of health.

B. University-Level Programmes

1. Basic BSc Nursing

First university programme started just before independence in 1946 at University of Delhi, and at CMC Vellore. In 1949, on recommendation of university education committee and education commission (1964-66) and conference & workshop held by TNAI, WHO and UGC, some more colleges came up in different states that were affiliated to state universities. INC prescribes the syllabus which has been revised three times, the last revision was done in 1981 on the basis of the 10+2+3 system of general education. At present the BSc Nursing programme which is recommended by the INC is of four years duration and has foundations for future study and specialisation in nursing.

2. Post Basic BSc Nursing

The need for higher training for certificate nurses was stressed by the Mudaliar Committee in 1962. Two years post-basic certificate in BSc (N) programme was started in December 1962 for nurses with diploma in general and midwifery with minimum of 2 years experience. First started by University of Trivandrum, presently there are many

colleges in India offering PB BSc (N) course. Indira Gandhi National Open University launched post-basic BSc Nursing programme, which is of three years duration and recognised by INC.

3. Post-Graduate Education - MSc Nursing

One of the foremost institutions to start the two years course in masters of nursing was RAK College of Nursing in 1959, and later CMC Vellore in 1969. Many colleges are now imparting MSc (N) degree course in different specialities.

4. M.Phil

INC felt the need for MPhil programme as early as in 1977 and appointed a committee for this purpose. In 1986 one year full time and two years part time programme was started in RAK College of Nursing Delhi.

5. PhD in Nursing

Indian nurses were sent abroad for PhD programme earlier. From 1992, PhD in nursing is available in India. MAHI is one of the other universities having PhD programme.

To recapitulate, the non-university programmes of nursing includes: (i) Basic ANM/GNM, and (ii) ad-


vance Post-Certificate diplomas. University Programmes include (i) Basic BSc (N), (ii) Post-Basic BSc (N), (iii) MSc (N), (iv) MPhil (N) and (v) PhD (N).

Conclusion

Nursing education has expanded considerably after independence. University education in nursing brought about changes in nursing education. The type of nurses required today is an "all round personality". Education brings changes in behaviour of the individual in a desirable manner. Besides providing knowledge and upgrading skills, it aims at all round development of an individual to become mature, self-sufficient, intellectually, culturally refined, socially efficient and spiritually advanced.

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