

Socio-Economic Status of Nursing Students

A Study of Marathwada Region in Maharashtra

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Introduction

The concept of Nursing has changed considerably with the launching of the global strategy of 'Health for All by 2000 A.D.'¹ It is one of the challenges to Nursing profession to achieve the goal.

It is presumed that candidates from low socio-economic groups prefer Nursing course as a professional career. Moreover, presently the Nursing profession is performing a vital role in extending health care to community in differing set-ups. At the same time large number of students after schooling join Nursing course by merit as well as in keen competitions for available seats in local institutes.

This prompted to study and appraise the socio-economic status of Nursing students residing in two adjacent districts in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra State.

Material and Methods

The study population for the present study was Nursing students enrolled in Nursing Schools, viz., Swami Ramanand Teerth Rural Medical College, Ambajogai, Distt. Beed, and Nursing School at Civil Hospitals in Distt. Beed and Parbhani of Marathwada division of Maharashtra State. The pre-tested proforma was used to collect the data on socio-economic status from 115 Nursing students in the first term of the 1995-96 academic year.

The General Nursing and Midwifery (G.N.M.) training course, conducted at S.R.T.R. Medical College, Ambajogai, Distt. Beed, was of three years duration with a minimum criteria as Higher Secondary School certificate. At District Hospitals there was a facility of the Auxiliary Nurse Midwifery

(A.N.M.) course of one and half years duration with minimum criteria for admission as Secondary School Certificate. The admission criteria was according to recommendations of Kartar Singh Committee Report (1974).² The syllabus was approved by Maharashtra Nursing Council with English medium. The candidates, after passing, registered with the Maharashtra Nursing Council. The budgetary allocation for training programme was ensured by the Department of Public Health, Government of Maharashtra. Therefore, the admission quota was as per Government guidelines for different categories, e.g., Open, B.S., OBC, ST, VJNT, SC, etc. However, reservation for male trainees was existing only for General Nursing course as 10% of admissions and not for ANM course in Civil Hospitals.

Profile of Students

Average age : 20.6 years

Sex ratio : M:F, 8(13.5%) : 42(84.5%)

Residence : Urban : Rural, 27(34.48%) : 88 (76.52%)

Religion : Hindu/Muslim/Others. 101 (87.83%)/5(4.34%)/9(7.83%)

Category : Open : Reserve, 21(18.27%):94 (81.73%)

In the present study, Nursing students had an average age of 20.6 years and it may be perhaps because of different criteria for enrolment to the Nursing course, i.e., passing of S.S.C. and H.S.C. examination for A.N.M. and G.N.M. courses respectively. There was predominance of females in the courses and the majority were Hindus. The Government policy regarding reservation category was reflected in terms of statistically large number of admissions being from socially backward classes, i.e., Scheduled Tribe, Vimukti Jatti and Bhatakya Jamati, etc. 92 (80%), Nursing students were unmarried, however, in case of 23(20%) Nursing students the reason for their marital status during the course or prior to it might be as a result of the inability to think and act independently on vital issues like family

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formation and related issues. Further, the influence of socio-cultural factors on attitude of parents may be contributory in rural area.

Observations and Discussion

Table 1: Educational Status of Parents

Status	Father No. (%)	Mother No. (%)	Combined No. (%)
Illiterate	23 (20)	65 (56.53)	88 (38.26)
Primary	33 (28.69)	28 (24.34)	61 (26.52)
Secondary	19 (16.52)	13 (11.31)	32 (13.92)
Matric	22 (19.14)	8 (6.96)	30 (13.04)
Graduate	18 (15.65)	1 (0.86)	19 (8.26)
Total	115 (100)	115 (100)	230 (100)

Table 1 shows that in the study the literacy status of mother and father clubbed together for Primary/Secondary/Matric/Graduate etc, was 92 (80%), which was higher than the national literacy average in males (63.86%) as per 1991 Census.³ However, in the illiterate category 65(56.53%) mothers were illiterate in contrast to 23(20%) illiterate fathers. This is more or less same as for Marathwada/Maharashtra and national figures, i.e., 67.65%, 61.17% and 60.58% respectively.⁴

Table 2 : Occupational Status of Parents

Status	Father No. (%)	Mother No. (%)
Agriculture	50 (43.48)	23 (20)
Service	32 (27.83)	4 (3.48)
Agriculture labour	16 (13.92)	11 (9.5)
Self-employed	10 (8.69)	6 (5.22)
Retired	7 (6.08)	-
Housewife	-	71 (61.73)
Total	115 (100)	115 (100)

Table 2 shows that occupation of father was agriculture 50(43.48%), service 32(27.83%), agricultural labour 16(13.92%), self-employed 10(8.69%) and retired 7(6.08%), etc. while majority, i.e., 71 (61.73%) mothers were performing only household traditional role. 23(20%) females were involved in agriculture and supportive activities and probably the reason might be on account of being single parents, deserted by husbands or different nature of

service with posting at distant places.

Table 3 : Economic Status of Family

Income/month in Rs.	SRTRMCH No.	Dist. Civil Hosp. No.	Total (%) No. (%)
1000	27	33	60 (52.17)
2000 -	14	19	33 (28.69)
3000 -	13	1	14 (12.18)
4000 +	6	2	8 (6.96)
Total	60	55	115 (100)

SRTRMCH: Nursing School attached to S.R.T.R. Medical College and Hospital, Ambajogai.

Table 3 shows that by referring to the criteria of economic backwardness,⁵ 60(52.17%) Nursing students were from low income family, in comparison with 55(47.83%) families being relatively better off from the economic point of view. It was also observed that Nursing students had very little knowledge as well as were not keen in recollecting the exact amount and the sources.

Table 4 : Intention for Selecting Nursing Course (n = 115)

Intention	SRTRMCH No.	Dist. Civil Hosp. No.	Total No. (%)
Social Service	32	25	57 (49.56)
Economic independence	35	10	45 (39.13)
Preference over other course	18	27	45 (39.13)
Parent's will	14	2	16 (13.91)
No. admission to other course	3	1	4 (3.48)
Easy admission to this course	3	-	3 (2.6)
Others	2	3	5 (4.35)

* Multiple intention by few students.

Table 4 shows that among the total of 115 Nursing students, 57 (49.56%) had opted the course for social service to community, while the remaining stu-

dents had various options like economic independence by 45(39.13%), students' preference over other course 45(39.13%), parents' will 16(13.91%), no admission to other courses by 4 (3.48%) students, etc.

Considering the socio-economic background of parents and the fact that 60(52.17%) Nursing students were from below poverty line families, it is likely that there was more stress as well as intention of economic independence and job security for future life, in selection of the course, rather than social service.

Table 5 : Preference for Future Placement

Place	SRTRMCH No.	Dist. Civil Hosp. No.	Total No.	(%)
Urban hospital	45	17	62	(53.91)
Rural: Primary Health Centre	15	38	53	(46.08)
Total	60	55	115	

Table 5 shows that majority (62 : 53.91%) Nursing students had inclination to stay in an urban set-up on account of better facilities from the service point of view, and may be perhaps due to attraction of urban lifestyle. However, 53(46.08%) Nursing students preferred working in rural areas and serve the community. It may be the fact that still rural life is dominant and important to them on account of their rural background.

Thus, the present study revealed that the majority of the students enrolled in training for Nurses were from low socio-economic strata, with a rural background and this is true as per prevailing preception. Out of 115 students 94(81.73%) got admission through reservation quota of the Government for upliftment and better opportunities for future life. However, it is strange that only 45 (39.13%) students had joined the course for economic independence with a little stress on acquiring scientific knowledge and skills so as to serve the community. It is a ray of hope that in spite of being the most backward region of Marathwada, the parents had permitted to continue education to their wards and this change in attitude will contribute to better status of women in society.

References

1. 'Nurses' Education and their Role in Health Programme : Symposium Report', (Speaker : J.J. Purohit). *The Nursing Journal of India*, March 1992, pp 53.
2. George, Roy K., et al. 'Socio-economic Status of B.Sc. (Nursing) Students : A Study of Kerala'. *The Nursing Journal of India*, Feb. 1992, pp. 39.
3. Population Census 1991, Maharashtra State provisional report, By C. Bantia, published in 1993.
4. Park and Park *Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine*, 13th edition.
5. Government of Maharashtra, Govt. Resolution, Deptt. of Rural Development. 30th Sept., 1995.

EVENTS

Symposium on Breastfeeding

The World Breastfeeding Week was celebrated by the National Task Force (NTF) on August 1, 1996 at the Indian Medical Association House, New Delhi. A Symposium was organised on the theme of the year, 'Breastfeeding : A Community Responsibility' with the involvement of various NGOs and members of the NTF.

A Press Conference was organised on this occasion and was addressed by the Chairman, NTF, Dr. N.K. Grover, Country Representative, Dr. Jon E. Rohde and Consultant, Human Lactation Management Programme, Dr. Arun Gupta. There was a very good interaction between the Press, Consumerists and the

panellists. Various Federations of the Consumer Council and representatives of the Consumer Council also participated very actively and assured us the implementation of the Act as soon as possible.

Ms. Bino Sen, Joint Secretary, Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development was the Chief Guest on this occasion, Dr. Jon E. Rohde, Country Representative, UNICEF was the Guest of Honour.

Various NGOs, members of NTF, Principals/Directors of various Medical Colleges in Delhi, Nursing Colleges, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Deptt. of Health, National Capital Territory of Delhi, apart from the Medical and Paramedical fraternity working for the promotion of Breastfeeding in our country participated in this programme with active involvement. ■