

Distance Education for Nursing Personnel

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Distance education is an effective instrument in our fight against illiteracy. It represents unique experiments in higher education. It is a non-formal system of education. It provides opportunities to those who could not take advantage of the institutions of higher learning or to those who live in places where such institutions do not exist.

Nursing is a growing profession and at the same time it is as old as humanity itself. The goals and objectives of health and medical services can be achieved only through proper nursing services. The nursing and allied health personnel are the base and backbone of the entire health services infrastructure in the country. Hence, there is an urgent need for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of nursing services through education and training.

Major deficiencies of nursing education and training in India

- Lack of training schools and colleges.
- Lack of in-service, refresher and correspondence courses.
- Lack of facilities for higher education in nursing like M.Sc. Nursing and research in Nursing.
- Variation in nursing training courses/syllabii within States as well as among different States of India.
- Paucity of specialization in nursing, like cardiothoracic nursing, paediatric nursing, emergency nursing, etc.
- Insufficient trainers.

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- Lack of good nursing training administrators.
- Rigid curriculum and odd teaching methods.

All nursing education should be continuous and not terminal. Besides, the in-service training programmes may be organised to keep nurses abreast of latest developments. Some nurses even seem to feel that they are deliberately not allowed to improve their qualifications so that they may not become more qualified than the existing nursing leaders thereby posing a professional threat to them. It is interesting to note that most of the nurses have improved their general qualifications through correspondence courses or by appearing in examinations as private candidates. Many of them have passed university degree courses, even upto M.A. level from reputed universities. It is suggested that correspondence courses in B.Sc. Nursing (Post Basic) may be instituted by some universities to ensure professional growth of nurses as otherwise they would be misutilising their energy for improving general qualifications (Goel, 1984).

All these deficiencies could be eliminated if various programmes in nursing could be conducted through distance education.

Objectives of Distance Education for Nursing Personnel

- To promote professional knowledge and attitude.
- To provide more opportunities for higher education.
- To help nursing personnel become more effective by developing their skills.

- To introduce new techniques and methodology of nursing practice in daily routine work.
- To integrate health personnel.
- To provide opportunity for professional growth.

Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing, and courses in health education, nursing management, hospital administration, etc. could be started by any open university. Teaching can be conducted through postal literature, workshops, group discussions, audio-visual aids and a few weeks of "on-the-job training".

In the Academic Committee of Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, it has been proposed to start Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing through correspondence studies.

The aim of the proposed strategies is to enhance the effectiveness of health care delivery system, hospital services and management competency of nursing personnel by providing a plan for need-based in-service training, and to orient nurses towards national goals and health care approach through correspondence courses. This would help to improve practical and managerial competencies of nurses and would develop an attitude for team work amongst all categories of nursing and health personnel, and would provide them greater promotional avenues, and also update their knowledge.

References

Goel, S.L. *Public Health Administration*. New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1984, p.228.

