

# Nursing Education and Administration

## Today and Tomorrow

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It is true that anything has to change over the years, may it be a profession or it may be culture, fashion, people, literature, art and science. Let me consider profession and a change in it. There have been many professions, which have shown a gradual change for betterment, for recognition and for social approval. This change is because of a complex group of forces-social, cultural, economic, political-which have been and still are affecting various regions of the world in diverse ways.

On the same lines Nursing also has seen a change as the world has changed, the same complex group of forces have influenced the Nursing profession. Certain specific trends have had a particular impact, namely, changes in the status of women; increase in population; geographic mobility; increased educational avenues; economic and social mobility; advances in bio-medical technology; introduction of automation and, of course, expansion in the supply of and the demand for health care. (WHO Report, of a meeting on "Nursing in Support of the Goal Health for All by the Year 2000", pp.25).

At present, therefore, Nursing is at various stages of development in different countries. It ranges from

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practices that conform to the traditional role expected of nurses to functions carried out by nurses acting as independent practitioners in their own setting. However, most of Nursing is still based on the care of the sick and has evolved in line with the evolving recognition of society's needs. Nursing needs to be improved in all spheres in order to gain recognition from the society.

It is sad to say that there is no uniform state of the art for Nursing throughout the world. The position of nurses shows great variations. This may be determined by the accidents of history, by different social policies, issues or circumstances or by cultural attitudes. Some of the abovementioned determinants help to promote progress, but others act as constraints. Some constraints are being unwittingly generated by nurses themselves, both individually and as professional groups, others may be created by the society, and still others may be attributable to professional/occupational groups outside Nursing as well as to the governments. Major factors acting as both constraints and facilitators of change include attitudes and values, resources education, legislation and the political involvement.

Nursing today, is still in its way to achieve, what it should have achieved much earlier, like its co-profession - Medical Profession -

which has obtained a highly respectable standard in the society. In Nursing today role of education, services, leadership, administration, research and almost all spheres in the field needs a change, in order to get its due recognition from the society in which we live. It should undergo reshaping to show the community that Nursing is an essential asset in the health care system.

To this end, I thought Nursing education and administration can contribute a lot since they act as pillars for building up our profession, since education brings about and produces better Nursing personnel with multi-dimensional perception, rather than the traditional unidimensional care of the sick. Nursing administration helps our nurses, to raise their voice in policy making, in operating better leadership roles in various aspects of administration.

### Nursing Education

Education is one of the main priorities of a truly democratic society. Nursing was formally started in The Nightingale School at St. Thomas Hospital in London and these groups of nurses provided the basis of Nursing education today. Thus Nursing education developed and sought different ways and means to meet the needs of the individuals, family and society. There came into

being the different systems of education in training nurses for institutional and community Nursing. That is the way Diploma programmes were first started and later degree programmes followed. Various other post-graduate programmes, workshops, seminars, conferences, meetings took place and Nursing education gradually started stepping up in the ladder.

Basic preparatory education for nurses varies widely among countries, ranging from small hospital controlled Diploma schools to large university programmes. Basic Nursing courses in most of the countries continue to be operated in hospitals, by hospitals and for hospitals; they are primarily procedure-oriented, with little or no orientation to the community. There is an emphasis on curative, hospital-based care, which is reflected in education. It is true that traditionally, the student nurses provided most of the care in the hospital to which the school was affiliated. As the demand for Nursing service in the hospital increased and many of the doctors' tasks became the tasks of the nurse, the theoretical and practical content of nurse education was extended in hospital-based needs. Little time remained in curriculum for the equally important aspects of Nursing care in home-based health problems, health promotion, illness prevention, rehabilitation and the dissemination of health information.

In more recent decades, Nursing education has tended to move from health-based institutions to those forming part of general education system in the country. But little significant change is observed in Nursing curriculum that would encourage Nursing practice to focus on the health status of communities, although it is being given a serious thought. If the same situation prevails it might be difficult for

a country like India which is more rural-oriented and where many problems are hidden, to come close to our acceptance of promoting 'Health for All by 2000 AD'.

In order to fulfill the commitment, fundamental changes will be necessary at all levels of Nursing education although it is not an easy task. Administrative support from the national and local government is mandatory if substantial change is to be effected in the system of education. The curricula should be changed to develop a cadre of professional nurses who can function independently in the primary health care setting and also with members of the other disciplines. It should stress on the concept of self-care, emphasize the promotive and preventive health service along with the curative and rehabilitative ones.

Nursing functions are carried out at different levels of knowledge, skill and, most importantly, decision-making. The system of Nursing education, therefore, must make provision for the preparation of personnel at these different levels.

Nursing education must also prepare nurses for competence in the utilization of local resources. The nurse educators must be prepared to include learning experiences in the community setting as a part of the course, placing more emphasis than before.

The professional role of the nurse necessitates a greater depth of understanding of the concept and scientific principles. This should emphasize on the 'why' of things rather than only the 'what', 'when', 'where' and 'how', which is one of the main differences between vocational programme and professional programme. It should also develop the student in such a way that he or she takes into consideration the holistic

approach of Nursing.

The extent to which the necessary change can be made, would largely depend on the efforts and commitments of the Nursing faculty responsible for the development and implementation of the curriculum in educational institutions. The nurse educators should explore the possibilities in the change of curriculum for the current system of Nursing education and also lay down strategies for bringing changes in education.

Such bold steps towards a curricular change would bring a change in the outlook of professional nurses and would influence the community's perception of our profession.

Apart from basic education, post-basic education goes a long way in helping our nurses to assume leadership roles in administration, education and also for planning. Other programmes such as in-service education, workshops, seminars, conferences must be organized to enable nurses to acquire additional aptitudes.

Another aspect in which India is lagging behind is Nursing research, which is one of the necessities of any profession. Research in the field of education, examination pattern, curriculum change, mode of teaching, etc., will make the Nursing education more rich and would go a long way in our profession.

Thus Nursing education can act as a basic turning point in the issue of change of the concept of our profession in the days to come and this change will assure a better tomorrow.

### **Nursing Administration**

Profession and autonomy are two sides of the same coin. Autonomy is

the self-righteousness for self-determination and self-governance, which are core components of any profession. Autonomy is an integral part of professional heritage: it helps in establishing a profession, maintain and promote a distinctive image in the society. By virtue of its autonomous status a profession enjoys power and authority and attains a respectful status in the society.

Nursing is a powerful professional force. The profession is privileged to be called 'noble'. But the unpalatable truth is that Nursing is a profession without autonomy. Though Nursing is a profession of paramount importance within the national health care delivery system, it has a very insignificant role in executing health policies and strategies in three major professional areas: Nursing administration, Nursing education and Nursing services.

Though there has been enviable advancement in all dimensions of Nursing, it is surprising to note that this situation remains unchanged and also unchallenged yet. The nurses occupying the administrative positions seem to be content to remain merely a deputy or assistant to the chief policy maker, who is always a medical man. Thus policies made for nurses by non-nurses remain deficient and defective. If the same situation continues, our professional development will automatically not take place and perhaps our status may further get hampered.

The Nursing profession now needs to produce the leaders who will be effective administrators. The nurses are a valuable asset of any health care system and now they have to be prepared to become agents of change. Leadership in Nursing is required at all levels of the health system. The Nursing profession needs to produce the leaders necessary to unleash this drive of a change. It must expect to face resistance, yet take up positions from where it can voice its opinions at policy and deci-

sion making levels.

- \* The nurses must attend planning, training programmes and work conferences, which will orient them to the political and legislative processes and help them to be better administrators.
- \* Establish formal and continuing education programmes to train nurses in administrative and managerial techniques, with the course content of organizational skill, method of assignments structuring the staff pattern, effective and efficient utilization of staff, financial planning, etc.
- \* The national-level Nursing associations should make serious efforts in influencing the creation of administrative force of Nursing personnel at all levels of the government.
- \* The Nursing education whether basic, post-basic or continuing, should be directed towards teaching leadership roles. The students can be given various opportunities to act as leader in the group. This will help a lot when they become professionals, to operate leadership role effectively.
- \* At work too nurses should feel that they are confident in being leaders. The skill to achieve this can be acquired in various ways. This may mean initiating innovative modes of delivery of care and then following up with evaluation. In some countries nurse practitioners programmes have been initiated. In some others, the public health nurses have been responsible for preventive and curative care in relation to a specific group. The ramifications of such assessments involve local politicians, public reactions and others, which are essential areas in leadership development.
- \* Leaders have to be identified by senior nurses and educators. They should identify potential leadership qualities in Nursing graduates and students and also nur-

ture those skills for individuals, teams or movements from the very outset.

- \* Research in the field of Nursing administration, should be seriously thought, since it is essential for better administrative skills and techniques.

If the abovementioned points are carefully performed, then our profession will be looked up, the nurses will be deputed for better administrative roles and in decision-making at higher levels. For this a zealous and commendable social dealing by nurses can show improvement in professional stand within the other health disciplines and more so in the society.

Thus in sum total we can say that education and administration would definitely act as agents of change. At the same time, we would positively say that not only education and administration will shape our position in our society, but we need a change in the way of approach in patient care, we need a better approach in all ways of Nursing. Hence our today should be shaped perspectively in order to have a better tomorrow.

### Bibliography

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