

Education in Nursing Discipline

Ms. SEETHALAKSHMI

Health needs of our people are increasing and becoming complex and acute. The resources however are limited. If a clear thought and understanding is developed among the different disciplines on the existing reality, the task is not difficult to achieve within the existing health resources. The most important resource for the success of any programme or an organisation is not in the quantity of manpower but in the quality and its proper utilisation. Instead of increasing the quantity of manpower, the concern has got to be in the manner in which they are prepared, whether it adequately prepares them to understand and meet the emerging health needs.

Gaps do exist in the higher educational field, particularly in the specialisation. Presently the overwhelming stress remains in feeding more and more information without paying considerable attention to their relative importance to the social reality. From its inception, the nursing discipline claims that it has an inbuilt uniqueness. The manner in which this uniqueness exists or is sought to exist in practice has to have a serious rethinking.

The gap between what is taught and its relevance to social reality is increasing day by day. Even in the nursing research, a drift from a desired social operational goal towards individual benefits brings an imbalance in what is required of the profession to solve health problems to what one gets from the profession. And thus the gap widens between the expected and the achieved. The inability of the nursing education to provide for the requisite values, training and tools to deal with the problems faced by the people in matters regarding health in a meaningful and purposeful manner leads to the following observations:

1. For the educational content (including higher education) to be dynamic, the educational system must necessarily have a major inbuilt function to incorporate relevant information. This can be achieved when the training is focussed away from the mere fulfilment of the academic requirements to the fulfilment of real socially desirable tasks. What is done then would be socially relevant to the reality of the existing and emerging health problems.

2. Integration of traditional medical system with modern medicine, especially in terms of its philosophy, approach and practices. This is to establish the nursing profession in the Indian cultural context.

3. Action-research as a necessary component of higher studies to fulfil the functions of the university consistent with the needs of the people.

4. Considerable reorientation, both in content and practice towards preventive health rather than

curative, primary health rather than diseases, rural health problems and services rather than assisting medical practice, management of health rather than administration of medicine, community rather than assisting the doctors in the consultation room and training and development of health interventionists rather than just an associate for medical consultants.

5. Primary importance is to be given in the development of simple methods utilising available resources and facilities at the level of higher education and specialisation on how to deliver people's health in people's hands.

6. An understanding of the Indian socio-cultural reality and an insight into the health issues has to be the necessary background in which the nursing education evolves to help evolve a dynamic nursing profession, that suits our people, our culture and our reality. This is to enable the nurses to comprehend and to take an appropriate role for themselves after the education.

7. The western ethno-centrism that dominates our thinking has blinded us to the reality of the strengths and comprehensiveness in local health traditions that still continue to exist making us intolerant to it. But this precisely is what has been sustaining people through the health practices for centuries till date. Hence, a new outlook towards our people and their health culture has got to be incorporated in nursing education to enable them to establish a meaningful relationship with the community that is mutually beneficial.

In the context of a much needed rethinking in all spheres that affects our lives at the national level, we have a reasonable duty to accept without hesitation the facts and understanding that have been impressively accumulating, to accept and to change even if the change may be a painstaking one.

**To Strengthen the Voice
of Nurses**

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for

TNAI

The author is from Rural Health Centre, Patanjaliपुरi, Tamil Nadu.