

An Alternative Approach in Nursing Advancement

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DEVELOPMENT of appropriate and adequate manpower resource at various functional levels is a primary need to achieve the goal—Health for All by 2000 AD. In the context of our efforts to achieve the goal it is highly important that the nursing manpower should be suitably prepared. In the developing country like ours where the needs are many and resources are meagre, we have to think about the alternate measures to prepare the nurse manpower to serve the community as far as practicable.

In the process of developing national health through primary health care, there is a heavy involvement of human efforts and therefore these valuable resources need to be carefully monitored for its efficient utilization.

The essential roles of nurses that have emerged out of the rising demands made on nursing have changed and are ever expanding; consequent to these, the advances made may be categorized as these of: (i) Nurse clinicians and clinical nurse-specialists; (ii) Community health nurses or community nurses; (iii) Nurse administrators; (iv) Nurse Teachers, Nurse researchers or nurse scientists.

Unquestionably these expanding vistas of nursing have thrown a challenge to the members within the profession and their efficiencies in meeting these challenges today will decide the future of scientific nursing and its practice.

Nursing like all other health professions sees life from stark reality i.e. from conception to decease, embracing unto its fold the infants, children, adolescents, young adults, adults, the middle aged and elderly people with physical and emotional imbalances leading to sickness on one hand and the healthy individuals, families and communities requiring care on the other.

Nurses must be ready to prepare themselves to assume their changing and expanded roles and share the responsibilities in the health team under the present socio-cultural and economic conditions. Due to limited number of production of nurses with advanced scientific preparation with technical skills, judgement and decisions for implementing action are in high demand for institutional, rural and urban public health services but are not available, leaving a

vacuum in standards of desirable care. The profession as such and the nurse leaders should think of alternative avenues to provide opportunities to qualify within the State or country on their own and not wait for the established channels in practice today in the service institutes or agencies. The present need for open university is to be reviewed in the present perspective critically and bring a revolutionary change for the benefit of the sick and well.

The Need for Such Centre and the Underlying Philosophy

The quality and standard of nursing care provided or practical depends on the preparation of nurses at the levels they are expected to function. In India there are only few educational institutions, colleges or schools where advanced courses in nursing are run. The existing opportunities are so little or microscopic in comparison to the demand that most of the young and enthusiastic nurses are deprived from self-development and growth. It is experienced or recognised that 10% of the total applicants get a chance to enter the advanced postgraduate institutions of their choice and in the line they would like to pursue their study—call it specialization or strengthening skills with advances in the science.

The 7th Five Year Plan states one of the causes of failures of our health schemes is stressing on the quantity of service, overlooking the quality. While developing countries like ours cannot develop or plan out overnight for the quality when need is most to mitigate human suffering at peripheral levels, inservice education could be an answer partly to achieve the quality care along with the quantum enforced by the health administrators.

Hence one of the innovative approaches as an alternative measure to meet the needs of the young professionals and the future torch bearers of nursing as a whole be it service, administration or education, would be to open an institution for larger groups of nurses which will fulfil the academic needs of the postgraduate standards and has affiliation and recognition by both the academicians and those who control the registration and recognition: an autonomous body for academic standards and the Indian Nursing Council for uniformity and recognition of higher qualifications for nursing practice.

This institution or autonomous body would be responsible for contributing to the education of large

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number of nurses and confer diploma/degree after successful completion of the course.

Objectives

1. To prepare a large number of nurses with advanced scientific knowledge and skills for carrying out individuals needing complicated nursing care.

2. To prepare the nurses at advanced levels to practise the nursing assessment, diagnosis and management in caring the healthy and sick at different ages and stages in the well-ill-well continuum of life process.

3. To prepare the nurses to take up leadership who will be able to initiate innovate new programmes and guide in research activities.

Suggested Plan or Guidelines in the Initial Stage

With advancements in medicine, to cope with the demands of medical profession, the Government of India established with the concurrence and approval of Indian Medical Council, the National Board of Examination, entrusting it with the responsibility of conducting and organizing the examinations at post-graduate level. These over the years have ensured a system of uniformity and standardisation of medical education in the country at all-India level. The graduates who seek this qualification are products from around 109 colleges of medical education and various universities which provides opportunities and incentives for higher education.

Nursing with 21 colleges and schools of nursing distributed in States of India hardly can meet the requirements in the health care delivery even at the rudimentary level. The trained Nurses Association of India in consultation with Indian Nursing Council can organize a high power body entrusting it with the conducting of examinations on an all India basis to ensure an uniform standard of postgraduate qualifications in nursing as the first step.

The nomenclature of the high power body may be called National Board of Examinations and the degrees conferred by this board should be recognized by the Indian Nursing Council.

The National Board will ensure high standards of examinational procedures to ensure that the candidates who qualify have had adequate trained in theory and practice and are competent in the field of specialisation.

The N.B.E. can classify the areas of speciality and conduct the examinations under two heads :

- (a) Community Health Nursing.
- (b) Institutional/hospital nursing.
- (a) The community health nursing should include
 - Integrated Maternal and Child Health
 - Health administration including hospitals and community

— Health Education, Epidemiology (Sociology and Psychology related to health care)

— Psycho-social factors affecting health and health care

— Nursing science—covering process, assessment, diagnosis and therapeutic care.

(b) Institutional nursing should include—

— Hospital administration

— Health Education

— Epidemiology and its application in prevention of illness

— Specialized papers—Medical nursing, Paediatric nursing, Industrial nursing and other fields of speciality that can be developed.

Admission: Rules and Regulations

(1) That the admission to the diploma/degree of N.B.E. be open to those nurses having the registerable qualification of State Councils which are recognised by the Indian Nursing Council Act.

(2) That the examinations have two parts previous/preliminary and final/advanced in the field of speciality and allowed to appear at an interval of three years between the First and Last qualifying examinations after successful completion of the examination of N.B.E.

(3) Adequate experience in the respective field in which the candidate desires to specialize.

Plan of Action

Let all the members of long standing of TNAI and other professional organisations like I.P.H.A., Nurse-Teachers Association etc. join hands, lend our brains to form an institution of higher learning which will provide an opportunity and impetus for self-development and advanced learning.

With an approval and formation of the body, the members can chalk out the details i.e. curriculum, enrolment/admission and examination rules for admission and the appropriate degree/diploma to be conferred on the nurse-members within the nursing profession etc.

The author feels deeply that if such a machinery like open university comes into force then many nurses will have opportunities knocking at their doors to quench their thirst in the scientific world of nursing. Nursing as we know or as convinced is a blend of knowledge acquired through medical, biological, social and psychological sciences which are integrated and is called for during nursing practice at different levels—be it an educator or administrator or a practitioner—a knowledge of the ongoing advancements is a must to strengthen the task force and strengthen the nation by providing means to provide quality nursing care.