

Are our Nurses trained to meet the modern challenges in Nursing ? How can we improve Nursing Education ?

Education is to help an individual to develop knowledge, skill or character and power to make a living. It helps him to foster the best qualities, virtues and potentialities to grow to the best in his physical, intellectual, social and spiritual powers.

What are the aims of those who are choosing nursing training—Is it the “job availability” or “no—other-way-what-to-do” motive ? What are the aims of Nurse-Educators ? Is it mere a job or more than that ? Only our individual conscience could tell. Nevertheless, we admit that we are trained to meet the modern challenges and that we shall do better, provided we cope up with the modern dynamic developments in science & technology.

The primary need to improve the present-day system of nursing education is a true sense of vocation. Nursing is more a vocation than a profession. Further the following steps could be taken.

Establish **independently-dependent** schools where the nursing schools are independent in their co-ordination and dependent on the co-operation of in-patient institutions. This would help plan the required clinical experience according to the level of knowledge and understanding of the student to avoid premature responsibilities and duties. Good co-operation between the education and service will result in successful functioning to fulfill the objectives of education through service and service through education where education (theory) is as important as experience (practical) and vice versa.

Introduce **‘pay-the-cost-get-the-benefit’** type of education in nursing for, we honour the things for which we pay the cost. This helps the students to be more serious and attentive in their training. Merit scholarships shall encourage better education and education loan funds shall help the poor students.

Enhance the **entrance qualifications** to that of Pre-University

Certificate to give better foundation of sciences to strengthen the student's understanding of scientific principles in nursing and retain English to promote better communication and understanding.

Sustain the **medium of instruction** in English in order to make the best use of the quantity and variety of the literature available on nursing, most of which are in English. It may take a very long time to get enough books in regional languages. Moreover, English would help the student to upgrade her qualifications in advanced countries. It would be better, perhaps a **MUST**, if **vocational guidance** is given to students during their final year of High School education to select the vocation of their abilities, aptitude and intelligence.

Reduce the number of students in a batch, say ten to fifteen at a time, to gain the advantage of individual supervision and attention for better learning.

Allround development of student nurses—physical, intellectual, social, recreational and spiritual—should be given more importance for, they need to take care of the patient as an individual with a ‘whole’ personality.

Provision for **better libraries** with variety of journals, periodicals, textbooks, and teaching aids are to be improved in our schools of nursing.

Educational tours to various institutions will brighten the knowledge of the student.

Additional **clinical teachings** from time to time by clinical instructors, physicians etc. shall supplement and support the classroom learning.

Study-day-system of education would be followed for continuous correlated learning and patient care. The nurse-trainees should be free from non-nursing duties and running errands so that more attention is given to their constant learning to help the patient for his speedy recovery.

Introduce **pre-nursing courses** in the first year of College education to give better foundation to build on the regular course.

Replace the present **system of examinations** (written & practical) by subject-wise question papers and ‘not on the dumb-dummy but on the living human’ system of practical examinations. Further, these examinations should only be conducted by qualified nursing personnel who are able to evaluate ‘what is expected’ from a student. To improve the education of the trainees, it is highly essential that those who train/educate them should possess better qualifications and therefore, nursing tutors should be given opportunities to raise their qualifications. Tutors with special preparation/qualification will certainly be an asset to the school. This applies especially to teaching of Psychology and Psychiatric Nursing which is considered to be one of the most urgent and important needs in our training schools.

Perhaps it would be better to channelise all the **‘brain-drain’** of nurses to other countries either for employment or studies through the TNAI. This would enable the TNAI to keep a watch on the brain-drain and suggest effective steps to check the exodus of nurses when necessary.

No change can be implemented overnight. How much more should it take to rebuild our system of education to educate the human brains. !—Ever since nursing education started, there have been changes to meet the ever changing needs of our dynamic society. Therefore, let us accept this challenge, dedicate to our vocation, define the plans and delegate to the task before us.

Mr. G. Thomas Kanthiah

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(Mr. Kanthiah gets the First Prize, a Cardigan donated by M/s. Jainico Sons).

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Are our Nurses Trained to meet the modern challenges in Nursing? This indeed is a pressing question today. A straight and a cryptic answer would be 'no'. It is believed that good patient care is the salient feature for both nursing education and nursing-service alike, yet there exists an incredible gap between what is taught and what is practised. A survey of the nursing service would show that the nurses are becoming merely adept in aiding the doctor and nursing education is more examination-oriented. The patient is not the centre figure in either of the case.

Increasing the hours of classroom teaching has done very little to bridge the gap. On the contrary it has served to push the students further away from the natural setting for learning i.e., the patient, his relatives and his immediate surrounding.

Consequently the aim of nursing-education is lost. The nurse has failed to appreciate the role she is expected to play—to fulfil the responsibilities of a professional nurse.

We are at an age of transition. Only a few of our populace are sufficiently awakened and many are gradually awakening to their health needs. A majority are steeped in ignorance still bound by customs and superstitions. This situation makes a different demand on the nurse. The growth of technology and industry, the nuclear disasters and the problem of population explosion have its own peculiar demand on the nurse. Medical service with its sophisticated techniques, intensive care units, computers and monitors demands that the nurse should keep pace with its ever-growing complexity.

The vocational aspect of nursing on the other hand expects the nurse to spiritualize her work to preserve the 'Humane' aspect of nursing undiluted in the face of modern technology in medicine.

"Are our nurses trained to meet the demands of the day?" The present system of nursing education is a century old. It is doubtful how many of the students get an understanding of how a study of anat-

my, physiology, nutrition and microbiology set the sedge for health teaching. The importance of the principles of fluid therapy is lost on many a student, then they see and know that Mr. X's intake and output are not measured and recorded accurately and conscientiously. Since the teacher does not control the condition in the ward and make provision for the student to apply in practice what is learnt, the hours spent on teaching the importance of sterilization proves a vain effort.

The philosophy of any education-lays emphasis on the student, the philosophy of nursing stresses on the patient. Nursing education should therefore take both the patient and the student into consideration. The ward should be the place for teaching and learning by doing.

The emphasis should be shifted from teaching to learning, the teacher playing the major role by directing, guiding and developing the power of independent thinking. Provision should be made for the student to discover experiment and create values for herself.

The method of teaching should satisfy two vital obligations: (1) It should bring the student face to face with the living object, the patient and (2) it should develop the power of independent thinking. The concept of Nursing today is not working for the patient, but working with the patient.

Examination is a bug-bear to education—it merely tests the memory power of the student and should be replaced by one of realistic evaluation in the light of day-to-day development. The selection programme should evolve a screening procedure whereby the vocational aptitude of the student is tested. The pre-entrance requirements should be raised to the level of the requirement for graduates. Nurses and students should pay for their education. If students are treated as students and not taxed with the work load of the hospital then perhaps nursing education can be improved to meet the modern challenges.

M. J. Jesudoss
Govt. K. G. Hospital,
Madras

POINTS FROM ESSAYS

The nurses must possess good attitudes, cheerful approach, cordial relations with people, ambition to excel in their job, respect for others' views, dignity of labour, sympathy, willingness to help in different situations, desire to learn more, concern for others and a sense of responsibility. Nursing must seek the co-operation of educators and hospital administrators to achieve excellence in nursing education and administration.

Mrs. R. Vijayakumari, Kurnool

Our nursing students are not able to put their knowledge to constructive use, they don't feel the urge to communicate, to improve and to be creative in nursing. A system is urgently needed which shall encourage initiative and originality. This requires a new outlook and attitude in educators, administrators and supervisors in nursing.

Miss M. Sigamani, Cuddalore

Make some research studies on the effectiveness of certain methods of teaching and other problems existing in nursing education. The cure is in the diagnosis. The cure for educational ill can only come about when we are able to develop a new breed of teachers.

Sister Paschalina, Kottiyam

Like everyone else the nurse is tempted to sin. To conquer this she has to set down programme which will discipline her to do what is right. We need to feel that behind us is intelligence and love. Doubters do not achieve, sceptics do not contribute, cynics do not create. Faith is the greatest motive power.

Mrs. Aney Mohan, Vasco da Gama

All nurses should be given an examination every five years to renew their registration. Nurses think they have finished their education and cannot study any more and are blind to the modern medicines.

Miss K. Abraham, Hyderabad

We spend about 150 hours for teaching "Nursing Arts" in the class room which can be taught effectively as well as practically in the ward itself. Every nurse be sent for a short-term refresher course on modern nursing methods....The young blood must be introduced as office-bearers in the TNAI so that the association will be more active in order to attract young people.

Mr. S.S. Edward, Pondicherry