



What mars professional Progress

By T. A. Thorpe*

"A fault, as small as a mustard seed, becomes as big as a mountain when sought to be concealed. It can, however, be eradicated if an open confession is made"

—Mahatma Gandhi

Seeing the signs of all-round progress in this dynamic world, one wonders why Nursing has not achieved the desired standard and status though it is playing a dominant role to eradicate the human suffering and co-ordinate with medical science to achieve its absolute aim. To my mind, the diagnosis is very simple: "for the progress of a profession, a devotion and sacrifice is required from its professionals." Are we devoting the attention, time and energy it requires to achieve this goal?

Another important reason could be our reluctance and the lack of much-needed initiative to progress. We, no doubt, aspire to occupy higher positions in Nursing. But our desire seems to be to covet these positions without possessing adequate knowledge and education in the field. We think passing an examination academically and having the so-called experience within the four walls of a hospital are enough to claim that post. Many of us do not readily accept the newer ways and advanced techniques now available in Nursing and are prone to adhere faithfully to the traditional methods. We are very much reluctant to add the latest concepts to our knowledge and to exchange ideas with our fellow-professional in the field. This keeps nursing far behind the fast moving and dynamic world—a world of speed and full of modernisation.

Let us examine the reasons for

this attitude of "unwillingness to progress? The selection and recruitment of the students to the nursing profession, somehow, is basically faulty. The incumbents are ushered in without examining their aptitude, abilities and trend of mind. There is hardly any criteria followed to judge these qualities in the prospective nurses.

Secondly, the students who are selected in an haphazard manner are left under the care of dilettante educators who themselves need the guidance and a vision for modernisation. Thus the recruits develop wrong attitudes. Improper guidance and wrong examples set by the seniors hinder development of ability to imbibe good inter-personal relationship among themselves and with others; thus they practically isolate themselves within the walls of a hospital.

Thirdly the student nurses are not given "student-status." The students who do not enjoy student-status and dignity become frustrated. The situation is such that nurses are confined to learn everything in the wards which narrows their vision. Instead of developing their knowledge they attain one-sided improvement.

There are shortcomings in nursing administration as a result of traditional inheritance and stereotype procedures. There is great need to reform them and remove the influences of autocracy from the minds of nursing administrators. It is difficult to achieve a change overnight but gradual effort to achieve this end would immensely help professional growth.

Our inaction to remove the shortcomings in the light of our experience and the over-dependence of our profession on medical personnel stands in the way to progress.

How shall we overcome these shortcomings? The first and foremost requirement is to cultivate willingness to progress. Only recently nurses have become anxious for higher education and increased knowledge which is a healthy sign of progress.

Nurses of the country will have to bring in a revolution in nursing. They should bring difficulties on a common platform for open discussions among veterans and votaries of the nursing profession to seek useful solution.

We should impart education to our juniors on current developments rather than adhering to orthodoxy. We should not hesitate to share our experience with our colleagues. We should prepare ourselves to devote our time and energy to achieve recognition to the profession by joining hands with all the rest in the profession.

We, nurses, will have to step out of the outmoded orthodoxy and step into the modern era to ensure steady professional progress in order to keep pace with the progress in science and technology around us.

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Readers, participation can only make this column a forum for exchange of views.

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