

Higher Education for Nurses

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EDUCATION is one of the main priorities of a truly democratic society. To meet this at the highest level, there are as many as 120 universities and over 400 colleges in India.

Nursing Education, though vital in nature, has not got its due recognition and status even in the twentieth century. As early as 1871 nurses were prepared at the diploma level to function as first level practitioners in the hospital. The first College of Nursing was started in 1946 by the Government of India. However, the progress in this direction has been so slow that even after 37 years, their number remains at twentyone.

Nursing Education aims at preparing personnel to shoulder the responsibility of working as efficient partners in the health team to give optimum health care to the society. If this ambitious goal is to be achieved, I feel a drastic change is required in the present system of Nursing Education.

Essential Aspects

Teaching of skills is an essential aspect of higher education. The students should learn how to do a job and how to do it well. This is equally true of Nursing Education. It is important that the student should realise the responsibility towards the patients and society. To properly assume this responsibility, the student must have good knowledge and appreciation of the world of science and her own place in it.

The ultimate aim of higher education should be to cultivate in the student a mind that will and can think for itself and willingness to act accordingly, for the welfare of others. Nursing students must learn the art and science of caring for patients in varying conditions. The curriculum must provide for qualitative learning to equip one with the necessary knowledge and skills to put it into practice.

The professional role of a nurse necessitates greater depth of understanding of the concept and scientific principles in order to provide comprehensive patient care. Professional preparation must emphasise on the 'why' of things rather than only the 'what,' 'when,' 'where' and 'how' which is one of the major differentiating factors between a vocational programme and professional programme. Nursing Education must help a student to develop ability for judgement, ability to identify, understand and apply scientific principles and to recognise the patient as a person. Utmost ability for observation and

recording, making plans considering priorities and assisting the doctor for adequate care in the return of the patient towards health is also very important. These can only be achieved if Nursing Education is entrusted to higher institutions of learning.

Proper Learning Climate

The clinical learning of the students must become more meaningful, challenging and satisfactory. It is important to have a proper learning climate which includes an adequate number of qualified teaching personnel, sufficient and proper equipment and supplies, and an understanding of the working personnel that students are there to learn and not to serve or replace staff. Seeing good clinical practice is essential for good clinical learning. Above all, there should be a harmonious interpersonal relation that is conducive to learning. An opportunity to learn well during the period of training will ensure an efficient nurse for the rest of her career.

The professional aspect of the curriculum must be clinically oriented. Efforts should be made to motivate the students to develop clinical competency at all costs. Development of human values like integrity, honesty, self discipline, sense of responsibility, dignity of labour, truthfulness, compassion and dutifulness must be given higher priority. This can be better done by teachers who are student-oriented rather than content-oriented. For success of the programmes, they need to be identified and utilised.

I feel that efforts of students and teachers are too much directed towards passing an examination and getting more marks in these days. I would like to see that these efforts are directed more towards greater responsibility for their own education. If the student is to continue her own education after graduation during service, and I think she must, then she should be made to accept some of the responsibilities for her own progress and development while she is still in school or college. I strongly feel that there should be fewer classroom assignments, examinations and far more independent study and comprehensive examinations, practical experiences for developing skills, and more tests of ability to analyse and draw solutions for the problems. The result must ensure the acceptance of responsibility in the fulfilment of the role expected while earning one's living. What is essential is to inculcate within the student a desire to learn more and more.

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Scientific Principles

A major criticism of the Nursing Education today is that it has become too academic in its approach. No doubt the preparation is raised to the university level, but the task-oriented approach is not sacrificed at the altar of academic approach. Nursing care based on scientific principles not only adds safety to the patient but also helps her to be an efficient partner in the delivery of health care services to the nation."

The Administrators and health planners will have to recognise the need for higher education for nurses. Given an opportunity, this profession is bound to progress and keep pace with the advancing Medical profession to work as

partners in the health team. The health care delivery system can be said to be effective only if each component of service provided for the same is of the right quality. Any weak spot is sure to weaken the whole system thereby hindering the achievement of the ultimate goal. I am of the strong opinion that setting up a National Nursing Education Commission may be the right way of proceeding to study the problems of Nursing Education to tackle it in the right spirit and to give it a new shape to fit in the national system of education. Nursing education that science based, and in coherence with our culture, values and needs along with medical education can provide the foundation for India's progress towards a healthier nation ensuring a BETTER TOMORROW.



MAHARASHTRA

Mrs. A. M. George, Secretary, Bombay City Branch, TNAI, writes:

We conducted seven meetings of members of the Executive Committee of the Bombay City Branch, TNAI, and four General Body meetings during the year 1982.

We had a talk on "Comprehensive Nursing Care of Cancer Patients", by Mr. Robert Tiffany, Director, Nursing Education, Royal Marsden Hospital, London, at the Wadia Maternity Hospital on February 17.

On March 14, a tableau was presented on "Principles of Ward Management". It was organised by Sr. Tutors of J. J. Hospital in two sections, one part expressing the disadvantages of functional assignment and the other on advantages of patient assignment. The student nurses also took part in this.

World Health Day was celebrated on April 7, at the Jaslok Hospital. The topic was, 'Add Life to Years'. The participants

were: Mrs. K. Thommy, State Nursing Superintendent and President, Maharashtra State Branch, TNAI, who presided over the function; Dr. R. D. Lale, Professor, Nuclear Medicine, Jaslok Hospital, Bombay, who inaugurated the function and introduced the theme, 'Add Life to Years'; Miss. Durga Mehta, Vice President, TNAI and Matron, K.E.M. Hospital, who welcomed the guest speakers.

The Guest speakers were: Mrs. Sadhna Mahatre, a retired Professor and an active social worker, Mrs. Uma Handa, Professor, L.T. College of Nursing, Bombay, Mrs. Rose Andrade, a retired nurse, Mrs. Sobha Rani, a retired film actress.

From May 6 to 12, the Nurses' Week was celebrated.

On May 6, the Inauguration was held at the Dr. R. N. Cooper Hospital, Juhu, Ville Parle, Bombay. On May 8, a sports meet was conducted in the K.E.M. Hospital, Parel, Bombay. On May 10, a film was shown on Miss Florence Nightingale's life history and another on Miss Dorothy Lyn Dix depicting her hard work, at the Wadia Maternity Hospital, Parel, Bombay. On May 12, a fancy dress competition was held followed by the valedictory function at the Birla Mathushri Sabhagar of Bombay Hospital, Bombay. This was presided over by Mr. P. P. Kamdar, Deputy Municipal Commis-

sioner, Greater Bombay. The chief guest was Dr. K. D. Sharma, Director, Medical Education and Research, Government of Maharashtra. It ended with a variety entertainment and a prize distribution for the winners of the sports and for the outstanding items of the variety entertainment programme.

On May 22, a case study competition was held as part of students' activities and prizes were awarded to the best case study writers by Mrs. K. Thommy. The following students were the winners. **1st Prize:** Miss. N. Jair, School of Nursing, Aswini Hospital, Bombay; **2nd Prize:** Miss. E. D'Cruz, School of Nursing, Bombay Hospital, Bombay; **3rd Prize:** Miss. Jejiswini Deshpande, Training College of Nursing, G.T. Hospital, Bombay.

Consolation Prize: Miss J. E. Sarsom, School of Nursing, Aswini Hospital, Bombay.

UTTAR PRADESH

February, 1983 was a busy month in the calendar of Clara Swain Hospital, Bareilly. Evangelical Nurses' Fellowship's fourth Hindi Regional Conference was organized here from February 11 to 13. Delegates from Kanpur, Jhansi, Lucknow and Kasganj attended this Conference. Different speakers stressed that Nurses must know their calling