

Independence of Nursing Profession

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NO doubt Nursing is the noblest profession in the world, and it is meeting most of the criteria of a profession except it is not an independent profession. It is not self-governing: we can say that it is not standing upon its own feet.

According to the law of nature man is born independent and has a right to maintain, attain and regain positive health without discrimination of caste, colour, creed, race, religion, political pressure, poverty or ignorance but when he comes into the society he is bound under the chains of religion, race, caste, and other factors of the society. Likewise, Nursing is also one of the noblest professions but it has not yet got its independence, as the masters of Medical profession think this profession of Nursing to be a subordinate and slave profession of Medicine and until and unless the Nursing profession comes out of the clutches of the Doctor-Administrators we can not achieve our goal of progress.

We can be co-workers with the Medical profession and Medicos but we are not their subordinates. Nursing and Medicine are the two sides of one coin and they go hand-in-hand. The WHO expert committee also pointed out that if you want to improve Medicine, first you should improve Nursing. The Care, Cure, Medicine and the Patient are the four pillars of Medical and Nursing professions both and are correlated with each other. Therefore, there is need for drastic revolutionary changes in the Nursing profession, so that society may know the real value, status and position of Nursing personnel and the profession because our profession is public-oriented and it is meeting the needs of the society. The changes which are required in Nursing fields are as follows:

1. Administrative Changes

There should be an independent Director of Nursing Services in each State. It also requires the complete hierarchy or scalar chain like: Director of Nursing, Additional Director of Nursing, Deputy Director, Assistant Director, District Nursing Officer, Public Health Nursing Officer and Nursing Officer.

The powers and authorities of the Director should be independent to take decisions in the matters of appointments, transfers and taking disciplinary actions in the cases of Nursing personnel. There should be separate and independent Litigation Officer/Legal Officer to fight for the rights of Nursing personnel. At present the present Chief Nursing Superintendent/State Nursing Superintendent or ADHS (Nursing) do not have power to take independent decisions in all the cases of Nursing personnel

and they have to take approval from the Medical Director of the State which is absolutely wrong because the Medical Director has no knowledge about the qualifications and positions of Nursing personnel.

2. Educational Powers and Authority

The Principal of the College of Nursing or the Director of Nursing Education must be a Nurse and well qualified and experienced in Nursing Education. The Principal must have the power and authority to operate budget and exercise academic and administrative control over the Faculty of Nursing. In most of the States in India the Principal of Medical College holds these authorities and he/she overrules the Principal of College of Nursing. The Doctor-Administrators mostly disturb in day-to-day academic administration of the School of Nursing in India.

3. Changes in Remuneration, Pay Scales and Status

There should be changes in pay and salary of Nursing personnel. The Medical and Engineering graduates get the starting pay which is given to the Nurses at the nick of their retirement. For example, the pay scale of Medical Officer is Rs 1000-1860 and the pay scale of Nurses is Rs 625-1120 which shows a partiality on the part of the Medical Administrators. It should be removed. The B.Sc. Nursing graduates should get the pay and status equal to that of the Medical and Engineering graduates, i.e., Diploma Nursing equal to Diploma Engineering, B.Sc. Nursing equal to MBBS/B.E., M.Sc. Nursing equal to M.S./MD/ME., Ph.D. Nursing equal to Ph.D. Medicine, and the like.

The Constitution of India and the decision of Supreme Court of India have also recommended equal pay, remuneration and position for equal work, qualification and experience. Therefore the salary of Nursing Officer should be equal to the salary of Medical Officer or Assistant Engineer. The pay of Nursing College Lecturer should be equal to the pay of Medical College Lecturer and the like. The initial appointment to the Nursing graduate should be given as Nursing Officer as is given to the Medical graduate as Medical Officer. The complete nomenclature of Nursing cadres should be changed in the manner of Medical cadres.

4. Independent Nursing Practice

Independent Nursing practice should be allowed to the Registered Nurses as it is allowed to Registered Medical Practitioners. There is no need to train more doctors in the country but more nurses are needed and should be trained. The WHO and

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can be resumed, and the jaundice will not recur. Jaundice due to other causes is not affected by this procedure. Sometimes it is desirable to interrupt breast-feeding briefly in breast-milk jaundice (even if the cause is not in doubt) just because the serum bilirubin becomes too high rather earlier than usual.

But as a general rule, the existence of jaundice by itself is no reason to stop breast feeding. Because the occurrence of breast-milk jaundice has become well known, despite its relative rarity, some people believe, erroneously, that breast-feeding should stop completely when there is jaundice from any cause. Stopping even briefly is seldom necessary, and probably never unless the baby should anyway, for other reasons, be under the care of a physician.

Thrush (Candida)

'My baby has white sores in its mouth, and will not suck'. Thrush is caused by a yeast called *Candida albicans*. It grows in the baby's mouth, and makes white sores which look rather like milk curds. However, you can wipe away milk, but you can not wipe away thrush. Sometimes thrush covers the baby's whole tongue, and makes it completely white. Sometimes thrush grows down into the intestines and causes diarrhoea. Usually, however, it causes only soreness, so that the baby is unwilling to suck. Thrush is commoner in children who are weakened by another infection; after a course of antibiotic; or if they are malnourished. Thrush is less common in strong healthy babies.

You can treat it with nystatin drops, or gentian violet paint. Sometimes, thrush causes sore nipples in the mother—so treat mother and baby together. Give her nystatin cream, or gentian violet (though it is very messy). Follow the baby's weight carefully. Try to continue breast-feeding—most babies with thrush can suck well enough. If necessary, express the milk and give with a cup and spoon for a few feeds, until the treatment has reduced the soreness

of the baby's mouth and mother's nipple.

General Points about Hospitalization of a Breast-Fed Baby

If a baby has to go to hospital make every effort to allow its mother to stay with it. We know that small children may suffer psychological damage if they are left alone in hospital. The possible trouble that their mother's presence may cause for the hospital is a small price to pay to prevent this. If a baby for a while is too weak to nurse, encourage its mother to express her milk. If her own child cannot take the milk other sick babies at the hospital will surely benefit from it.

The anxiety of the baby's illness and the lack of sucking stimulus may make a mother's milk supply decrease considerably. As soon as her own baby's condition improves, and it can suck again, frequent nursing will bring back her milk. She must be repeatedly reassured that this is possible, and normal, in order to keep up her self-confidence.

The understanding and support of all the health workers involved should help to strengthen her resolve to continue breast-feeding, and in this situation their words can be important lactagogues.

Failure to Grow

Failure to grow (or thrive) is diagnosed when a baby fails to gain weight fast enough. A healthy baby should gain at least 0.5 kg each month for the first six months of life. That is the minimum. It is more usual for babies to gain about 1 kg a month—especially in the first three months. All babies should be weighed regularly once a week or once a month according to circumstances. Each baby should have its own weight-chart and its weight should be recorded and followed on that.

For information on better maternal and infant feeding practices, write to: Infant Nutrition Information Service, C-14, Community Centre, Safdarjung Development Area, New Delhi-16.

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UNICEF declaration at Alma Ata also advocates development and provision at Primary Health Care to the rural people. The Nurses are already doing Primary Health Care in the remote areas in our country. The female/male Health Workers, Health Assistants, Public Health Nurses and Health Guides are working in rural areas. Therefore, these Nursing personnel should be provided legal support to do independent Nursing practice and comprehensive Community Health Nursing care to the individuals, families and the community as a whole. Their supervision should be done independently by Nursing Officers, District Nursing Officers and Public Health Nursing Officers only.

Conclusion

According to the WHO plan every state must attain positive health by 2000 A.D. or Health for All by 2000 A.D. This target can be achieved by the community Health Nurses, Health Assistants/Health

Workers and Health Guides who are already working in the community. Therefore, the central and State Governments should provide liberty and independence to the Nursing profession. The Nurses are the key persons and the backbone of the country and they only will fulfil and meet all the health needs of the society. The Nurses should get up and unite with each other.

Union is strength. Therefore, all nurses should be members of the national nurses' association, i.e. TNAI. There should be drastic revolutionary changes in the Nursing profession. The TNAI elections must be according to the patterns of General Elections of India for MPs and MLAs at the Centre, State, District levels of the country so that more TNAI members may cast their votes and take more interest in Nursing association and leadership. This will motivate the nurses to fight for their rights in a democratic process for the growth and development of the Nursing profession.

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