

A Fruitful Year

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Florence Nightingale Scholar

Prior to my leaving for Britain for further studies, I had served in St. Margaret's Hospital, Poona, as Sister Tutor for three and a half years. It is a hospital for women and children only.

Objectives for undertaking further Study

My objectives for undertaking further study were:

1. To study Pediatric Nursing in Britain.
2. To observe how children were nursed in various stages of different ailments.
3. To observe how parents were guided in preventing diseases and keeping their children healthy.

Subject

The subject of my study in Britain was *Pediatric Nursing*. My object in offering this subject was to acquaint myself with all the up-to-date facts about pediatric nursing and with the latest treatments, and on my return to India to teach the subject efficiently to the student-nurses in St. Margaret's Hospital who would make use of that training in nursing children efficiently. To guide parents in the prevention of child diseases, and looking after the health of their children.

U.K. National Health Scheme

The National Health Scheme deserves nothing but praise. It has enabled the hospitals to equip themselves with all up-to-date equipment, and the means and to give adequate medical help to all needy persons, irrespective of their financial state. The co-operation between doctors and nurses was worthy of note.

What I observed in Britain ?

Hospitals

I had the good fortune of

visiting many hospitals in Britain and observing several good features there. I shall mention some of them which struck me most.

1. Right from the birth of a child, its bodily development is very minutely and carefully observed. All physical and mental deformities are attended to. Even the effects of the child's environment are carefully studied.

2. Every precaution is taken to inculcate healthy habits in the child while in hospital. The circumstances of the parents are studied and they are given whatever help they need under the circumstances.

3. In every children's hospital there is a teacher to teach the school-going children undergoing treatment in hospital; so they do not lag behind their classes when they return to them after recovery.

4. In hospitals children are also taught hand-work according to their aptitudes, ages and needs.

5. In some hospitals only parents are allowed to visit their children. The hospital authorities appeared to be very particular and strict about visiting days and hours.

6. The aim of hospitals is to give not only medical services but also to take care of the all-sided development of children.

7. Doctors and nurses have very cordial relations with children and their parents. Parents are always ready to co-operate and this facilitates treatment to a very great extent.

Public Health Work

1. The underlying principle of Public Health Work in Britain is that no ailing person should be deprived of adequate treatment. Every individual has a right to physical, mental and intellectual health.

2. There is close co-operation between the Public Health Work on one hand and the various hospitals and the society on the other. It was worthwhile to observe how the Public Health Department looks after the health of pupils in educational institutions and the workers in factories.

3. The Public Health Department imparts knowledge of public Health and the responsibility of individuals in maintaining it, by arranging lectures on various institutions and holding exhibitions.

4. The Public Health Work has facilitated a number of things. For example:

- (i) If it is not possible for a child or its mother to stay in hospital for treatment, the Public Health Nurse attends them at home. As far as possible nursing and deliveries are attended to at home.
- (ii) Old people, who have no one to do their domestic work, are given 'Home-help' and this has indeed proved a great blessing to the old making their day to day living much easier.

Nurseries

There is a Day Nursery in almost every place where a working mother can leave her child during her working hours. In the Nursery the atmosphere is very homely and does no harm to the child. Like Day Nurseries, there are Residential Nurseries at some places. The atmosphere there is very homely. For every group of six to eight children there is a trained Nursery Nurse to look after them. Nursery nurses are very helpful for looking after little children. If Nursery Training courses were started in our country it could greatly help institutions for children.

Nursing Courses

1. Many of the hospitals in Britain have what is termed as a 'Preliminary Training School' where the course is of twelve weeks' duration. The General Nursing course is of the same duration as in India, but with this difference. There are two parts, midwifery and its duration is one year. During the last six months the nurse has to attend to home-deliveries, look after her patients and give whatever help that is needed.

2. In many places no final examinations are held after preliminary training. The reason for this is that the initial selection to nursing is very carefully made by holding an entrance examination. For this examination English, mathematics and other usual subjects are prescribed. After passing this examination candidates are admitted to the course.

After every eight weeks the pupil-nurses are sent for a week to work in the hospital. This helps to correlate theory and practice. Their tutor goes to the wards and guides and helps them. This is certainly a feature for tutors in India to follow. This brings about co-operation between the tutor and the ward sister.

3. The teaching method is so flexible as to suit any particular syllabus or hospital. This helps nurses to specialise in any branch they like.

4. The P.T.S. Course is of twelve weeks' duration, at the end of it an 'At Home' is arranged to which the parents of the pupil-nurses are invited. Such functions help to bring the public in close contact with Nursing Schools and to attract more pupils to the nursing profession. During the twelve weeks of preliminary training, the pupils are taught language, general knowledge which helps them to increase their knowledge.

5. A new course called the 'Integrated course of Nurse Education' has been introduced in Hammer-

smith Hospital, London, from last year. It is of four years' duration. It includes General Nursing, District Nursing, Midwifery Part I and Health Visiting. This course will soon be introduced in other places too.

6. There is a 'Block System' in most of the Training Schools and this is very helpful to the students. Lecturers use teaching aids and students find it easy to understand the subject.

Administration

1. Most of the hospitals have a Board of Governors who constitute the Administrative Body. The Board is responsible for the management of the hospital. The Matron is always on the Board.

2. The Ward Sister occupies the key position in the ward and has been rightly called 'The Key of the Ward'. As 'Ward Sister' she is responsible for everything in the ward.

I found ward administration worth emulating here in India. The relations between sisters, staff nurses and pupil-nurses were very friendly and the atmosphere in the ward happy. This certainly helped a lot towards the care of the patients.

3. In the plastic ward, owing to surgical operations, limbs undergo changes which affect patients psychologically. In order to avoid this, nurses maintain every kind of friendly relations with the patients. The nurses are called by their first name.

Other things observed

1. Young boys and girls of peculiar background and circumstances are taught in special Industrial Day Schools, thereby freeing the community from their contamination.

2. In schools, children are given milk and food free of charge.

3. Children are administered intelligence tests in early childhood and the Government run special schools for retarded children.

4. There is constant research work going on in Britain in medicine for every disease.

5. Problem children are kept in a Psychological Medicine Department and their behaviour is minutely observed. Their parents are given all necessary guidance and information.

My Work in India

I shall again take up my work in St. Margaret's Hospital. I feel quite confident to be able to teach the subject more efficiently now and I shall certainly try to introduce some of the good features of pediatric nursing that I observed in Britain. We shall try to guide parents in looking after the health of their children.

A General Evaluation of the Course

The importance of this training to a country like India, where child morality is high, where the span of life is very low and where people are generally very ignorant about health problems, needs no emphasis. More and more persons should be sent to foreign countries to study and observe how children, in those medically advanced countries, are cared for. Our Health Department, Hospitals and people at large, must all come together and work together to safeguard the health of our children who are *de facto* the health of our country.

The parents, most of them being either illiterate or semi-literate, need a lot of information and guidance in the health matters. It is a colossal task of the highest national importance.

Arrangements for Travel, Living etc.

On the whole I found them satisfactory. I certainly enjoyed my stay in Britain and have gained a lot of vital knowledge about pediatric nursing.

I have nothing but deep gratitude to the National Florence Nightingale Committee for their valuable assistance.