

# SHORTAGE OF NURSES IN IN



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*"To do what nobody else will do, in a way that nobody else can do, in spite of all we go through... that is what it is to be a nurse."*

Rawsi Wil

**N**ursing is an art and science. Nurses lead an exhaustive life right from the time they enter the profession. They not only take care of the patients, but have to work with other members of the health team and relatives on a daily basis. The major force in any hospital comprises of nurses. The hospital will come to a standstill if it does not have the required number of nurses.

It is truly said that nurses are the backbone of the healthcare system. They are responsible for not only treating the patient but healing the mind and the soul. It is one of the noble professions where patients are looked with empathy and not sympathy.

In the current Indian scenario where the population has mounted more than 1.252 billion, we require more than 2.4 million nurses to meet the demands of the population. According to the WHO data (2011), the ratio of nurses per 1000 population is just 1.7.

**"Why is then this noble profession dying?"**

In India, the major issues for nurse retention which need to be tackled are: job insecurity for the contractual staff, low salary package, lack of conducive work environment and infrastructural facilities and brain drain due to migration.

According to the Indian Nursing Council (2012), the number of insti-

tutes providing the training at various levels is as follows:

Name of the program	Total number of institutes	Total number of available seats
ANM	1,642	46,719
GNM	2,670	1,09,224
B.Sc Nursing	1,578	80,245
P.B B.Sc. Nursing	696	22,655
M.Sc Nursing	535	10,026

It is clear from the above table that we can produce more than two lakh nurses per year. But the ground reality is that more than half of the seats in various institutes remain vacant.

Thus, the reason for nursing shortage is twofold; inability to produce more nurses through quality education and inability to retain the nurses in our country.

A survey done to explore the views of the present generation of not choosing nursing as a profession revealed that the students like to opt for other options because:

### Nursing is physically demanding

Nurses have to lift and transfer the patient and equipment as a normal course of work. They are on their feet for the entire shift.

### Shift duty

The nurses have to work shifts. As the shift changes every week, there is no fix time. They also have to work on weekends, holidays and are unable to spend time with family. Since nursing is female dominated, this is a lot of concern especially when they start a family.



### No college life

According to the requirement of the Indian Nursing Council, the student opting for nursing requires regular attendance in the clinical area. Thus, even in the study if she is absent or sick, she is unable to complete the necessary course before completion of the course is prepared in such a way that the student hardly gets any leisure activities.

### Mental stress

Many times the nurse is t

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situation where patients do not appreciate help, turn violent and abuse the nurse verbally. There will be times when she is faced with sad and tragic situation, which can be tough to handle.

### Risk of infection

Nurses deal a lot with blood and body fluids. They are exposed to all types of viruses and other pathogens.

### Poor image of nurse

The nurse is portrayed negatively through the media, creating a very poor image of nursing in general.

Time is ticking and if we do not take the necessary steps at the right time, it will not be long when the entire health sector will come to a stop.

Transformation is the need of the hour. Some strategies to overcome the nursing shortage and attract students to join nursing are.

### Face lift

Nurses should be portrayed in relation to their hardships, sincerity, honesty by the media. The nurses themselves should exhibit professionalism by showing that they possess the right attitude, knowledge and skill while caring for their patients.

### Nursing as a career

Awareness about nursing as a career should be given to eligible students by conducting seminars, videos, educational fair etc to attract the young minds.

### Quality education

Education is the building block of

a profession. It is necessary that the inspections are done with integrity and the institutions not fulfilling the minimum criteria of standardization be banned from imparting nursing education.

### Flexibility in the curriculum

It is time that education is looked in a broader sense and the curriculum modified to meet the demands of the changing society. Introduction of soft skill training and value added course in the curriculum can help to improve the caring aspect related to nursing. Rules and regulations of the course could be modified to allow flexibility for the benefit of the students.

### To retain nurses

- A good working and conducive environment.
- Proper physical infrastructure.
- Attractive salary package with incentives like health benefit.
- Nursing to be looked at as a service provider and not only as a financial burden by the management. Care given by the nurses can be charged just the way we charge consultancy and other services.
- Flexibility in the working.
- Maternity leave benefit for six months.
- Encourage faculty for higher education by deputation.
- Placing the right person to the right job by considering their interest, qualification, education and experience.
- Creating nursing as an independent practice.
- Adequate support by the superiors and the management.

- Self respect and recognition.

### To improve nursing standard

- Creating new job opportunities in all types of health sector at all levels.
- Encouraging research and evidence based practice in hospital for better quality care.
- Accreditation by various organizations.
- Licensure procedure to be implemented through regular exams and procuring of credits through continuing and service education.
- Encourage nurses to form associations and not join unions.
- Staff development cell to be created in each hospital.

*"Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success"*

-Henry Ford

Lets us join hands at all levels; individual, institution, government to create a new beginning in the nursing career.

### References

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*Sunlight fell upon the wall; the wall received a borrowed splendor. Why set your heart on a piece of earth, O simple one? Seek out the source which shines forever.*

Jalaluddin Rumi