



Training of professional nurses in Nepal

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ABSTRACT

The study:

- traces the evolution and growth of nursing education in Nepal;
- identifies the acute shortage of nursing teachers which affect the quality of nursing education;
- reveals the acute shortage of nursing personnel to meet the current requirements.

Keywords: Nurse; education; service; training.

INTRODUCTION

- It is needless to emphasize that training helps to make a man perfect.
- A qualified teachers helps to prepare a bright nurse.
- And a versatile nurse provides quality care contributing to better quality of life.

GENESIS AND GROWTH

The first professional nursing training school, established in 1956 at Kathmandu, with an initial intake of fifteen students was divided into two parts:

i) a 3-year training in Kathmandu, Nepal, and ii) a one-year midwifery practicum in Lady Irwin Hospital, New Delhi, India. The programme was hospital-based and had as its aim, the production of health personnel, who

could work as bedside nurses in Nepal's hospitals. In 1959, a second nursing school was established with the help of the United Mission to Nepal there by leading to an increase in the annual intake of students.

Following introduction of the New Education System Plan (NESP) in 1972, nursing schools were brought under Tribhuvan University, Institute of Medicine (IoM). The three-year nursing certificate programme then offered was very much oriented to hospital nursing.

Nursing education was given a fresh impetus in 1987 following a major review of the nursing curriculum and the introduction of the primary health care (PHC) curriculum. The intention was to prepare nurses to meet more effectively the health care needs of the people

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of Nepal. The aim now is to produce manpower with necessary knowledge, understanding and skill to provide preventive, promotional and curative health care to individuals, families in community and also in a hospital setting.

Besides the nursing certificate programme, post basic nursing education programme was introduced in 1976 at the IoM. The programme, initially developed to train qualified nurses to teach midwifery or to work as midwifery supervisors, was initially recognized as a 'diploma' and later as a degree programme (Bachelor of Nursing - Midwifery). During this period, three additional BN programmes (community, adult and child health nursing) were introduced. After twelve years, these were replaced in 1988 with an integrated curriculum which consisted of 2 (two) streams: community and hospital health nursing. This new curriculum, which is general in nature, bears more resemblance to BN programmes in other countries. It highlights PHC and aims to produce graduates capable of assuming leadership roles in community and hospital settings; teaching at nursing campuses, improving nursing practice by applying the results of need - based research.

The Master of Nursing (MN) programme of two years with special focus on women's health and development was introduced by the IoM in 1995 with an intake of 4 students. The aim is to prepare nurses with advanced knowledge of women's health and development to be able assist women throughout their life cycle, and enable them to contribute fully to their own health and the

health of their family, the community and the nation. As from 2000 a post graduate diploma course in Psychiatric nursing as well as basic B.Sc. nursing should start.

HUMAN RESOURCE FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL

As per 1998 statistical figures, Nepal's population stands at 21,843,064. At present Nepal with about 3000 professional nurses and 5,275 hospital beds has a nurse patient ratio of 1:6268. The health care system currently is almost all government but is in the process of changing. There are a total 114 hospitals in Nepal covering sectors like university, services, military + NGO managed, mission, and private nursing homes.

It maybe recalled that between 1956-1971 the production of professional nurses had been only 313. Since the establishment of the IoM in 1972 the training of professional nurses has been conducted on regular basis and Nursing Campuses have been established in different parts of the country. There are eight nursing campuses in Nepal.

1. Maharajgunj Nursing Campus (MNC)

MNC is a central nursing campus situated at Kathmandu. At present there are 35 teachers and 254 students. The total production of certificate level nurses from this campus till the end of 1997 was 1663. It conducts different nursing education programme from certificate, BN to MN.

a. Proficiency Certificate Level Nursing (PCL) programme

The PCL intake is 60 students per year. The three - year programme covers primary health care. At present there are 62 students in the first year, 60 students in the second year and 52 students in the third year. These are basic level health resources in Nepal. A total of 1251 students completed the course by the year 1998.

b. Bachelor of Nursing programme

The Institute of Medicine started higher degree study in Nursing in 1976. This was a post basic course of two years in midwifery (26 students), community (62 students), paediatric (45 students), adult (47 students) with major impetus on administration, management, teaching and learning aspects. These outputs were graduates who work mostly as teachers at certificate level or supervisor or sisters in hospitals. The BN programme presently has two tracks: hospital major and community major. The total intake is 40 students. The hospital major has 25 students and community major has 15 students. There are 40 students in the first year and 32 students in the second year. These students are middle level health resources. The total output has been 404 students who have completed BN (Post Basic).

c. Master in Nursing

The 2-year master of nursing programme was introduced in 1995, under the title "Women's health and development". The yearly intake is four students. These are

higher level health resources and total production has been 8 students so far.

2. Lalitpur Nursing Campus (LNC)

This campus was established in 1959. It is a private campus managed by the United Mission to Nepal, an INGO. At present there are 18 teachers and 151 students. The record shows that 564 have successfully completed the course so far. The Lalitpur Nursing Campus started BN Nursing in 1995 and enrolls 10 students per year.

3. Biratnagar Nursing Campus

The ANM extension campus at Biratnagar was upgraded in 1982 to conduct certificate level course in nursing and enrolls 35 students per year. The total production so far has been 338. At present there are 32 students in the first year, 35 students in the second year and 28 students in the third (final) year. There are 10 teachers in BNC.

4. Birgunj Nursing Campus

This campus was also upgraded to certificate nursing level in 1984 and the annual intake is 35 students. There were 100 students and 12 teachers. The total production has been 198 nurses so far. Birgunj Nursing Campus has 35 students in the first year, 35 students in the second year and 30 students in the third year.

5. Pokhara Nursing Campus (PNC)

PNC started proficiency certificate level course in 1984 with an annual intake of 40 students. Currently there are 45 students in the first year, 45 students in the second year and 40 students in the third year. There are

15 teachers in PNC. PNC has produced 391 students so far.

6. Nepalgunj Nursing Campus (NNC)

The NNC campus was upgraded from ANM to certificate level in 1987. At present there are 34 students in the first year, 30 students in the second year and 30 students in the third year. There are only 5 teachers. Because of its distance from the capital the record shows that there is always chronic shortage of teachers.

NNC has produced 167 nurses so far.

7. Bir Hospital Campus

This campus was established in 1989 and accepts 40 students per year. So far the total output of nurses has been 118. There are 100 students and 14 teachers.

8. B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS) Dharan

This institute is autonomous and has recently been upgraded to university status. It has its own College of Nursing where classes for a four-year B.Sc. nursing started in 1996. The record shows that there were 10 students in the first year, 11 students in the second year and 19 students in the third year. There are 4 teachers. The 3-year certificate level course has been started from 1999.

A broader classification of nursing campus in Nepal shows that there are

5 Nursing Campuses under IoM. 1 private, 1 autonomous and 1 government, totalling 8 nursing campuses. A nursing campus is being started by the UMN at Tansen under the CTEVT. It is obligatory for all private medical colleges to have their own nursing schools and effects in that direction are being started.

SUMMARY TABLE OF ENROLLMENT OF NURSING STUDENTS

The summary table shows that there are 1064 students enrolled at certificate level in different 8 campuses. The table also shows that there are 115 teachers engaged in teaching.

The standards set by the Nepal Nursing Council for nursing education is that teacher to student ratio should be 1:40 in the classroom situation; 1:6 in clinical areas, 1:10 in demonstration room and community/field. According to this set of standards about 160 teachers will be required only in the clinical areas. Since the number of teachers is inadequate at present, this shortage is bound to affect the quality of nursing education in Nepal.

The total number of BN and B.Sc. nursing students at present is 128. Similarly there are 8 students in Master of Nursing (MN) programme.

Table I: Number of Professional Nurses currently in training.

S. No.	Institution	Proficiency Certificate			Bachelor Nsg/BSc. Nsg.				Master Nursing		Total	Teachers
		I	II	III	I	II	III	IV	I	II		
1.	Maharajgunj	60+2*	60	50+2*	40	32			4	4	354	35
2.	Lalitpur	45	45	45	10	6					151	18
3.	Biratnagar	32	35	28	-	-					95	12

4.	Pokhara	45	45	40	-	-					130	15
5.	Birgunj	35	35	30	-	-					100	12
6.	Nepalgunj	34	30	30	-	-					94	5
7.	Bir Hospital	30	30	40	-	-					100	14
8.	BPKIHS	-	-	-	10	11	19				40	4
	Total	283	280	265	60	49	19				106 4	115

Note: *Foreign students Maldives

PRESENT STATUS OF NURSING RESOURCES

The records show that by the end of 1998 there were 3027 certificate holders in nursing. The total number of different categories of nurses at the end of 1999 stands at 3443.

Table II: Estimate of future supply of Professional Nurses.

Year	Output
1999	252
2000	288
2001	285
Total	825

The estimate figure for the next three years is based on the enrollment record of the presently functioning nursing campuses. The figures show that there will be about 825 additional nurses available to meet the present deficit. It may be recalled that the present production rate is not sufficient to meet even the present requirement. The demand for nurses is very great.

DISCUSSION

This survey shows that the total production of professional nurses per year is

242. Thus the present existing demand for nurses will be fulfilled only by the year 2005, unless there is an increase in the number of nursing schools.

The number of nursing campuses in Nepal has increased but there is a chronic shortage of professional nurses as the number of hospitals and nursing homes in urban areas has been increasing steadily. The nurse to patient ratio in hospitals situated in rural or semi-urban areas remains unsatisfactory.

There is also inadequacy of faculty members in nursing campuses especially in those institutions located outside the Kathmandu Valley in terms of number, qualification and experience. This kind of deficiency greatly affects the quality of nursing education imparted there and should be looked into by the Nepal Nursing Council (NNC).

Dramatic increase in nursing homes/hospitals in the Kathmandu Valley has created more demands for professional nurses. More and more nurses graduating from nursing campuses prefer to work in private nursing homes/hospitals as there is a better work environment, equipment, remuneration and opportunity for advancement. The quantitative increase in nursing homes and hospitals in urban areas

will attract more nurses while hospitals in rural areas are expected to face scarcity of professional nurses for many years unless there is substantial increase in production. Beside this, there will have to be attractions/incentives such as accommodation and career opportunities for nurses working in rural areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish more reliable data-base on number of professional nursing teachers/students.
- Follow uniform standard criteria for determining teachers/students ratio all over the country.
- Increase the number of nursing campuses, maintaining rural - urban balance.
- Ensure proper distribution of senior teachers in all development regions by providing more attractive career development incentives to those nurses who work in rural areas.
- Provide more career incentives to senior nursing teachers so that they are encouraged to go and teach in nursing campuses located outside the Kathmandu Valley so that quality of nursing education improves further.
- Form a Task Force to prepare human resource projections for the future.
- Let Nepal Nursing Council (NNC) enforce existing regulations to maintain teacher/students ratio in order to improve nursing education.

- Let the NNC, the national body, be responsible for overseeing nursing education and standards and review its present nursing education policy in an effort to meet deficit in a given period of time.

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