



# Challenges Faced by Nurses in India and Proposed Solution

Nutan Kumari<sup>1</sup>, Bharti Sachdeva<sup>2</sup>, Poonam Yadav<sup>3</sup>

Faculty of Nursing, SGT University, Gurugram

<sup>1</sup>Assistant professor Community Health Nursing Department

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor Medical Surgical Nursing Department

<sup>3</sup> Nursing Tutor OBG Nursing Departments

Nurses represent the largest group of healthcare professionals, having the greatest exposure to systems and functioning. Nurses play the most important functions in providing care in different clinical settings. Nurses and midwives make up nearly 50% of the health task force globally. Nurses play a variety of roles ranging from care providers and educators to leaders, researchers, managers, and advocates. They take care of the patients' needs across the continuum of preventive, promotive, curative, and rehabilitative arenas. Nurses' role is not limited to conventional practice alone; they also work as nurse informaticists, entrepreneurs, nurse practitioners, and navigator nurses. There are certain challenges that nurses face at the departmental or organizational level that need to be identified and rectified to strive to establish a better task force for higher quality care for all.

**Keywords:** nurses, challenges, healthcare

## INTRODUCTION

Nursing establishes a bond of compassion and affection within human society. The scope of nursing care has expanded and has extended beyond the hospitals. Over a broad spectrum of treatment, nurses frequently serve as the pivotal element. In a range of care settings, from acute and tertiary care to preventative and wellness programmes, a nurse's professional abilities and education have a vital role in the success of patient outcomes. The patient is quite satisfied with their friendly demeanour, caring touches, and smiling faces. India's healthcare system is still undergoing significant changes despite the country's urbanisation and globalisation. The focus of the healthcare system has shifted away from curing disease and towards satisfying material demands and expanding revenue-generating activities. Due to the country's current healthcare system framework, many common people are now unable to afford curative

care.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the healthcare system is beset by numerous issues. The answer is to investigate the causes of the issues and potential remedies to stop them.

The care of patients and leadership positions that nurses fill in hospitals, health systems, and other organisations make them essential members of the healthcare sector. The nursing career can be extremely rewarding, but it can also be incredibly difficult and require high dedication and commitment. Nurses must concentrate not only on the needs of the patient but also on the administration of the healthcare system. Despite the nurse's best efforts to provide for the patients, this frequently leads to unfortunate difficulties. They oversee patient care and serve as its coordinators. Along with technical talents, they also need to possess a lot of managerial skills for this.<sup>2</sup>

Overworked staff, caused by a shrinking workforce and poor care, also contributes to higher morbidity and mortality. It is crucial that everyone, everywhere, has access to professional, driven, and encouraging nursing care as part of an effective healthcare system. In an effort to build a better task force for better care for everyone, it is important to emphasise the role of nurses in healthcare.<sup>3</sup>

There are unmet health goals in India, where the healthcare system is experiencing a drastic transition. The transformation is brought about by, among other things, demographic shifts, medical technology advancements, a profit-seeking mentality, immigration, task shifting, the education-service divide, and the current economic downturn. The cooperation of other healthcare professionals, such as doctors, paramedical workers, and other support staff, is facilitated by nurses. Nurses face several challenges at the workplace that make it difficult for them to provide patients with high-quality care, bringing negative attention to that healthcare facility.<sup>4</sup>

Nonetheless, these difficulties are arguably the main reasons for nurses to leave their field of work. As a result, fewer students choose to pursue careers in nursing, which adds to the staff shortages. People relocate to other nations in search of better pay, working conditions, and respect.

## NURSES' WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

### 1. Working Conditions

Unmanageable patient loads and disparities in the nurse-patient ratio are caused by a lack of manpower. The nurse-to-patient ratio must be carefully maintained because it significantly impacts patient care. When nurses are compelled to care for patients at high nurse-to-patient ratios, they suffer fatalities, infections, injuries, or premature discharge without receiving adequate instruction on how to care for their illness or injury. They consequently visit the hospital again right away, frequently feeling worse. Nurses can better care for their patients when they have fewer patients.<sup>5</sup>

### 2. Long working Hours

Short staffing patterns in a healthcare facility can lead to long working hours and multiple shifts for staff nurses. There is no doubt that it is detrimental to the nurses' health. When a nurse is exhausted physically and mentally, providing excellent nursing care is quite difficult.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. Workplace health hazards

Occupational health risks are very likely to affect nurses if proper care and precautions are not taken. While carrying out their duties, nurses must deal with several biological, physical, and chemical hazards. Critical elements in preventing negative outcomes from the occupational safety and health hazards nurses are exposed to daily are the level of occupational safety and health training and resources available to nurses, as well as the incorporation, implementation, and use of such training and resources with management support and leadership.<sup>7</sup>

### 4. Workplace Violence

Healthcare environments frequently experience workplace violence. Massive workloads and responsibilities placed on the staff can frequently cause disturbances in tranquillity, ultimately resulting result in less effective care. In a healthcare facility, having many tasks can be problematic. Threats, verbal abuse, hostility, and harassment are other examples of workplace mental violence that can result in stress and psychological harm. There are times when verbal abuse turns violent. In a healthcare setting, co-workers, as well as patients, visitors, and intruders, are potential sources of violence.<sup>8</sup>

### 5. Lack of Recognition & Appreciation

Hospitals must provide a secure environment for the sick, and their nursing staff has duties that are not always acknowledged. Since nurses lack a support system, it is common for their performances to be underwhelming. Nurses play a key role in all facilitations during hospital inspections by the Medical Council of India and the Indian Nursing Council, but at the end of the inspections, neither the results nor their contributions are acknowledged.<sup>9</sup>

### 6. Lack of Synchronicity:

An emerging issue in the healthcare sector is disharmony and a lack of teamwork. A crucial component of the healthcare system is harmonious relationships between healthcare professionals. Every terrible incident that occurs in the hospital indirectly blames the nurses. Even if the nurse is not to blame, she gets all the blame if a patient is dissatisfied with the hospital care they received. The lack of doctors' availability or ineffective medical care are two examples of inadequate care, but nurses are still held accountable.<sup>10</sup>

### 7. Improper Incentives & Pay Scales

In addition to transparency and a lively exchange of ideas at work, nurses should also anticipate regular recognition—not just during Nurses Week. The lengthy hours, difficulties, and safety worries (particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic). These are just a few reasons why medical facilities like hospitals should honour and thank nurses.<sup>11</sup>

### 8. Non-nursing roles

In almost all healthcare settings, nurses take on tasks that are not their strong suit, leaving them with little time to perform their actual duties. They are taking longer than necessary to complete non-nursing tasks, such as billing, record keeping, inventory, laundry, diet, physiotherapy, patient

absconding, etc., leaving less time for patient care. Very little has been done in any jurisdiction to specifically address this, which means that nurses must bear the brunt of any problems with these roles in the form of leave cancellations, salary deductions, etc.<sup>12</sup>

## **PROPOSED SOLUTIONS TO THE CHALLENGES**

Each task on the list is connected to and dependent upon each other in some way. In order to find solutions to these issues, we must go deep within them and get to the heart of the matter.

### **Work environment**

The ability to provide high-quality treatment is greatly influenced by the workplace environment. It affects everything, including job happiness and the security of patients and the people who care for them. The nurses' safety and security should be emphasized. It is essential to safeguard nurses' autonomy and dignity at work to improve their contributions to society. Safe, empowering, and fulfilling are all characteristics of a healthy work environment. As members of the patient-centered team, all leaders, managers, healthcare providers, and support personnel have a duty to work with a feeling of autonomy, professionalism, accountability, transparency, involvement, efficiency, and effectiveness.

### **Effective Teamwork**

A team must be taught the value of teamwork in order to achieve the objective of providing effective and high-quality patient care. It may also quicken the focus on patients' curative care.

### **Recruitment/retention policy**

To increase the workforce and provide greater support and care, an organisation must implement a proper and well-thought-out policy for recruitment and retention.

### **Balance of the workload (quality/quantity)**

Workload frequently results in unwelcome inconveniences and a loss of mental serenity, which eventually results in less effective treatment. To acquire the intended outcomes from a healthcare team, an organisation should aim to balance the workload by dividing it equally among all the healthcare professionals.

### **Equipment/materials**

It is frequently a cause for concern that equipment and consumable supply samples are both readily available and adequate.

Typically, employees complain that inadequate and unavailable equipment and supplies leave them helpless. The issues varied from inadequate equipment and supplies necessary for saving lives, such as IV medications for adrenaline, oxygen, and autoclaves, to comparatively affordable materials like gauze and cotton wool. The hospital management should regularly check to ensure enough supplies and equipment are available to guarantee that the facility operates efficiently.

## Evidence Based Practice

nurses should shift some of their attention to evidence-based practise. The nurses can read the relevant studies for various practises to determine whether or not they are genuinely successful. Regularly reading research articles and researching different experimental studies can help nurses learn more and practise their craft better, which can have a significant positive impact on patient health care and therapeutic treatment as well.

## CONCLUSION

Healthcare workers are responsible for providing the best possible care to patients and the public, and this can only be done in an environment that fosters and supports a highly engaged and prepared workforce. Nurses can be empowered, supported, pushed, and affirmed to continue doing what they do best without any obstacles if their needs are met and their issues are resolved.

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