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Join in, One and All

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The choice-based system is applicable to electives only and offered in the form of modules. The programme prepares nurses for generalist nursing practice. Knowledge of wellness, health promotion, illness, disease management and care of the dying is core to nursing practice.

In addition to a range of nursing skills, students get knowledge on nursing practice. This is achieved through learning in skill/simulated labs and a clinical environment. Simulation will be integrated throughout the curriculum to enable them to develop competencies before entry into the real world of nursing practice. Through this educational process, students assimilate and synthesise knowledge, cultivate critical thinking skills and develop care strategies.

Competencies that reflect practice standards of the INC address the areas of cultural diversity, communication technology, teamwork and collaboration, safety, quality, therapeutic interventions and evidence-based practice. They are prepared to provide safe and competent care to patients and influence patient outcomes.

The question that needs to be addressed is why is there a change in the criteria wherein even commerce and humanities students can join the course? There are some reasons for this.

Shortcut of nursings: Currently, India has only 1.7 nurses available per 1,000 population. This is less than the WHO recommendation of 2.5 nurses per 1,000 population. In other words, India is short of 2.5 million nurses, a number that has now dwindled to 1.56 million. Without the prescribed number of nurses, it is not possible for hospitals to provide treatment through co-medicines. Nursing is all-compassing. It is imperative to understand that nursing is about both health and wellness. Health is a state of well-being that encompasses physical, psychological, social, economic and spiritual dimensions. It is every human being’s fundamental right. Our society consists of dynamic and interactive systems involving individuals, families, groups and communities. Cultural diversity, race, caste, creed, socio-economic levels, religion, lifestyles, changes in environment and political factors influence it. Nurses are required to recognise and respect human differences and diversity of population and provide ethical care. This profession, therefore, utilises knowledge derived from arts, sciences (physical, biological and behavioural), humanities and human experience. It also incorporates clinical competence, critical thinking, communication, teaching, professionalism and caring. Nurses collaborate with other health disciplines to solve individual and community health problems. The profession facilitates evidence-based practice and compassionate caring among its practitioners in response to emerging issues in healthcare and new discoveries and technologies. Above all, nursing practice requires personal commitment to professional development and life-long learning. When arts students can practise nursing after doing ANM, there should be no problem with them undertaking a BSc nursing degree.

Let us first consider the new National Education Policy 2019 which talks about pluralistic healthcare education and delivery. The first year or two of the MBBS course will be designed as a common period for all science graduates, after which they can take up MBBS, BDS, Nursing or other specialisations. It indicates that common foundational courses based on medical pluralism will be followed by core courses focused on specific systems and electives that encourage bridging across systems. Graduates from other medical disciplines will also be allowed lateral entry into the MBBS course.

Permitting students from non-science streams to take up nursing is critical. India has 1.7 nurses available per 1,000 population and admissions to nursing colleges have come down drastically. The writer is President, Confederation of Medical Associations of Asia and Oceania, and Heart Care Foundation of India.