

Situating Status of Nurses in Corporate Hospitals: Unfolding the Myth

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ABSTRACT

"Nurses in hospitals industry are class in itself with their very nature of work and professional qualification. They are identified as a status group or a service class in hospital hierarchy. Their position is determined as paramedical staff but their duty overlap with ward boys and sweepers in both patient crowded government hospitals and labour squeezing private hospitals. Even though the nurses are skilled worker, in corporate hospitals, they are treated as most unskilled worker. Heavy work burden and less wages forces the nurses in corporate hospitals to struggle to achieve work life balance. The present paper has made an attempt to unfold the myth and relating the status of the nurses in corporate hospitals. It highlights the issues connected with work life balance of nurses and their status in corporate hospitals.

Keywords: Gender injustice, exploitation, deplorable condition, stress, motivation, escalating position.

1. Introduction:

Nurses form the backbone of any medical services in the health sector. But in our country this section of skilled workers are highly exploited. They lack respect and dignity at workplace and more importantly pays extremely low wages associated with less secure jobs. This situation is more so in corporate hospitals. Despite shortage of nurses and other Para medical staff s corporate health sector following a totally unscientific method of recruitment which keeps majority of aspirants disillusioned because of reducing too much subordinated contract labour status with extremely low wages and exploitative work environment.

Review of Literature

Santha Lakshmi, K, (2012) in the paper, "**Analysis of workplace balance of women nurses in Hospitals-comparative study in government and private hospitals of Chennai.**" Explained the role of nurses has expanded from a health care provider to health educator, diagnostic assistant, health advisor, physicians assistant, health counsellor, and health researcher. In every form they are providing reassurance to both patient and their family.

Grootjans and Newman (2013) research paper, "**The Relevance Of Globalization To Nursing: A Concept Analysis, International Nursing Review**" stated that there are two challenges faced by nurses in contemporary time, first is work force and educational issues like global shortage of nursing staff and impact of migration. In addition to these educational issues speaks of concerns sour rounding national, international standards of nursing education etc. The second one is all about professional issues

Patidar (2011) in the study , "**Future Nurses Perception Towards Profession And Carrier Plans- A Cross Sectional Survey In State Of Punjab**" revealed that most qualified students choose their carrier as teacher in nursing colleges as it provide some autonomy in their work, increase in job satisfaction, higher professional recognition and better salary. Majority of nursing students don't want to join bed side nursing.

Nair (2009) in her article, "**Effects of Globalization on Nursing**" said Nursing is considered as dirty work which seems to become culturally embedded in Indian context. Nurses think of their pitiable service condition. Indian hospitals as are reflection of their low status. Here pay is low, night shifts are very exacting. According to many of them family life especially when children's are young is adversely affected because of night shifts.

Objective of the Study

In this paper attempt has been made to analyse the challenges faced by nurses working in corporate hospitals of India.

Materials and Methods

This paper is basically descriptive and analytical in nature. In this paper an attempt has been taken to analyse challenges faced by nurses working in corporate hospitals of India. The present study is based on secondary data and the data's were collected from journals, books, newspapers and websites.

Nursing Profession under Corporate Culture

Nurses play a major role in health care industry and are the first ones who are thought about when we talk of health care and it is necessary that their needs have to be taken care. A congenial atmosphere should be created for them to work with. Mental stress, work pressure, improper working conditions, discrimination, exploitation, distrust and unlimited work load and in corporate hospitals has thrown numerous challenges to nursing profession. (Lambert, E.G., 2010). Utmost job satisfaction and content, the result of which would be a high quality nursing care. But in corporate hospitals it is largely found that there is gross violation of labourer laws and lack of trade union rights. Nurses working in corporate hospitals face extreme form of exploitation.

Increasing competition in nursing profession in corporate culture with declining wages, worsening service condition and increasing cost of living discouraged honourable life for nurses. (Person 2010)

Studies have proven that factors like improper work life balance, work pressure, inadequate working environment, and salary, job security have greater impact on job satisfaction, which is a distant relating in corporate culture. Previously, female work force in India was mainly employed in non- managerial, subordinate or low profile positions in work force. With the dawn of LPG era, women participation in work force especially in health sector increased significantly.

Modern health care institution in India emerged in the late 19 century. In the beginning, the government institutions were few in number and majority of hospitals and clinics were run by missionaries and charitable trusts. From third five year plan onwards, the scope of public health system expanded greatly to attend universal health care in country. Nevertheless since the mid-1980s and profit driven private sector again surpassed the government. Liberalization and changing health policy of the govt constrained the scope of state intervention in the health sector. Corporate houses and business class began to invest in hospitals industry in all most all major cities of the country taking advantage of less state regulation, non-unionised labour, vast consumer market. This has resulted in emergence of big corporate hospitals who trained only for profit with increased impoverishment of staffs particularly the nurses as sufferer.

Corporate Health Services and Nursing Profession in India

Nursing as a profession in India is viewed from two major prospective. Formal, informal nursing. Informal nursing is associated with the care giving roles of women to children, to the ailing and the old at home. Therefore, formal nursing has limited to acting as midwives for assisting in child birth and very few are engaged in public health system and private health care institution. Formal nursing has been stigmatised because of public exposure and discharge of the degraded works of cleaning, dressing etc. The profession has been further degraded with corporatization of health services, where they face extreme form of exploitation. The constructed agreement that nurses enter into included signing a bond that requires them to work in the hospitals for two – three years. Moreover confiscating nursing certificates has become an established practice to restrict their professional mobility. These types of practice restrict professional mobility. Nurses became unable to search better professional avenues without the knowledge of their current employer.

Results & Discussion

Nurses in corporate hospitals face various inhuman torture and exploitation of which lengthy duty hours are most challengeable. Not only they work for long hours but the wages paid to them also very low.

Most corporate hospitals in India demand bonded contracts which if broken; nurses are forced to pay more than their salary. The so called ISO certified hospitals also hire untrained nurses thus bringing down the wages of skilled nurses and putting the lives of patients at risk. Female nurses in such corporate hospitals are also punished on flimsiest ground. Cut in salary, irregular pay and double duty time are rampant.

In many hospitals during duty hours, there are no rooms for them to rest or change their cloths and even paying for over time is an alien concept. One of the inside story of exploitation of nurse in corporate hospital set up that does not find any mention anywhere in the human rights violation in the form of sexual exploitation or harassment of female nurses. While the labour department and government neglecting the problems faced by the nurses and lack of union fighting for nurse's cause. Many are forced to silently bear these injustice

Studies have unfolded that stress level of nurses working in corporate hospitals is very high compared to their male counterparts.

To bring gender injustice to an end and to stop exploitation of women nurses in corporate hospitals various studies on basis of their findings have suggested the following measures to be taken, so that their pitiable and miserable condition of work life balance could be improved.

It is call of the time that, nursing fraternity organize itself to fight for very legitimate and genuine claim which include

1. There should be trade union right for all the women nurses working in corporate hospitals throughout country.
2. Bringing to an end the unethical practice of bond system and hospital management to stop confiscation of educational and experience certificates at the time of registration.
3. Steps to be taken to stop workplace harassment by doctors and hospital management. All nurses to be treated with respect and dignity.
4. Government regulated standardized wage as per minimum wage policy should be strictly followed in all corporate hospitals. Wage should be revised and adjusted according to cost of living, with periodic increment.
5. Entire duration of duty hour must be confined to eight hours with overtime allowances. Besides this leave and social security benefits available to their counterparts in government hospitals also should be given to them.
6. Hospital management should provide health coverage benefits working in their establishment.

Conclusion

To conclude on the basis of analysis, it is found that women nurses working in corporate hospitals in post globalization era are subjected to inhuman exploitative practices adopted by the profit manager. They are severely challenged by work and family commitments. From the above analysis of the prevailing facts, the challenges are many, but if addressed with basic human concern majority problems of nurses could be sorted out. The most priority thing to improve the status of nurses in corporate hospitals by hiring skilled persons, increasing job satisfaction level., service commitment as per govt norms., conflict management etc. To sum up all such sensitive and pivot issues connected to status of women nurses working in corporate hospitals of the country. A multi stake holder approach is need of the hour where the nurses are treated as a class itself.

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