

Paradigm of Indian Nursing in Global Healthcare

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ABSTRACT

India, the most populous nation with approximately 1.459 billion people—17.5% of the global population—possesses a strong demographic advantage, with 65% under the age of 35 and a median age of 29. This youthful and dynamic population, combined with India's cultural heritage and linguistic adaptability, makes the country a significant contributor to the global workforce, particularly in healthcare. India contributes 20% of the global workforce and has around 3.3 million nurses, representing 8% of the world's nursing workforce. Karnataka, a southern state, is a major hub, producing over 50% of its nursing graduates from Bangalore alone. Despite these numbers, India's nurse-to-patient ratio remains at 1.96 per 1000, below the WHO recommendation of 3:1000. To bridge this gap, the government has increased healthcare spending to 2.5% of GDP and expanded nursing education.

Nursing education in India spans diploma to doctoral levels, including advanced specialty diplomas and the Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP). These programs equip nurses for critical roles in gerontology, emergency care, oncology, and more. However, both India and the world face a looming nursing shortage, with WHO estimating a global shortfall of 4.5 million nurses by 2030. Contributing factors include poor working conditions, high educational costs, job dissatisfaction, and international migration. Approximately 50,000 Indian nurses migrate annually, often facing challenges abroad such as licensing issues, cultural adaptation, discrimination, and limited career progression.

Addressing these challenges requires systemic reforms: improving work environments, supporting education, ensuring ethical recruitment, and expanding career opportunities. Indian nurses, known for their resilience, compassion, and dedication to "seva" (selfless service), are vital to shaping a globally responsive and sustainable healthcare system.

India, being Number one in its population, having about 1459 million people, which represents 17.5% of 8.2 billion global population, the most remarkable is, 65% of Indian population, comes under youth population i.e. below the age of 35 years, having good demographic dividend with 29 years median age population. India plays a crucial role in Global Work Force, because, India contributes 20% of Global workforce under different sectors.

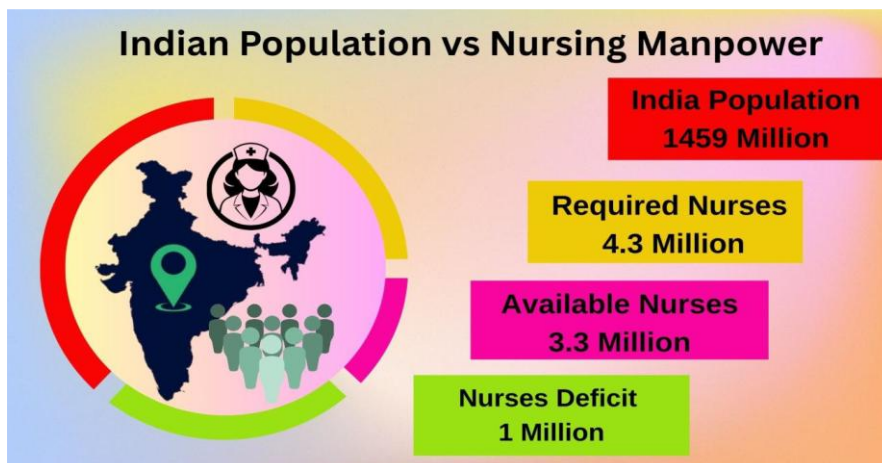
Indian's belief with thousands of years of Indian cultural heritage & India being a multilingual country, where people speak 454 regional languages, having script for 334 languages & out of which 22 languages are constitutionally approved as official languages and that is why, Indian students accustom very much comfortably with any global languages irrespective of the country & cultures. of course, coming to the Indian festive & cuisines, we celebrate festivals respecting all 6 religions being together of Hindu, Islam, Christian, Jain, Buddhism, Parsi with a strong we feeling & solidarity, Hence, India being diverse in many aspects, Indians are very well known in world for their "Unity and diversity".

Approximately, 29 million nurses are working across the Globe however, In Indian scenario, 3.3 million Nurses are available and it represents 8% of global nursing workforce where as in Karnataka a southern state of India has 0.2 million robust nurses' population.

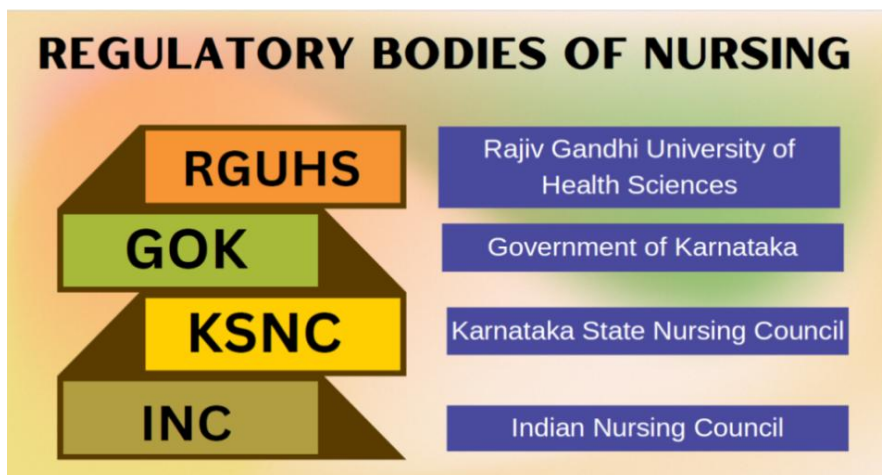
Male and female nurses are equally essential for delivering comprehensive nursing care in current nursing work force. Because of diverse perspectives and experiences, in enhancing the patient care both male and female nurses are equally essential for delivering comprehensive nursing care in current nursing work force. Globally, nursing profession is a **female** dominant profession, representing about 90% of female nurses & 10% men nurses. Whereas in India, approximately 0.14 million men, are representing 20% of Indian men nurses population.



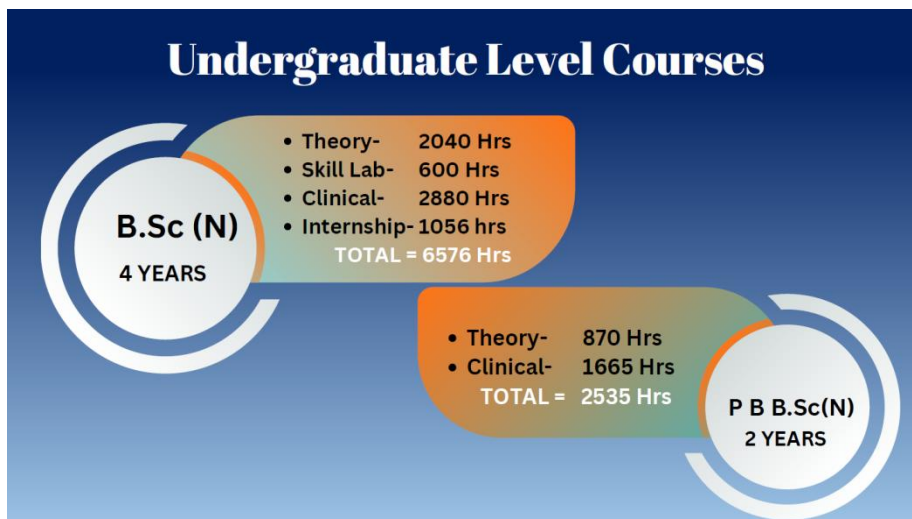
As per the Indian Nursing Council, In India, currently 2.34 million Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives are in nursing workforce, along with 0.94 million auxiliary Nurse and Midwives (ANM) with 0.05 million lady health visitors. In India ANM, LHV's are exclusively working in public health nursing focusing on maternity and child health in rural areas. The nurse-patient ratio is a critical factor in health care industry and it influences directly on patient outcomes. Therefore, India is prioritizing healthcare needs and investing 2.5% of its GDP exclusively on health, medical and nursing services, because of this 40% of nursing manpower has increased in India (Economic Survey 2024) within a decade by establishing a greater number of nursing educational institutions.



However, as per W.H.O recommendation, the nurse patient ratio is 3:1000, however, currently In India the availability of nurse patient ratio is approximately 1.96 nurses for 1000 population. In Karnataka State, approx. 617 nursing colleges and about, 692 school of nursing are existing and out of which, approximately 330 colleges as well as 400 nursing schools are located in Bangalore, generating more than 50% of nursing graduates in each year from Bangalore itself.



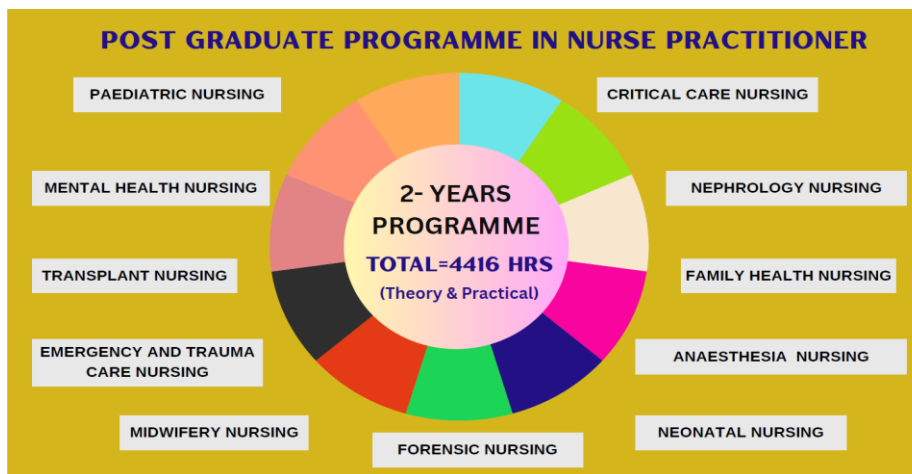
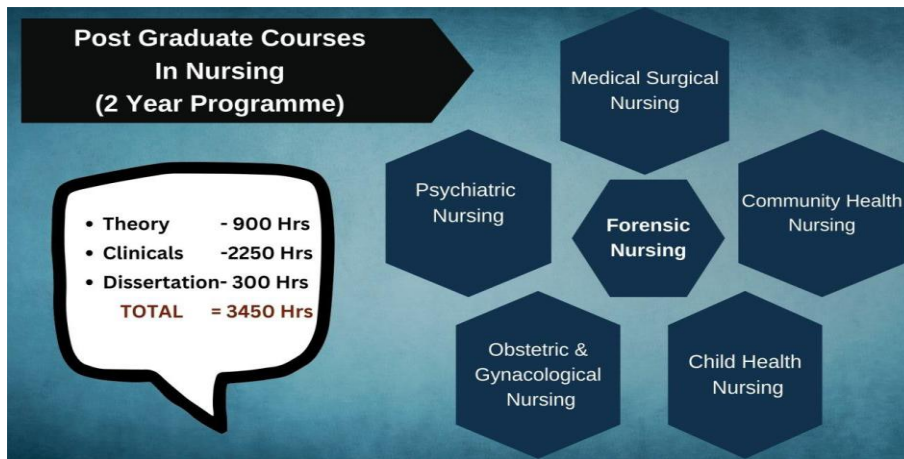
"India offers a diverse range of nursing courses, each are designed to prepare the students with the skills and sound knowledge necessary in the health care field."



Advanced Post-Basic Diploma level programs, In India, graduated registered nurses can pursue a 1-year advanced post-basic diploma courses under various specialties, such as

- Forensic Nursing,
- Cardiothoracic Nursing,
- Renal & Burn Nursing
- OT Nursing,
- Gerontology
- Neonatal Nursing
- Oncology
- Emergency & Disaster Nursing and
- Critical Care Nursing,
- Midwifery
- Neuro-Nursing

This advanced post-basic diploma program encompasses 400 hours of theoretical instruction, 1280 hours of integrated clinical practice along with 160-hour internship, totalling to 1840 hours of comprehensive training.



Doctoral degree in Nursing profession helps to promote high quality evidence-based nursing practice, improve patient care outcomes, professional credibility and implement the best global practices. In India, Doctoral degree in Nursing, is of minimum 3-4years program after Post Graduation however Doctorate in Nurse Practitioner (DNP), which is a 4-year program exclusively for Nurse Practitioners.

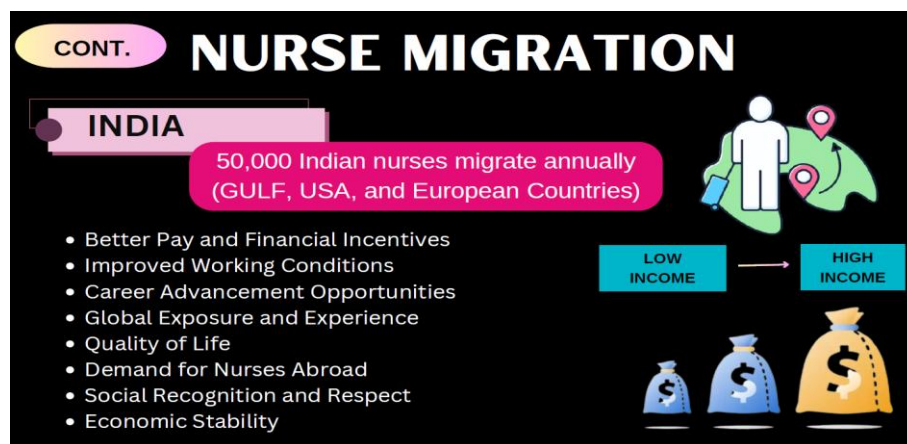


Today's burning issue in health care sector is, Nursing shortage which is a critical issue affecting health care systems worldwide. The growing shortage of nurses and the increasing gap between hospital beds and patients indicates clearly the urgent need for innovative solutions to overwhelm the acute shortage of nurses.

Moving on to the global shortage of nurses focusing on the healthcare systems around the world, according to WHO estimation, the world will face a shortage of approximately 4.5 million registered nurses and 0.3 million midwives by 2030, emphasizing the critical need for immediate action to address this global healthcare challenge.

Identifying the root causes of the global nursing shortage is crucial for developing the effective solutions. Some of the reasons for the Global Nurse shortage include

- Pandemic Impact
- Poor Working Conditions
- Increase Healthcare Needs
- Stressful Work Environment and Job Dissatisfaction
- Ageing Population
- Insufficient Training Capacity
- Lack of Career Opportunities
- Increasing Natural Disaster
- Inadequate Workforce Planning
- Inadequate Compensation
- Increasing the Cost of Nursing Education
- Impact of Technology Gap and
- Global Migration of Nurses



India is a key source of nurse migration, with around 50,000 Indian nurses moving annually to high-income countries to meet healthcare needs. In order to bridge the gap and overcome the global nursing shortage, we need to implement the effective strategies.

- Pandemic had increased the focus on public health
- Poor Working Conditions has increased turnover of nurses seeking the better working Conditions, Hence, health care entrepreneurs should provide conducive work environment for retention of nurses.
- Post COVID has increased demand for skilled nurses, with shortage & disturbed the supply & demand of nurse's manpower & it should be balanced with relaxed regulations for hiring the overseas nurses.
- Stressful Work Environment and Job Dissatisfaction can be reduced by maintaining suitable nurse patient ratios in proportionate to the workload.
- Increased ageing, increase life expectancy & increase senile comorbidity leads to huge demand of Geriatric nurses, however because of minimal nurses coming forward for caring geriatric population the demand for Geriatric nurses is increasing to resolve this issue.
- In previous decades, nursing education was often undervalued. The COVID-19 pandemic created a sudden surge for nurses, highlighting the need to address the shortage and unequal distribution of nursing schools. So, Supply & demand of nurses can be balanced with increase number of educational institutions across the globe.
- Lack of career opportunities can be eliminated by empowering nurses in health care organizations through career guidance counselling, frequent faculty development programs, support with better positions in the hierarchy, deploy for skilling, up skilling & capacity building with mixed methodology modules.
- Increased Natural Disaster causing raise in victims & shortage of nurses, hence nurses can be trained about disaster management as a part of curriculum & capacity building training modules for in-service nurses on these issues.
- Strengthen the nursing workforce in preventive, promotive, curative, restorative & rehabilitative health sector based on required level of nursing skills & knowledge for various sectors.
- Health care organizations shall support nurses for their retention by providing Salary, wages, benefits,

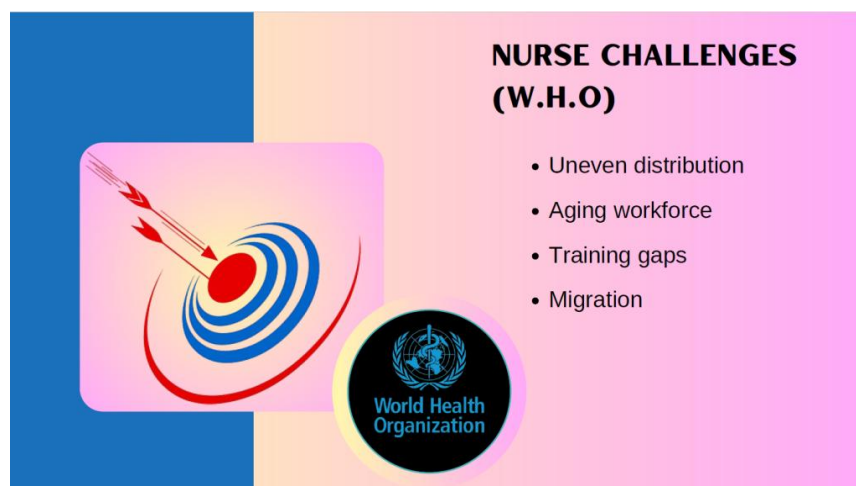
conveyances, incentives & facilities par with the labour authority/ provincial government based on their potentials.

- Educational institutions shall support the students with scholarships, financial aid for interns, encouraging for hybrid learning, supporting students for education loan, not charging exuberant fees can make the low income & middle-class people afford the nursing education.
- Periodical revival of nursing curriculum should be done in par with trending educational technologies/methodology. In-service nurses should be proficient in using the technologies like telemedicine & electronic health records, savvy of advanced biomedical technology.
- Global migration of nurses can descend through orientation to cross cultural nursing practices, adopting the better nursing retention policies in health care organizations & promoting the international standard practices.

The challenges faced by Indian nurses when migrating to other countries include

- Licensing and Certification Requirements: Meeting these requirements can be challenging due to strict standards in the destination country, potential additional exams or training needed and the time-consuming, costly & nature of the certification process becomes a challenge for Indian Nurses.
- Language Barriers can pose challenges as proficiency in the local language is often required
- Professional Growth Limitations for nurses include limited career advancement opportunities in some countries and being placed in lower-skilled roles despite of their qualifications & skills.
- Adapting to Advanced Healthcare Systems Nurses must adapt to technologically advanced healthcare systems by learning to new protocols, equipment, and procedures.
- Exploitation by Recruitment Agencies Nurses often face exploitation by recruitment agencies through unethical practices like high fees, false promises, (e.g., English, German, or Arabic), and differences in accents and communication styles may lead to misunderstandings.
- Cultural Adaptation involves adjusting to varied healthcare practices and patient expectations while navigating different workplace norms and social interactions.
- Discrimination and Bias can manifest in the workplace as racial or ethnic discrimination and in the form of local nurses being treated differently.
- Workplace Exploitation can involve lower wages, longer working hours, and poor working conditions compared to local nurses in some countries.
- Recognition of Qualifications can be a challenge, as Indian nursing degrees may not be fully recognized abroad, leading to the need for additional courses or training to bridge educational gaps.
- Financial Burden of migration includes high costs for visa fees, travel, accommodation, and expenses for certification exams and training.
- Homesickness and Emotional Stress can arise from being away from family and support systems, leading to feelings of loneliness and mental health challenges.
- Return & Migration Challenges: Indian nurses face return and migration challenges, including adapting to new work environments, navigating legal requirements, and managing emotional stress related to relocation.
- Legal and Visa Challenges involve navigating complex immigration processes and the risk of visa rejections or delays.
- and a lack of transparency in job offers and contracts by head hunters.
- Nurses frequently struggle to achieve a work-life balance due to demanding schedules and limited time for rest or family caused by shift work.
- Gender Specific Challenges: Indian nurses, particularly women, face gender-specific challenges such as workplace discrimination, inadequate safety measures, and societal expectations that often prioritize family responsibilities over their professional role

The World Health Organization (WHO) has highlighted several other challenges faced by nurses globally like



The World Health Organization (WHO) has outlined some of the key recommendations to address the global nursing challenges like



The Indian nursing paradigm is essential in shaping healthcare both nationally and globally. Indian nurses bring diverse skills, expertise and a strong commitment to patient care, making them invaluable to healthcare systems worldwide. In a holistic healthcare landscape, collaboration and knowledge exchange are crucial for enhancing nursing capabilities across borders. Indian nurses embody the spirit of seva, providing selfless service while adhering to evidence-based practices. From rural India to pandemic battlegrounds, they demonstrate that equity and excellence are interdependent pillars of a sustainable health system.

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