

Nursing Education Has Achieved Progress

Shahzadi Harun

This is the concluding part of the article, the first part was published yesterday.

AN increasing number of fellowships for degree, diploma, and special courses are being made available to nurses in Bangladesh. Major donor agencies include World Health Organisation, UNICEF, British Technical Assistance, United Nations Development Programme and Technical Assistance Between Development Countries. World Health Organisation and UNDP are providing a number of Master's fellowships in the South East Asia region to help prepare nurses for the newly created academic positions at the College of Nursing.

Thirteen nurses have received fellowships for degree or diploma study outside Bangladesh since 1980. Areas of study for these fellowships include paediatric nursing, nursing administration, nursing education, public health nursing, midwifery, psychiatric nursing, and cardiac nursing. Countries where nurses have studied include USA, United Kingdom, India, the Philippines, Australia and Japan.

Continuing Education

Because of changes in society's needs and theoretical and technological developments, continuing education for all profession is essential. It takes many forms: post-basic specialisation courses, short courses, seminars, in-service on-the-job training. In 1986 the Directorate of Nursing Services prepared a plan for decentralising continuing education in nursing to four Divisional Continuing Education Centres with a central coordination and production unit in Dhaka at the College of Nursing. This plan is being implemented.

Through assistance from WHO and UNDP, video production and editing equipment has been obtained and is being used at the College of Nursing to produce educational video tapes for use in the Nursing Institute and in continuing education activities. Each of the four Divisional Continuing Education Centres will have a TV and VCR that can be transported to Nursing Institutes and to venues of continuing education courses. Every Nursing Institute now has a TV, and VCRs will be ordered for each one. Each Nursing Institute will then have the capability of using Bangladesh and foreign made educational video tapes to supplement teaching in the basic nursing programme.

Post-basic Specialisation Courses. With the development of specialised health services patient's demand for

highly trained nurses in specialised areas in Bangladesh hospitals is constantly increasing. To meet these demands, a number of specialisation courses, ranging from three months to one year in duration, have been organised. Areas of specialisation in which these courses are offered are: Psychiatric nursing at Pabna Mental Hospital, Orthopaedic Nursing at Rehabilitation Hospital, Dhaka, Ophthalmology Nursing at Ophthalmology Institute, Dhaka, and at Chittagong Eye Infirmary, Pediatric Nursing at Shishu Hospital, Dhaka, and Rangpur Medical College Hospital, Tuberculosis Nursing at Infectious Diseases of the Chest Hospital, Dhaka, and Intensive Care Nursing at Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases and Institute of Post Graduate Medicine and Research, Dhaka.

Foreign Nurses

British Technical Assistance (BTA) programme offers a number of fellowships each year for nurses to work and learn specialised nursing care in hospitals and other institutions in the United Kingdom. BTA, WHO, and other donor agencies offer study tours to enable selected nurses to learn about nursing and health care programmes in other countries. A long-range programme in cooperation with the British Council is being developed to bring British Nurse Specialists to Bangladesh for varying periods to assist local nurses in increasing their technical skills and in developing teaching materials, especially video tapes of clinical work, to use in specialisation courses in Bangladesh. Japan has also provided training in Intensive Care Nursing for three nurses currently working in the Intensive Care Unit at Institute for Cardiovascular Diseases.

A number of short courses with the assistance of WHO and UNDP have been offered on specific subjects during the last two years. These courses range in length from two to six weeks, depending on the objectives of the course and the target group of participants. In conformity with the Directorate of Nursing Services policy of decentralising continuing education, short courses are being offered throughout Bangladesh wherever adequate teaching and hostel facilities are available. These courses include three Primary Health Care Nursing Courses for District Public Health Nurses in Chittagong, Rajshahi and Sylhet; three Clinical Teaching Courses for Sister-Tutors and Sisters in Chitta-

gong, Dhaka and Rajshahi; four Management and Supervision Courses for Matrons and Supervising Sisters in Chittagong, Mymensingh and two in Rajshahi; and three in Dhaka on curriculum development and evaluation which included much of the work on the revision of the basic nursing curriculum.

The Future

Professor Martha Rogers, an American Nurse Theorist, comments that "Education is for the future"; yesterday's methods will not suffice for tomorrow's needs. Thus, the focus and methods used in Bangladesh to educate nurses must change if nurses are to be appropriately prepared to make their much needed contribution to health care and promotion as well as to overall development of the country.

As noted, revision of the basic three-year nursing curriculum has recently been completed and the Bangladesh Nursing Council has approved it. Plans are in progress for twelve one-week workshops throughout the country to orient Sister-Tutors, Matrons, Civil Surgeons, Hospital Directors and other responsible personnel to this revised curriculum. Further revisions in the one-year midwifery curriculum are needed and assistance from the British Overseas Development Administration and British Council in this activity is being sought.

The revision in the basic nursing curriculum necessitates review and revision of the national nursing examinations for which the Bangladesh Nursing Council is the responsible authority. Passing the Bangladesh Nursing Council examinations is required for registration as a basic nurse or for registration following one of the specialisation courses. As part of the process of review and revision of these examinations, plans are also there to increase the number of objective test items on the written examinations and to explore ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the practical examinations.

The Government is constructing many of the buildings for these Nursing Institutes and recently a proposal for funding construction of several more has been approved under the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) programme. Other donor agencies are being approached for assistance in construction of all of the remaining Nursing Institutes.

Planning is going forward to develop a formal institutional linkage between the College of Nursing, Mohakhali, Dhaka, and the Department of Nursing Studies, University of Edinburgh, Scotland. This long-range programme will focus on faculty and institutional development, evaluation of the current BSc programmes, and development of an MSc programme, first for faculty at the College of Nursing and, when an adequate number of faculty has been appropriately prepared, opened to other applicants. The faculty from the University of Edinburgh will spend part of their time at the College of Nursing in Dhaka working with faculty and students here and with visiting faculty from the College who will be in residence in Department of Nursing Studies, Edinburgh.

Other opportunities for Master's and eventually Doctoral study for nurses at Universities and Institutes in Bangladesh are also being explored.

Continuing the policy of decentralising continuing education, seven short courses in primary health care nursing problems are planned in the next two years to be held at Nursing Institute in Chittagong, Dhaka, Dinajpur, Patuakhali, Tangail and Rajshahi. Thirteen management and supervision courses will be held at Nursing Institute in Chittagong, Comilla, Faridpur, Jessore, Kurigram, Patuakhali, Sylhet, Tangail, Thakurgaon and Rajshahi. Three research methods, epidemiology and statistics courses are planned at College of Nursing for Faculty, and at Nursing Institutes in Chittagong and Rajshahi.

Nursing education in Bangladesh, as can be seen from this discussion, has made considerable progress and has an exciting and bright future. The Nursing profession in the past has done little to seek greater public understanding and appreciation of the needs for and roles of nurses in Bangladesh. Nurses are now seeking to increase the awareness of the public and members of other professions about the importance of nursing and of nurses. The improvements that are being made in nursing education should assist this effort by improving nursing's social status and career opportunities. These improvements in turn, are necessary if nursing is to recruit and retain the calibre of women needed to meet the nursing and health care needs of the population of Bangladesh and to advance the Nursing profession. (Concluded)