

GENDER ROLE IN NURSING – AN OVERVIEW

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A nurse is a nurse despite of whatever gender you are. Mostly people think that men cannot give care to anyone as they are not compassionate.¹ Good nursing care can only be given by females. But it's not true. Nursing is a caring profession. You must be in touch with your own feelings and really like people. According to the General Social Survey, progressive attitudes towards gender roles has contributed to more men entering the nursing field.² There is also a demand for more male nurses in the healthcare field, as providers and patients alike become aware of the many benefits male-identifying nurses can provide. For instance, the presence of more male-identifying nurses can help ensure that male patients feel represented. And for certain sensitive procedures, patients might prefer a nurse of a certain sex, particularly for procedures such as inserting a catheter, using the bathroom or bedpan, or giving an enema.³ The fact that most nurses are women is not necessarily an indication of "gender inequality." It might just mean that men are less likely to consider nursing as a career." It might just mean that men are less likely to consider nursing as a career. That is changing, though. Nursing is a comparatively stable career, and it pays decently (although by no means lavishly). It is also a rewarding job, which attracts men as well as women.

Key Words: male identifying nurses, gender roles.

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INTRODUCTION

Nursing means to nurture or to nourish. It says that the first nurse in our life is our mother. So, when we say nurse, only one gender that comes into our mind is female. A common man also expects when they call for any nurse, the person should be female because that is the image of nurse most of the people's minds have. As time advanced, nursing profession has also grown up and now all the genders are opting for nursing as a profession. What does the word 'nursing' mean? Nursing means to nurture, to nourish or to give care. According to WHO, Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings. It includes promotion of health, prevention of illness, and care of ill, disabled and dying people.⁴ Any gender, male or female, can be a nurse and can take care of the sick individuals by keeping nursing in their mind and attitude.

GENDER IS NEVER A HINDRANCE TO BE A NURSE

The word nurse is derived from a Latin word "nutrie" which means to feed, to nourish. In olden days, the nursing role had been predominantly a female profession. This society has automatically excluded men from entering into the nursing profession and created a stigma for doing so.⁵ Researchers have explored gender differences among nurses at hospitals. In recent years, an extent of research has examined the association between gender and job satisfaction.⁶ However, the results of these studies have been contradictory and inconsistent.⁷ Some studies indicated that females are more satisfied with their nursing jobs than males,⁸ while others have found that males have higher nursing job satisfaction than females.⁹

Definition of Nurse: A person trained to care for the sick or the infirm, especially in a hospital.¹⁰

IS NURSING A GOOD CHOICE AS A CAREER?

Yes! It is. Nursing is indeed a very lucrative career in India. It is ideal for someone who is looking to serve humanity. Thus, nursing can be a good career. Moreover, nursing has good international scope as well. Additionally, in India medical facilities are improving and hence, there is a lot of demand for nurses.¹¹ Nursing is both a calling and a career. Completing a nursing degree takes a lot of hard work, but it makes it possible for one to have a meaningful career in a field that they are passionate about.¹²

Not only it is a stable profession to enter; it is also slated to grow, making it an ideal career path for many. The National Library of Medicine projects that between 2020 and 2029, there will be a 15% growth in healthcare, creating over two million jobs—222,000 of which will be nurses.¹³

MALE INCLINATION IN NURSING

There are more men in nursing today than at any time in history – and that is good for male nurses and the profession. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 12% of registered nurses are now men, up from 2.7% male RNs in 1970.¹⁴ In India, 16.6% of nurses in 2001 were males, according to a World Health Organization report on the country's health workforce in India. By 2018, this number had increased to 20.5%. The growth of men in the field has been gradual, but there are regional variations.¹⁵ More men are joining the field and finding it to be a rewarding and lucrative career. According to a Nurse Journal report, the number of men in nursing increased from 27,257 in 1977 to 314,195 in 2018—a 1,052% increase. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in 2020, 12.6% of registered nurses (RNs) were men¹⁶

A NURSE IS A NURSE

There is nothing with a gender. A nurse is always a nurse; a care taker; a nurturer. A study in Canada found that even though male nurses experienced greater job satisfaction through the caring aspect of the role, gender-based stereotypes contributed to job dissatisfaction in the workplace. Male nurses want to be referred to as "the nurse," and not the male nurse. When referring to a female nurse, gender is rarely mentioned.¹⁷

CONCLUSION

Nursing is all about taking care of people; serving the sick with comprehensive qualitative care. Gender cannot be obstacle in taking nursing as a career. As the nursing profession evolves, nurses should be considered "Nurses" and not be singled out as a gender-specific profession. Gender walls are falling. As a society, we are entering into

a time of neutrality. The concluding line is that the focus should be on what the individual is inspired to do, their life's purpose and what they could contribute to the profession as a person and not their gender.

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