

# Assessment of Current Status of Nursing Education in Bhutan- a Cross-Sectional Study

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**Abstract** - In Bhutan, the nursing profession started as an apprentice program, and when health school was established in 1974, Diploma in Nursing and Midwifery (1982) commenced. Since its inception, no assessment was done to understand the current status of nursing education in Bhutan. Focus group discussion, a qualitative method, is used for this study. Content and thematic analyses were used to analyze data.

**Keywords** - Nursing education, institute, assessment, nurse educators, clinical nurses, diploma program, district hospitals, clinical areas.

## I. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Three and a half years, Diploma in Nursing and Midwifery program was started in 1982 and was reduced to 3 years in 2002. Initially, the program was borrowed and evaluated by experts from Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, College of Nursing, India. The curriculum, infrastructure, and clinical areas were well established in Bhutan and delivered the program very efficiently. There are other four different types of Health-related education programs also. In 2015, the Institute was renamed as Faculty of Nursing and Public Health (FNPH), under Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan (KGUMSB).

## II. AIMS OF STUDY

**A. General:** - To assess the current status of nursing education-Diploma in Nursing and Midwifery in Bhutan

### **B. Specific objective**

To explore the impact of various teaching techniques being practiced currently, including the use of information technology, library, and infrastructure facility available on nursing education.

## III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE NURSING EDUCATION

Theresa M.terry Valinga (2012) defines “Nursing education is conceptualized as a means to facilitate students’ growth; the planned engagement of learner; the dynamic interchange among learner, nurse

educators and subject matter and collaborative experiences”. In nursing education, program evaluation, accreditation, and ongoing quality improvement are complex, interrelated processes, and a general overview of the process in evaluation and accreditation with continuous quality improvement is required for formal nursing education programs (Tobbell, 2014). Theory and practice are both integral parts of nursing education. Students apply theory knowledge studied in the classroom to clinical practice when they are in clinical areas. It is often discussed that there are not enough preceptors or no interest from staff to teach students in clinical areas, or they do not have enough clinical competence that would eventually affect the quality of nursing education (Norman, 2005; Jerlock et al., 2003). In Bhutan, FNPH faces a similar problem in clinical areas as nurse educators do not find time to do preceptors' roles, and clinical nurses are not adequate to do clinical teaching.

## IV. SAMPLE

The participants consist of nurse educators, students from the Faculty of Nursing and Public Health, and clinical nurses from District hospitals of Bhutan. Each group consists of 10-12 participants, with a mixture of seniors and juniors.

## V. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The method used is Focus group discussion (Berkowitz, 1997; Bogdan & Biklin, 1998) that included lecturers, students from the Faculty of Nursing and Public Health, and clinical nurses from five District hospitals. Each group was assembled in one room, and open questions were put to them. The group would take some time to discuss and put their point forward. The discussion was tape-recorded, and notes were also taken. The whole discussion took around forty-five minutes

## VI. DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

Focus Group discussion being qualitative data, content, and thematic analyses were done after listening to audiotape repetitively for several times. Notes also helped to refine data with complete information.



## VII. FINDINGS

### ***A. Students-Knowledge, skills, and attitude***

Three groups of students comprising of seniors and juniors were approached for focus group discussion. The finds are:-

Faculty of Nursing and Public Health- the three-year program is packed and needs a longer duration- both in theory and practice. Theory teaching is very good with highly qualified faculty. Facilities at Institute are adequate—classroom, skills laboratory, and computers, only WIFI is erratic. Skills learned from nursing laboratories are very good except advanced procedures that are practiced less inwards also. During the initial clinical posting, students feel anxious and nervous. In the practical area, knowledge gained is in a skill area, e.g., ECG, etc. Students learn skills by helping, asking questions, and imitating staff nurses in clinical areas. Staff nurses and In charges guide and teach mostly nursing skills.

### ***B. Clinical nurses- knowledge, skills, and attitude***

They feel that the training program is adequate in both theory and practice. Some feel the Midwifery module should be of longer duration for about nine months instead of six months. The laboratories are well equipped, and the library has enough books, but Nursing Journals are less. The teaching skills of lecturers are excellent. Sign-outs of nursing procedures are very good to enhance practical skills. Other activities, e.g., sports, cultural shows, tshego clubs, and community services, are also done periodically. Self-directed learning -research projects are also encouraged among students. For clinical experience, National Referral hospital posting is best for students. One month posting in District hospital in Bhutan for students is relevant as it has a more general type of patients. Clinical nurses cannot do full-time supervision to students as additional they have patients to take care of also.

### ***C. Nurse educators- knowledge, skills, and attitude***

Almost all teaching faculty are aware of the Diploma Program and module requirements and feel that it is

adequate. Institute has both formative and summative assessments. Practical requirements should be more and sign out for nursing procedures are intensive. Infrastructure, e.g., classrooms, laboratories are adequate now but maybe less once number of student increases. Library has enough books but less number of journals. WIFI is accessible within academic block only and games facility is not many. Clinical posting are mainly in National Referral hospital and is suitable to give proper training as Diploma nurse. Intensification of clinical supervision is required from both clinical nurses and teaching faculty. Teaching faculty has less 'hands on' practice as visits clinical areas less. Training quality is still good as students clinical practice has no complaints and discussed as more capable nurses than outside trained nurses. Students' theoretical knowledge is very good and have good writing skills.

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