

Dear Nurses of India, Its time to Speak-up!

I read Mr. Mallikarjuna Kuruva's article on the IAPH website titled "Nurses are essential health workers or overlooked health workers??" The one with a double '??' which like many other statements in the write-up were unnecessary.

Before you delve into the article

A wise advise:

It is strongly recommended you don't miss to read or rather read the section at the outset – the One Constructive Suggestion section, which appears in the concluding part of this article. That's worth your time, thought and action.

A disclosure:

I'm speaking on behalf of fellow Nursing colleagues whom I have met and worked with for over years. I have worked in a Private Hospital, a Nursing College, Government Hospitals in two different districts, and in a first world country. So unlike you Mr. Kuruva, my response is not a personal view. Its built on experience.

To begin with, Mr. Kuruva is a friend, and given the fact that I know he is an overtly emotional being, it was obvious his writing would depict his personality. I took his suggestion mentioned in the second & the last lines of his lousy writing, my response was to write a brutal rebuttal. I believe this bloodbath would give our profession a much needed spirit of rebellion; revolutions begin with rebellion.

"Nurses are essential health workers but is facing a situation of global supply chain."

I am yet to understand what you wanted to convey through this line, nonetheless, I'd say lets talk and think local; Global problems can wait.

"Nurses are like chickens brooded in a poultry farm and someday to be slaughtered for benefit of someone." If I had to rank the senselessness behind your sentence construction, I'd rank this sentence at second position. Nursing is a noble profession, significant number of Nurses come into the profession with a calling to serve, some have religious encouragement and some have hearts of gold. 'Sacrificial Love' I think is an apt word. Thousands come to the profession because they view Nursing as a profession which can fetch them quick job, a mode of livelihood, to not only support them, but their families. I worked as a Public Health Nurse in a 'High Risk District' as they call it for the districts who are less fortunate in all possible resources. I met and taught a batch of ANM, GNM Nurses, most of whom were first generation Nurses in their families, and their families were not the namesake but real nomadic tribes who sold liquors as a mean of livelihood and have been traditionally known as thieves and burglars. These girls

weren't forced into the profession, they appeared for entrance exams with a sole purpose of getting a government seat, because their socioeconomic situation would force them to do otherwise. I don't even want mention Nursing as a profession which opens doors to work in possibly all first world countries. The Nurse who enroll for the diploma or degree with this purpose in a posh private colleges do this willingly. So your opening gamble to compare Nurses with helpless and insignificant Chickens in poultry farm stands lies null and void.

"...and someday to be slaughtered for benefit of someone." This is a problem with the system and not an individual nurse, no one willingly wants to serve for less salary than they deserve. They are forced too.

"But the question is that these poultry chickens taste is not so good as the domestic chicken available in my village."

So here comes number one ranked – the most senseless, heartless and stupid statement in the entire write-up. For the sake of other readers and to appear cultured and civilized I would respond in two words, 'bugger off'. If I have to take your assumption of 'Nurses = Poultry Chickens', then I would naturally think that you meant to say, your so called village produces Nurses more tastier(=smarter) than other places? As much as I don't want to waste my time thinking about this, but let me remind you Mr. Kuruva, The McDonalds and KFC's you have been munching for years, or the chicken you cook every other day at home were not brooded in your 'delusion of grandeur village'. It is time you apologize for your derogatory sentence.

Responding to further writing: *'Obeying authority'* is not a problem but a duty of every professional. Blindly obeying is a problem, so be specific with your words.

'Involuntary acceptance of helplessness' is a BIG problem with our profession and this issue needs to be addressed. Agreed, and we will talk about this later in this write-up.

"poor nurses read administration for the sake of degree". Mr. Kuruva - self proclaimed judge of the profession speaks again! I will say, may be we as teachers failed to teach our students better administration. On the bright side, its never late to correct our mistakes.

"It's impossible to sustain nursing as profession if we tend to have the same behaviour which we display now." I don't know what evidence base Mr. Kuruva would quote for this statement, as he didn't supported his writing with references/bibliography. In spite of this, we will give him benefit of doubt and assume he meant 'profession sustaining = profession thriving and not barely surviving'. Yes, agree on this view, Nurses deserve to be treated better in all factors. Nursing has a long way to go in India in possibly all dimensions.

“I have very good experience with nursing but also had the worst experience. I don’t want to point anyone for this”.

I empathize with you and respect your humbleness to not to point at anyone. Otherwise you would be buried under lawsuits.

“Nurses are marginalized and overlooked profession at least in the eyes of policy makers, as poor nurses doesn’t get enough chance to meet the policy maker. So, if a nurse is ready to work and want to reach the policy table, poor chicken is been slaughtered as life time of chicken is very less. Stigmatized, Harassed, Authority obedient, nurses and well settled ones has low skills of negotiation and achieve what is really needed.”

Agree with major points, Nurses do lack negotiation skills and are Stigmatized and Harassed. Settled one’s have low skills of negotiation or are careless and don’t choose to make a dent. The issue lies with the culture among Nurses, the herd mentality to not do what is rational, but do what they have been asked or influenced to do.

Good points Mr. Kuruva. Cheers. Applause.

“Hope is the only driving force behind me as a nurse now, we need some nurse to become a malala, or Greta Thunberg to bring revolutionary change in Nursing else we need to wait for generations to bring out the small changes in our profession too!! ”

Hope is a powerful force. You have it, means you have power. You are not autistic, but you are angry (old man) for sure. I nominate you as my leader Mallikarjuna, because you care for the profession and have hope and zeal. Tomorrow never comes, today is what we have. Be the change.

“Wish someone would counter write my article and the discussion continues....!!!”

Your wish granted!

Here is where the rubber meets the road: One constructive suggestion.

1. What’s the suggestion?

Lets not waste the Corona Crisis: I think this is a once in a lifetime opportunity. General population of India have come to realization and have started to recognize that Nurses exist! They are actually humans who work tirelessly 24*7 in hospitals.

Can you count the number of thank you messages you all have got over these past two months? Its phenomenal, isn’t it?

We belong to a diverse country where emotional polarity is a normality. Generally, there is either enormous affection (like now for healthcare professionals) or enormous hate (remember people on the streets to demand justice for raped and burnt Hyderabad vet?). Hope you get my point and given the fact that you did forget about the Veterinary doctor from Hyderabad, speaks volume of our short term memory. In a nutshell, we only have limited time, we have to grab the opportunity of people's affection and raise issues of Nurses at national level. To make our voices heard, we will have to gain support of celebrities/social media influencer's who are ever present on planet Twitter.

Some of you might think, is this ethically or morally a right move to take opportunity of a pandemic to raise your issues? Well, I want to point you to the people in the power and their response to the impending economic crisis due to pandemic - two state governments have unequivocally decided to suspend Labour Laws for 3 years, which would possibly lead to exploitation of millions of labourers. Compared to the actions of the powerful policy makers, we are only asking for what we deserve.

If you forget everything you read today, just remember this, **“Lets Not Waste The Corona Crisis”**, the substance, spirit and essence of my heart behind writing this all.

2. How do we do it?

Social media is the common currency. Lets meet people where they spend their time the most. I know many will think, we have done this in the past, etc. I think seeking Professional help is inevitable. Professionals/companies exist who have managed to topple governments using social media, ours is only a noble cause. How can we do that, needs much deeper discussion within the IAPH community.

3. Why do we do this?

Our Aims: In Mallikarjuna's write-up he states various generational problems/mindsets in the profession which are hindering the change. Lets take them down one at a time. Out of many, for e.g. Behavior Change among the Nurses is what we can focus on – Fake it till you make it. Idea is to instill optimistic mindset, confidence and competence in the Nurses, until they realize actually they had this in them all the time, it was only about the time when someone (like IAPH) helped them realize this.

4. Is this a long shot?

You can only be unlikely winners until you think you belong to that sphere of loser. What do we loose if we try this? Financial and emotional loss at the most. What if you don't try at all, we are loser for sure.

And in immortal words of Mr. Kuruva I bring an end to my thoughts,
“Wish someone would counter write my article and the discussion continues...!!!”.

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