Future Directions of Nursing Education in Pakistan

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Abstract
Nursing a profession dealing with the care of most auspicious creature of universe; human being is advancing superiorly and nurses the operant part of nursing is growing very rapidly with acquisition of higher and higher learning. Nursing education in Pakistan is in the state of transition and till the end of 2015 three years diploma nursing will be replaced by a four year degree as the level of entry for practicing nursing in the country. Nursing education will be shifted from nursing boards to medical universities. Baccalaureate level nursing education for entrance to practice, an increase number of masters in advance nursing, Production of doctorate Nursing scholars, broadening the scope of practice, title of clinical nurse specialists, establishing nursing research institutions, foundation of professional nursing associations and professional societies of nursing scholars are the forecasting directions in the country.

Key Words: Nursing education, transition, future direction

Introduction:
Pakistan is a developing country with a population of about 180 million people having very poor approach and access to basic human rights including health and education. According to the registrar of nursing regulatory body (PNC) there is only one nurse for the care of forty patients in the country (Zuberi; 2006) whereas is the ratio of nurse to doctor is 1:15 (Baloch; 2009). Historically in 1947 the position of nursing was particularly serious and was in dire need of immediate consideration (Soares; 2000). Government tried best to overcome deficiencies and took necessary steps to upgrade nurses training and advance nursing services. Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC) was recognized in 1952 which established a standard curriculum. That curriculum was reviewed and restructured by the PNC in 1973 for the first time which was introduced and applied in the nursing schools across the country (Newslime PNC; 1998). Bachelors of Science (BSN) program in nursing began in 1998 by Agha Khan University school of nursing followed by a few public sector institutions and then the first master in nursing science program of country was also introduced in 2001 by Agha
Khan university school of nursing (Upvall; 2004). Higher Education Commission (HEC) with the cooperation of Pakistan nursing council (PNC) set a national curriculum for four year degree nursing program in 2006 for the first time which has been revised in 2011. Nursing education in Pakistan is in the state of transition and till the end of 2015 three years diploma nursing will be replaced by a four year degree as the level of entry for practicing nursing in the country. Nursing education will be shifted from nursing boards to medical universities.

According to Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2011) the profession of Nursing is advancing almost as quickly as the perspective in which it is practiced. The ever changing profession of nursing is reactive and is adopting to come across the needs of clients and the community. Worldwide nurses have engaged on innovative roles worked across borders and created new facilities for the fulfillment of patient’s care and needs.

Now the time is appropriate to consider what should be the future direction of nursing education in the country, what these modernizations mean for nursing profession in Pakistan, and to ensure that nursing profession and nurses are fit designed for the challenges of future and is in accordance to standards of other nations in the world.

Baccalaureate Education for Entry into Practice:

The trend of Baccalaureate programs rising globally to replace diploma nursing education. The entrance level progressed to baccalaureate degree for nursing practice in Phlippine, requisite for practice in Canada is baccalaureate, and The United Kingdom has shifted nursing education for professional license to university Baccalaureate degree. Diploma programs are phasing out in India (Nichols; 2011). In Pakistan mostly diploma holders upgraded their education to BSc degree through post basic (post RN 2years, fast track 1 year) beside these new established institution can only offer a four year BS nursing programs in place of diploma and the current diploma schools will be upgraded to degree awarding institution till the end of 2015 (PNC; 2011).

Transition of Training to education:

Nursing training referred to diploma nursing or hospital bound nursing which began in the late 19th century and still in practice in some developing countries it was training rather than education (Scheckel) Nursing training is based on apprenticeship model where students took some classes and evolve practically in care from the beginning. The training modules of nursing were
highly criticized and by Richard holding at first who emphasized on university education which can balance theory with practice this trend is rapidly rising across the world (Bullough; 2007). Pakistan far casting sharp advancement towards university awarding nursing education in the future (Aziz; 2011).

**Advancement of nursing education; preparation of master in nursing education:**

The basic purpose of master program in Pakistan was the Nurse practitioner and clinical nurse specialist roles. Both roles were blended together to convert it to Advanced Practice Nursing (APN) model, for the sake of harmonization with the scope of The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (Upvall; 2004). Now four universities in the public and two in the private sector run their master in nursing science program across the country (HEC; 2014). At present the focus of master program is mostly specified to education and management however it will shape the way to different clinical disciplined in the future. Currently a private sector university recently started its first batch master in clinical specialties (dawn news; 2013).

Although doctoral education in nursing started in 1924 at teacher college Columbia it was fully developed by the end of 20th century and after the recognition of nursing own theoretical base, doctoral education increased sharply in developed countries followed by developing nations like Philippine and India (Kirkman; 2007). In Pakistan nurses have to leave their country to acquire doctoral studies as currently no one university offer such kind of advance studies however beside other national medical universities a fast growing public sector Khyber medical university institute of nursing sciences (KMUINS) is in the process to initiate the first doctorate of nursing sciences in the country (VC KMU speech; 2014).

**Post doctorate fellowship:**

Post doctorate fellowship is on the rise in developed countries like US, Canada and other European countries, advance nurse practitioners became members of different professional associations (Dalley; 2008).

**Accreditation of education in nursing:**

Accrediting bodies like commission on collegiate nursing education (CCNE) and national league for nursing accrediting commission (NLNAC) are accrediting different professional
programs in advanced countries (Russel; 2005). Pakistan could make connection to these bodies for the accreditation of nursing education in future.

**Transformation of nursing education curriculum:**

Curriculum is central to nursing education according to Scheckel, patient safety, cultural competence, gerontology focus, evidence based practiced, use of technology and informatics, inter professional education, application of new pedagogies, critical thinking and simulation are essential elements and future trends for transformation of nursing curriculum and education. Higher education commission in collaboration with (PNC) developed nursing curriculum for Baccalaureate nursing education included all essential elements and trends of modern education (HEC; 2011). PNC is working for the development of a uniform master in nursing education curriculum and for the revision of Post RN curriculum.

**Distance education:**

The introduction of new educational technologies has marvelous progression in distance nursing education (Clark; 2005). Nursing students in Pakistan today can anticipate that numerous degree opportunities will be accessible in distance education design especially nurses who are working at different organization and want to obtain their education besides working.

**Conclusion:**

Rapid technological growth converts the world in global village information and learning is not limited to geographical boundaries and education cross the borders of continents with speed never imagine before and as a result no disciplined is scared of development. Nursing a profession dealing with the care of most auspicious creature of universe; human beings is advancing superiorly and nurses the operant part of nursing is growing very rapidly with acquisition of higher and higher learning. Pakistan being a developing country followed the steps of developed nations and along other field of walking nursing as a profession is not back in the progressive ladders of improvement. Baccalaureate level of entrance practice, an increase number of masters in advance nursing, own country production of doctorate scholars, broadening the scope of practice, title of clinical nurse specialists, establishing nursing research institutions, foundation of professional nursing associations and professional societies of nursing.
scholars are the forecasting directions in the country. Evidence based practice, problem base learning, lifelong learning, and critical thinking are the competencies of future nursing students and educationists of the country in the future.

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