

RETENTION STRATEGIES TO REDUCE NURSES' TURNOVER IN INDIA: A REVIEW STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The nurses' turnover has been a and global challenge .The administrators of hospitals and human resource managers are struggling hard to sustain the workforce of nurses in health care sector.A dream of healthy nation can not be envisaged without their immense cooperation in health care delivery system.The national and international organisations sensitized the government and the world on nursing shortage .During Covid 19 pandemic ,owing to nursing shortage ,it was imperatively realized to plan and implement effective and suitable retention strategies for employed nurses so to minimize their turnover in our country.

Keywords: - *Retention, retention strategies, turnover, factors affecting turnover, turnover intentions, job dissatisfaction.*

Objective

To integrate the various retention strategies effectively to reduce the nurses' turnover .

Methodology

Integrative literature review.

Databases Medline, Pubmed, Mendeley, Elsevier, Springer ,Scopus were used to search papers between 2010 and 2022 to search for relevant papers for retention strategies of nurses.

Results

70 research papers were screened and 26 papers were selected as per the inclusion and exclusion criteria under the themes of administrative, professional, personal, social and others as combination of other causes. The various studies revealed retention strategies as multifactorial approach.

Conclusion and implications

This study would definitely contribute to effective planning and implementation of retention strategies so that nurses' turnover could be minimized in hospital institutions. It would promote researches on management topics of various retention strategies and their role in reducing the turnover of nurses. The satisfied retained workforce of nurses would certainly result in rendering of qualitative services to clientele in community and curtailing financial resources due to turnover .

TURNOVER OF NURSES A PROBLEM

Turnover of nurses has been a global challenge in health care delivery system. This problem has got aggravated a lot during the Covid pandemic .Many countries are struggling hard to reduce the turnover of nurses in their respective country. The shortage of nurses is not only representative of figures but it also depicts the various challenges faced by nurses in their career indirectly in our country (Gill, 2016). Nurses encounter problems in their institution due to ineffective administration, personal life , professional field and sometimes in society as nurses .All these reasons lead to rise of stress, dissatisfaction and demotivation among them affecting their turnover intentions and finally turnover decisions. Health care delivery system would collapse without their professional support. In spite of being as the largest part of health care system ,their welfare had been underestimated by administration, government and society too. National nursing councils being vocal regarding welfare of nurses are also ignored by government. The various programs are needed to increase the retention of nurses in India

(Garner et al,2015).Nurses being the pillar of health care delivery system ,being the Covid warrior have to be addressed effectively so as to prevent their turnover.Losing competent ,qualified ,skilful ,professional nurses by institution will further increase the workload,cost to institution and Hiring new,untrained nurses will not only fetch financial losses to organization but also tarnish the competitive advantage of health institution by their unprofessional services globally. Improved retention rates of registered nurses may enhance the competitive advantage for hospitals by improving patient satisfaction scores and improving care(Colwell,2019).The ratio of female nurses as compared to male nurses working in health care delivery system is more in India.Female nurses sometimes find it very difficult to balance their work life. Their personal problems are being ignored by administration resulting in turnover.The tremendous workload of job on employed nurses due to turnover of nurses in institutions further results in burnout among them affecting their turnover.Thus , there is urgency of planning and implementation of retention strategies by management for nurses so as to reduce their turnover .

DATA ON NURSES TURNOVER

In Asian countries, the reported nurse turnover rates range from 15% in Indonesia (Dewanto & Wardhani 2018) to 25% in South Korea (Lee, 2019), while,among Western countries, examples of such include 18% in the United States (Nursing Solutions, Inc. 2019) and 20% in the United Kingdom (Nursing & Midwifery Council 2018 as cited in Labrague,2020).Nursing shortages has been on rise and affecting the health care services profoundly.According to the State of World's Nursing India profile, the health care sector consists of 47 % of nurses and midwives.With 1.7 nurses per 1,000 population, India faces nursing shortage as per the WHO recommended rate of 3 nurses per 1,000 population("India needs 4.3 mn nurses by 2024",2021).

Retention has been defined by the authors as,

Retention is a voluntary move by an organization to create an environment which engages employees for the long term (Chaminade,2007 , as cited in Walia & Daroch ,2017).Perceived retention as initiatives which the management takes to prevent employees from leaving the organization(Cascio ,2003).Employee retention is concerned with keeping or encouraging employees to remain in an organization for a maximum period of time(Mita et al 2014;cited in Kossivi et al 2016). Employee retention can also mean any effort by a business to maintain a working environment which supports current staff in remaining with the company.Many a times the retention policies focus on increasing the job satisfaction among the employees so as to reduce the cost of recruiting and training of newly inducted staff of organisation(Onah & Anikwe,2016).Retention is a process which an organisation employs to enrich its environment with skilful,committed employees so that the organization can be benefitted with their valuable services . Retention strategies refer to policies health care delivery systems employ in order to retain nurses by reducing their turnover and thus ensuring nurses engagement in an organisation.The main goal is to meet the expectations of employees without losing sight of the goals and vision of institution thereby adding global competitive advantage to hospital institution .

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Medline,Pubmed,Mendeley,Elsevier,google scholar ,Springer,Scopus, were used for integrative literature review.Papers published between 2010 and 2022 were selected and analysed so as to associate to relevant causes of nurses' turnover .70 papers were referred but 26 selected because of relevancy of topic and its subtopics.The retention strategies discussed globally has been included in order to minimize nurses' turnover in our country .The researches conducted in our country as review study is not done.This review study has identified the various

retention strategies from Indian pretext. The following search terms were used : Retention ,retention strategies,turnover,factors affecting turnover,turnover intentions,job dissatisfaction.

METHOD

Integrative literature review

INCLUSION CRITERIA

Published between 2010 -2022

Researches available online in English with full text availability

Related to retention strategies as per the causes of nurses' turnover in our country.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Researches published prior to 2010

Researches not relevant to title

Researches providing insufficient data

Duplicate articles

Researches not published in English

CAUSES OF TURNOVER OF NURSES IN INDIA

As nurses turnover is challenging for many hospitals, very little is known about nurse turnover in India(Lakshman, 2016). There are many causes of nurses turnover in India. It can be classified as administrative ,professional, personal ,societal and as combination of others .

RETENTION STRATEGY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

The top management must support the role of nurses and simultaneously be approachable to them in their organization. The nurse managers selected by the management should create a friendly and flexible environment for nurses to work and they should be free to put forward their problems to management .Nurses to be encouraged to drop their suggestions anonymously in the suggestion boxes planted in the corners of institution . The nurses prefer to work with managers who pay attention and support their personnel (Heidari et al,2017).

JOB RECOGNITION

Many nurses feel demotivated and dissatisfied ,when their hard work is not recognized by nurse managers and administration. Physicians and other team members working with nurses should realize the importance of nursing profession and pay their dues to nursing personnel .

EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT POLICY

The recruitment policy must indicate the mission ,vision ,goals of health care delivery system. A proper and well planned policy for recruitment and retention has to be included in an organization in order to enhance the manpower for better support and care(Chugani & James ,2017).

JOB ENRICHNESS

Job enrichment to be implemented to various levels of nursing personnel to avoid job boredom. Workshops, hands on skills, appropriate job rotation, evidence based nursing practices should be organized and implemented by institution to impart knowledge and skill of various specialities of nursing to all nurses.

FAIR COMPENSATION

Unfortunately, in India, nurses are still paid less in many private health care institutions. If the compensation is adequate and appropriate, nurses are motivated to pursue their job in the long run. Competitive financial compensation including many incentives play key role in retention of nurses (Duru & Hammoud, 2021).

PLANNED RETIREMENT AND RETAINMENT OF AGED AND EXPERIENCED NURSES

Aged and experienced nurses by virtue of ageing process encounters difficulty in doing nursing job on ground but however because of their enriched exposures and experience, they can always be beneficial for health care institutions. Administration along with senior nurse executives must plan supervising jobs for them and give them their due recognition so that they are comfortable and continue their job further with flexible work schedules and this will prevent further turnover of nurses. Delhi govt deployed its senior nursing officers as nodal officers in private hospitals to monitor the management of Covid-19 patients along with monitoring Covid vaccination (Delhi govt deploys nodal officers, 2022).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAREER, EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Many nurses leave the job on the plateau of their career in absence of adequate career progression and educational opportunities. Nurses willing to do higher educational courses pertaining to their profession, other allied sciences stream related to nursing, management studies must be encouraged as they are going to be future nurses of India. Equal opportunities for all employed nurses as inservice education and training on advance technology are other factors which helps in nurses retention (Archana & Rashmi, 2017). Career advancements directly and significantly influence nurses' turnover intention (Lakshman, 2016).

ADEQUATE STAFFING

Nurses are burn out in the institutions because of the increased workload of patient care. Unfavourable nursing staff adequacy was associated with working extended hours, doing double shift and working during day off; which indicates shortage of nurses. Optimal staffing and scheduling of nurses in hospital are essential to address the unfavourable perception of nurses on nursing staff adequacy (Jawahir & Hong, 2021). Recruitment of male nurses is another strategy to maintain adequate staffing in institutions.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Nurses work very hard in their working area for smooth and efficient delivery of health care services with tireless professionalism and sincerity. Inappropriate methods of performance measurement in health care sector causes unfair perception of management system and leads to high turnover among staff (Madlabana et al

,2020).360 degree performance appraisal system should be in corporate in nursing for assessment of nursing performances.

PREVENTING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Workplace mental violence may appear as harassment ,verbal abuse,threats,psychological stress and trauma to the nurses.Apart from this ,physical assault is also caused to them.In a healthcare setting, the possible sources of violence include patients, visitors, intruders and even co-workers(Chhugani & James ,2017). Creating a safe environment for working free from workplace violence is wholesome responsibility of administration. Rules and regulations must be laid out for offenders committing such nuisances .

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Nurse leaders ,managers and clinical nurses must be given participative leadership in the administration for their retention.The leadership strategies among the senior nurse managers such as guiding, coaching, and mentoring registered nurses helps in retention of registered professional nurses.Consultative leadership style encouraging nurses participation in management decisions increases nurses retention as compared to autocratic/bureaucratic management style in health care delivery system (Magda et al ,2011).

WELFARE MEASURES

Welfare measures include creche facilites for children ,housing facility near the health institutions,cafeteria services inside the campus,resting rooms,availability of changing rooms ,incentives for educational and professional growth, scholarships for children ,free medical aid for nurses and their dependants,employee insurance schemes,outfit allowances ,transport allowance,transport facilities and effective reward system change the orientation of nurses towards organization as they feel institution is really concerned about them and do care for them.

RETENTION STRATEGY FOR THE PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

JOB AMBIGUITY

The Functional level nurse managers along with HR managers,administrators must demarcate the job outlines for junior , senior nurses and junior trainee doctors of a institution so as to avoid job ambiguity.Thus ,role ambiguity in nursing profession act as a job stressor which compels nurses towards their turnover.So ,the job description should be clearly laid out in the organisations (Kaur et al,2016).

PROVIDING HEALTHY AND SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

In India ,nurses are working in deplorable conditions which make them more physically exhausted and prone for many occupational infectious diseases.Adequate PPEs should be provided to working staff. Providing of Covid 19 vaccines first to front line health workers including nurses was a great step of Modi's government in our country in prevention of morbidity and mortality of Covid 19 infections among nurses for efficient functioning of health care delivery system Higher authorities such as doctors, managers and administrators should be instructed not to criticize or blame the staff nurses in front of the patients and other staffs(Rajan,2013).

APPROPRIATE AND FLEXIBLE DUTY SHIFTS

Nurse administrators need to limit duration of day/night shifts. Working more than 8 hrs at a stretch is itself very taxing for nurses working in intensive care units,medical –surgical wards and other busy units of hospital. Shift duties and appropriate night shifts roster to be framed. An impartial and unbiased attitude should be followed by nurse managers while delegating shifts .

INCREASED WORKLOAD

Recruitment of more nurses has been an important factor in retention of nurses as they reduce the stress due to excessive workload on present staff employed in institution (Patil et al ,2018) . Unnecessary duplication of documentation to be avoided for nurses working in clinical field as it further increases the workload.

APPROPRIATE COMPENSATION

Nurses' unions point out that nurses are not merely skilled labourers but professionals and hence actually ought to be paid more.The nursing colleges too agree to provide their student nurses to work on that low salary (Nagarajan,2019). This chain needs to be broken.In order to sustain workforce of qualified,competent professionals nurses, competitive package must be offered to them,

EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FROM NATIONAL NURSING ORGANISATIONS,UNIONS

Nursing councils should plan and enforce the strategies of nurse retention and take suitable legal actions against the institutions not following their norms. Nurses look up to their councils for their development and welfare holistically .Policy makers and national nursing associations must take a lead in developing of strategies for addressing the challenges of nursing profession and retention of nurses (Buchan et al ,2018).

RETENTION STRATEGY FOR PERSONAL ISSUES**FAMILY SUPPORT**

In nursing profession,females ratio are more as compared to male nurses . Women reports many incidences of their worklife imbalance as they have to shoulder multiple responsibilities at work and home.Both government and private hospitals must encourage to be aware about the status of employed female nurses in their organisation (Monisha et al ,2020). Family social support helps in retention of nurses in an organization (Mun et al ,2021). Counseling sessions could be organized for staff, family members for their family roles and better compatibility and for worklife balances for distressed nurses(Rajan,2013).

MOTIVATING STAFF

Incentives,paticipative management ,competitive salary package,and welfare schemes,approachable administration ,counselling sessions during stress act as motivators to retain them in the job . Best employee of the month award given in health care institutions leads to motivation among nurses for continuation of their present jobs (Nguyen,2019).

PLACEMENT OF NEEDY NURSES NEAR TO INSTITUTIONS

Distance from home to the hospital (88.8%) and access to public transport to hospital (88%) are also affective factors on retention. (Heidari et al ,2017).The preferential selection of enrolling students from rural back ground in medical and nursing studies might be useful with the condition that students after completing their studies should preferably return and work in their native villages followed by placements in rural areas(Behera et al,2019).

CHILD CARE FACILITIES

Nurses leave or remain absent from their job for looking after their children,family or for family responsibilities.Creche services to be provided for the nurses requiring it for rearing of their younger children (Thephilah ,2019).

RETENTION STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL ISSUES

JOB RECOGNITION, SOCIAL SUPPORT & SOCIAL WELFARE MEASURES

Nurse leaders and managers are still not being recognised in our country by society. Professional respect of the nurses should be maintained properly (Rajan, 2013). Coworker social support outside the organization also helps in nurses' retention. The members of society should also support the noble nurses by paying their due recognition in society and should be acknowledged for their remarkable contribution in our country. Social welfare measures to be provided to them eg creche facilities for their children at affordable rate, transport facilities to them during odd hours of duty time especially during night with safety, free medical and nursing services to their dependants in many government and private health care institutions. Safety and security of the nurses should be given importance (Chugani & James, 2017).

INDEPENDENT DECISION MAKING AND LEADERSHIP BY NURSING DIRECTORS

Independent decision making and leadership is not provided to many directors of nursing for effective administration of nursing and welfare measures of nurses which act as hindrance in retention of nurses.

REPRESENTATION IN THE CABINET

Government must understand the importance and role of nurses in the delivery of health care services in health care delivery system. A separate department allocation at cabinet level for the welfare of nurses will definitely help in retention of nurses. Strong political commitment is required to improve the working conditions of nurses in the organisations (ILO, 2022). The few nursing leaders positions at top level must be organized (Varghese et al, 2018).

CONCLUSIONS

Nurses being the pillars of health care delivery systems and a majority workforce, should be retained by formulation and implementation of appropriate strategies in organizations. The policy makers should emphasise on the strict adherence of welfare measures by institutions. The various studies revealed retention strategies as multifactorial approach. So, the HR managers, administrators should address their issues empathetically for their retention in institutions. The researches on management topics to be promoted for resolving of cropping issues of turnover of nurses so that their turnover could be reduced. Participative decision making should be encouraged. A vision of a healthy nation is possible with the contributions of effective, timely and compassionate nursing services by planning and implementation of appropriate retention strategies in the health care delivery system.

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