

*Nurses are the hospitality of the hospital**~Carrie Latet*

Over the decades that I have spent in this profession, I have come across several sayings on 'nurses' and 'nursing'. Though there are many marked by their wonderful insights, perfect observations or brilliant wit, if I was to describe who a nurse is, I would always fall back on this quotation. Maybe that is because whenever I read these printed words, they make me feel significant, with a renewed sense of belonging. Or maybe because they remind me of my duties as a nurse, but not without making me feel good about it.

The nursing profession has seen so many changes in the recent years. We see a lot more young male nurses than before. The midwife is replaced by the district or community nurse, who, unlike past times, plays a pivotal role in promoting cleanliness, social awareness and is proficient in additional duties of administering drugs, injections, booster dose, etc. The assistant nurse is also replaced, thus increasing the duties and responsibilities of a staff nurse. Academically, we see the nursing students devote a lot more time on theory papers than previously. The nurses now depend on the SOP for taking decisions for which we could only depend on the heart or the head.

Have these developments changed the efficiencies of an average nurse for the better? Well, to speak honestly, you can never come to a conclusion with such questions. There will always be a number of people whose aim is to prove that all changes are for the worse. If not the changes, they will opine that the nurses are not as caring as they used to be. Or that the 'personal touch' is altogether missing from the profession. I do not dismiss these sentiments. But I shall certainly not want the improvement that this profession has attained to go unnoticed.

Now we have an educational system that prepares the novice nurses beforehand with knowledge that in our times, we only learnt through real life experiences. There is a lot more emphasis on the theoretical facets of nursing. Adding to their skills, they now have the scope of specialization in midwifery, OT, ICU, and so forth. The communicative and psychological training that they undergo enhances their interpersonal skills with the doctors, other staff, patients, relatives and visitors, up to a great measure. With the social networking sites being within less than a stone's throw reach, any nurse can share her/his knowledge, experiences, doubts, worldwide at the click of a mouse.

Personally, if I am alarmed at the rate of nurses leaving the country for jobs with better prospects, I also come across young nurses now and then who are worried about hurting the patient's feelings or who care for them being totally free of any racial or cultural prejudice. And that definitely adds to making the hospitals all the more hospitable.

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