

# Editorial

*The shortage of nurses is a global phenomenon, most of the other countries have realized their worth and treat them well and pay them better. We are falling short on both counts in India.*

*Come to think of it, in India's hierarchical and rarefied medical fraternity, the nurses are unfortunately not figured very high for all the hard work they do and for all the skills that they possess. The glamour, the money and the recognition all go to the doctors alone, almost always. For instance, look at the 2008 Padma awardees, the list contained the name of the doctor who treated the Prime Minister during his by-pass surgery. The doctor is eminent in his field no doubt, but on his own he could have achieved little. Yet the entire Para medical team consisting of highly skilled technicians and nurses did not warrant any merit or attention.*

*This has happened because, nurses contribution has not been adequately recognized for many decades. Legally, all responsibility is owned by the doctor. The nursing profession historically grew in the shadows of medical profession in spite of the legacy of Florence Nightingale. The sheer size of the nurses' cadre in any State in the overall human resource capital makes the practical sense that they be given responsibility to manage themselves with accountability.*

*Many countries now recognize the important role that nurses play and in fact in Europe where immigration rules are otherwise tightening, nurses are still being welcomed with open arms. But in India, there is only a little appreciation of the career of Nursing and also little effort has been made to challenge the stereotyped image of the servile and inferior position that nurses usually have in society. Though there is great disparity in the pay, position and benefits between the doctors and nurses, nurses are the key ingredients in the high tech health care world of today.*

*Speaking on the occasion of the National Florence Nightingale Awards last year (possibly the only day we pause for a day to remember nurses!) To mark the International Nurses Day, the honourable President of India Tmt. Pratiba Patil had remarked that it was a matter of pride that the quality and commitment of Indian nurses was getting recognition. She had also commented on the acute shortage of nurses in the country by pointing out that there are about 3.7 lakh nurses in India while the requirement is about 10.5 lakh nurses by 2012. But dreaming of filling up this gap may be wishful thinking.*

*So, in conclusion, the shortage of nurses is a vital global phenomenon, as we are falling short on both counts.*



**Editor-in-Chief**

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