



## Overview of Indian Nursing Colleges

**For Prelims:** Nurse to Population Ratio, [National Health Profile](#), [Gender Index](#), [World Health Organization](#), Disparities Among Indian States in Health Infrastructure.

**For Mains:** Potential of India's Healthcare Sector, [Issues Associated with India's Healthcare](#) Sector, [Recent Government Initiatives Related to Healthcare](#).

[Source: TH](#)

### Why in News?

Ministry of Health data reveals that 40% of districts in India lack any nursing colleges. Moreover, five States in the south have 42% of the country's nursing institutions, while three States in the west have 17%.

### What are the New Findings?

- India currently has close to **35 lakh nurses**, but its nurse to population ratio is **only 2.06:1000 against a global benchmark of 3:1000**.
- There has been a **36% growth in the number of institutions offering undergraduate nursing education** since 2014-15, resulting in a **40% growth in nursing seats**.
  - But About **64% of the nursing workforce is currently trained in just eight States**.
- **42% of nursing institutions are concentrated** in five southern States namely, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana.
  - **17% are in the western States** of Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra.
  - **Only 2% of nursing colleges are in the northeastern State**.
- The growth of nursing colleges also lags far behind the 81% growth rate of medical colleges, with the number of undergraduate and postgraduate medical seats surging at 110% and 114%, respectively, since 2014-15.

### Global Statistics:

- According to the **WHO, approximately 27 million men and women** make up the global nursing and midwifery workforce, accounting for nearly 50% of the global health workforce.
- There is a global shortage of health workers, in particular nurses and midwives, who represent more than 50% of the current shortage of health workers.
- The largest shortages of nurses and midwives are in Southeast Asia and Africa.

### What is the Reason Behind the Shortage of Colleges?

- **Minimal health budget:** India's expenditure on the health sector has risen meagerly from 1.2% of the GDP in 2013-14 to 1.35% in 2017-18. The National Health Policy 2017 had aimed for this to be 2.5% of GDP.

- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Massive shortages in the supply of services (human resources, hospitals and diagnostic centers in the private/public sector) which are made worse by grossly inequitable availability between and within States. For **example, even a well-placed State such as Tamil Nadu has an over 30%** shortage of medical and non-medical professionals in government facilities.
- **Workload and Staffing Issues:** Nurses in India often faced heavy workloads, long working hours, and staff shortages. This situation not only affected patient care but also resulted in burnout and job dissatisfaction among nurses.
- **Low Compensation and Job Insecurity:** Nurses were typically paid lower salaries compared to other healthcare professionals, despite the demanding nature of their work.
- **Gender Norms and Social Stigma:** Nursing has traditionally been seen as a female-dominated profession in India, which has perpetuated certain gender norms and social stigmas.
- **Rural-Urban Disparities:** The nursing infrastructure in rural areas lagged that of urban centers. Rural healthcare facilities often faced more challenges in attracting and retaining skilled nursing staff.

## What should be done to Increase Nursing Colleges in India?

- **Investment in Healthcare:** The National Health Policy 2017 had aimed for this to be 2.5% of GDP.
- **Nursing Education and Training:** Enhance the quality of nursing education by updating the curriculum, adopting modern teaching methods, and providing adequate training facilities.
- **Scholarship Programs and Incentives:** Introduce scholarship programs and financial incentives for aspiring nurses to attract more individuals to the profession.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launch public awareness campaigns to promote the nursing profession and its significance in the healthcare system.
- **Recruitment and Retention:** Implement strategies to recruit and retain nursing professionals in the healthcare workforce. Offer competitive salaries, benefits, career growth opportunities, and a supportive work environment to encourage nurses to stay in the profession.
- **Telemedicine and Technology:** Embrace telemedicine and digital health solutions to improve healthcare access and delivery.
- **Collaboration with Nursing Organizations:** Foster collaboration between government bodies, healthcare institutions, and nursing organizations to develop and implement effective policies and initiatives for nursing infrastructure growth.

## What are the Government's Efforts?

- **157 new nursing colleges will be established** in co-location with the existing 157 medical colleges established since 2014 as per Budget 2023-24.
- Centre directs States to correct regional disparity with a new scheme to open nursing colleges.

## What are the Recent Government Initiatives Related to Healthcare?

- [National Health Mission](#)
- [Ayushman Bharat](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana \(AB-PMJAY\)](#)
- [National Medical Commission](#)
- [PM National Dialysis Programme](#)
- [Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram \(JSSK\)](#)
- [Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram \(RBSK\)](#)

## Way Forward:

By implementing these measures, India can bolster its nursing infrastructure, strengthen the healthcare system, and better address the healthcare needs of its population. It will ultimately lead to improved

healthcare outcomes and a more robust nursing workforce.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQ)

### Mains

**Q.** “Besides being a moral imperative of a Welfare State, primary health structure is a necessary precondition for sustainable development.” Analyse. **(2021)**

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