



# State of the World's Nursing 2025 Report

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## Why in News?

The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) released the **State of the World's Nursing (SoWN) 2025 report** on [International Nurses Day \(IND\)](#).

## What are Key Findings of the SoWN 2025 Report?

- **Global Nursing Workforce:** The global nursing workforce grew from **27.9 million in 2018 to 29.8 million in 2023**, but **78% of nurses are concentrated** in countries representing just **49% of the global population**.
  - The global nurse-to-population ratio is **37.1 per 10,000**, with **Europe** having five times more nurses than Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, and high-income countries having **10 times more than low-income countries**.
  - By **2030**, the global nurse workforce is projected to reach **36 million**, reducing the shortage from **5.8 million in 2023 to 4.1 million**, with 70% of shortages concentrated in **Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean**.
- **International Migration:** 1 in 7 nurses globally are foreign-born. In HICs, this rises to 23%, compared to **8% in upper middle-income**, **1% in lower middle-income**, and **3% in LICs**.
- **Mental Health and Regulation of Nurses:** **92%** of countries have regulatory bodies for nurses. **94%** have [minimum wage laws](#), but only **42% of countries** provide [mental health support](#).

## What is the Scenario of Nurses in India?

- **Nurse-to-Population Ratio:** India has **only 1.9 nurses per 1,000 people**, far below the WHO's recommended ratio of **3 nurses per 1,000**.
- **Nursing Workforce:** India has over **3.3 million nurses** registered with the **Indian Nursing Council (INC)**, an autonomous body under the **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**, established under the **Indian Nursing Council Act, 1947**.
- **Expansion of Nursing Education:** India committed to opening **157 new nursing colleges by mid-2025** that will add **15,700 Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.Sc. Nursing) seats** across the country.

## What are the Major Challenges Facing India's Nursing Sector?

- **Overburdened Nurses:** India has **only 1.9 nurses per 1,000 people**, below the **WHO norm of 3**, although 3.3 million nurses are registered with the [Indian Nursing Council](#), this is insufficient for India's 1.3 billion+ population.
  - India faces a 2.4 million nurse deficit (2010 estimates), this shortage strains nurses, impacting **care quality** and raising **burnout**.
- **Urban-Rural Imbalance:** Most nurses are concentrated in urban centres, leaving rural and remote areas grossly underserved.
- **Inadequate Training and Upskilling:** While India is expanding training programmes, there's still

a lack of continuous professional development.

- Many nurses lack access to **advanced or specialised education**, impacting their ability to deliver high-quality care.
- **Inadequate Compensation and Recognition:** Compared to their international counterparts, Indian nurses are poorly paid. Despite being the **backbone of healthcare**, their contributions are often undervalued or overlooked.
- **Social Stigma and Harassment:** Nurses, especially women, face **gender bias**, disrespect, and harassment from patients, peers, and within the medical hierarchy.
  - They are often blamed for issues like equipment shortages and doctor unavailability, despite having no control over these factors. Most harassment cases go unreported, causing mental stress.
- **High Migration (Brain Drain):** Approximately **640,000 Indian nurses work abroad**. A significant number of trained nurses migrate to other countries in search of better **salaries, working conditions, and growth opportunities**, which weakens India's healthcare workforce.

## International Nurses Day

- **About:** 12th May is observed as International Nurses Day by the **International Council of Nurses (ICN)** to honour the compassion and care nurses provide. It marks the birth anniversary of **Florence Nightingale**, the founder of modern nursing.
  - Florence Nightingale was a **British nurse, statistician, and social reformer**, renowned for caring for British and allied soldiers during the **Crimean War (1854-56)**, where she earned the nickname "**Lady with the Lamp**."
  - The **ICN** is the **world's first and largest global body** of healthcare professionals, representing over **130 national associations and 28 million nurses**.
  - It promotes **quality care, sound health policies, nursing advancement**, and a respected global nursing workforce.
- **2025 Theme:** "**Our Nurses. Our Future. Caring for nurses strengthens economies**," emphasises the importance of supporting **nurses' health and well-being**.

### **Drishti Mains Question:**

Despite forming the backbone of the healthcare system, nurses in India continue to face systemic neglect. Discuss.