

Annual recurrent training cost for a nursing student in Nurses Training School of Colombo

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Abstract

Introduction In the state sector, training of medical, nursing and allied health professional students is free of charge in Sri Lanka. However, there is no published data on how much it cost to train a nurse in Sri Lanka. This study attempts to determine the cost of training of a nurse in Nurses Training School Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Objective To determine the recurrent cost of recurrent training of a nurse in nurses training school Colombo

Methods One Nurses Training School was selected from the 16 Nurses Training Schools in the country. Relevant key cost centers were identified and step-down costing method was used to calculate the recurrent training cost of a nurse.

Results Average recurrent cost per nursing student per year is Rs. 508,381. Total recurrent cost for the 3-year training program is Rs. 1.53million.

Conclusion The recurrent training cost to the government per year, is around rupees half a million for a nursing student in Sri Lanka.

Key words: recurrent training, cost, Nurses Training Schools

Introduction

Being a developing country Sri Lanka's per capita income is USD 4200. Sri Lanka spent only 3.4% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on Health [1]. However Sri Lanka's achievements in the health sector are commendable as exemplified by Maternal Mortality Ratio of 33 per 100,000 live births, Infant Mortality Ratio of 8.2 per 1000 live births and high Life Expectancy at birth, 72 years for males and 78 years for females [2].

Sri Lankan Health care delivery system includes both Public and Private sectors. Public health sector is the key player in health care delivery accounting for 55% of the annual health expenditure while the private sector contributes around 43% [1].

Sri Lankan state Health System is managed by 145,000 strong workforce. Nearly one fourth of this number (i.e. 36,000) is nursing officers. Nurses are highest in number out of all professional categories. There are around 18,000 medical officers and nearly 2000 medical consultants in the Government sector [3].

State provides free education for students of medical, nursing and other categories such as physiotherapy, radiography etc. Medical students are trained by the Ministry of Higher education while the other categories including Nursing students are trained by the Ministry of Health. Yearly around 1200 Medical students are recruited for a 5 year full time study programme at 9 state Medical Faculties [4]. Further around 2750 nursing students are recruited yearly for a 3-year full time programme at 16 state run Nurses Training

schools, managed by the Ministry of Health [5].

Currently the country faces an acute shortage of nurses. Ministry of Health estimates the current requirement for nurses in the Government sector to be around 44,000 for an optimum service delivery [6]. Hence the Ministry is planning to increase the available training capacity to train more nurses.

University Grants Commission, under whose purview the Medical Faculties come, publishes the **per capita annual recurrent cost** to train a medical student. However, there are no studies to identify how much it cost to train a nursing student per year in a state-run Nurses Training school. Calculating the training cost of nurses is of paramount importance to the Ministry of Health at a juncture, where the Ministry is planning to increase the number of nurses being trained. This study tries to fulfill that requirement.

Objective

To determine the recurrent cost of training of a nurse in Nurses Training School Colombo.

Methods

Out of the 16 nurses training schools (NTS), under the purview of Ministry of Health, the NTS attached to the National Hospital of Sri Lanka (NHSL), Colombo was purposely chosen for this study. It is one of the largest and oldest nurses training schools in the country.

A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out. Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions with relevant Administrators of the Ministry of Health, NHSL and NTS were carried out.

Documents related to the expenses of the NTS during the year 2017, including pay roll, other allowances and bill payments were scrutinized.

Following cost centers were identified; Salaries, Students allowances, Students uniform allowances, Electricity, Telephone and Gas. Finally, Step-down costing method was adapted to calculate the nurses recurrent training cost.

For the calculation of the recurrent cost, for a nursing student, recurrent expenses for three months were considered and the monthly averages were taken.

Results

The school of Nursing – Colombo was started in the year 1939 to provide the increasing demand in nurses for government hospitals. Recurrent expenditure allocations to the NTS Colombo came via allocations from the NHSL. NHSL along with the Directorate of Training under the purview of Deputy Director General Education Training and Research of the Ministry of Health exert administrative and technical supervision of the Nurses Training School Colombo.

The Nurses Training School had the following staff at the time of this survey in mid-2017. One principal, one Senior Tutor, eleven Tutors, Librarian, one Health development assistant, three Health management assistants, five House wardens, one Diet steward, and a Driver.

A total staff of forty four (44) was working in the Nurses Training school at the time of the research.

Table 3 shows that, there were total of 491 students belonging to 3 batches of students.

According to Table 4, the calculated average monthly recurrent cost of Rs. 20,187,524 is for 491 students. Hence, the average cost per student per month is $(20,187,524 \div 491) = \text{Rs. } 41,115$.

Therefore, the average cost per student per year $(41,115 \times 12)$ is Rs. 493,381.

The uniform cost per student per year is Rs. 15,000. The total average recurrent cost per nursing student per year $(493,381 + 15,000.00)$ is **Rs. 508,381**.

Staff salaries expenses:**Table 1 - Average of Salaries per month for each category of staff**

Staff Category	Number	Average expenses for salaries of each category per month Rs.
Principal	1	100,048
Tutors	14	966,723
Librarian	1	36,670
Development Officer	1	38,232
Management Assistances	3	142,234
Diet Clark	1	34,638
Wardens	5	255,781
Cook	1	42,084
Health Assistances	13	632721.
Minor staffs	4	100048
Total	44	Rs. 2,349,181

Expenses for utilities:**Table 2 - Cost of Utilities**

Utility Type	Average cost per month Rs.
Water	365,178
Gas	3,568
Electricity	929,943
Total cost per month	Rs. 1,298,689

Student allowances: There were 3 batches of students at the time of the study.

Table 3 – Cost of average allowances in LKR

Year of student	Numbers present	Cost for allowances per month Rs.
3rd Year	180	6,042,307
2nd Year	122	4,128,552
1st Year	189	6,368,794
Total	491	Rs. 16,539,654

Average total recurrent cost: To calculate the average total recurrent cost, all the average cost categories were added as shown below.

Table 4 – Average total recurrent cost per month

Cost center	Percentage %	Average cost per month Rs.
Total Staff Salary per month	11.64	2,349,180
Total Utility Cost	6.43	1,298,689
Total Cost for Allowances	81.93	16,539,654
Total		Rs. 20,187,524

Discussion

There are 16 Nurses training schools under the technical purview of Education Training and Research Division of The Ministry of Health. They are located in Colombo, Kandana, Sri Jayawardenapura, Kandy, Kurunegala, Badulla, Anuradhapura, Rathnapura, Kalutara, Hambanthota, Galle, Ampara, Matara, Jaffna, Batticaloa, and in Vavuniya [5].

Nearly 93.57% of the recurrent cost for nurses training had been spent on staff salaries and students allowances. Utilities are accounted for the balance 6.43%. As the staff salaries and student allowances are the same irrespective of the location of the training school, calculated per student recurrent cost would be somewhat applicable to all training schools across the country.

Therefore, it could be stated that the Government spends around rupees half a million for a nursing student per year as recurrent expenses, in NTS Colombo.

As per the published figures of the University Grant Commission, the Government spent following amounts per student per year as recurrent expenses in 2015 [4]. The recurrent expenses for Dental, Medical, Engineering and Law, are Rs. 819, 970, Rs. 484, 426, Rs. 341, 447, and Rs. 145, 503 respectively.

Nevertheless, it would be observed that annual recurrent cost per nursing student is slightly above or almost in the same range as of a medical student; that is half a million rupees per year. The most expensive per capita recurrent training cost was for a dental student, which exceeded both nursing and medical training recurrent costs.

However, it should be noted that Medical undergraduate and Nursing Training programmes are 5 years and 3 years of duration respectively. Therefore, though the yearly per capita cost of medical and nursing training is almost equal, the total amount spent on a MBBS degree (Rs 2.42 million) is much higher than the total expenses (Rs 1.53 million) for the Nursing Diploma programme.

Conclusion

The recurrent training cost to the Government per year, per student is **Rs. 508,381**. The payment of a monthly allowance to nursing students is a reason for high recurrent expenditure for nursing training.

Sri Lankan Government not only trains nurses free of charge, but it also provides them a monthly allowance of around Rs 34,000/- per month throughout the 3 year training period.

Limitations

In this study, only the recurrent expenses have been considered and other cost e.g. capital cost was not considered.

References

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