

# Nurses fly out to greener pastures, K'taka hospitals battle staff crunch

Govt Institutes Register 2,118 Vacancies This Yr

Sreemoyee.Chatterjee @timesgroup.com

**Bengaluru:** Ten nurses and hundreds of patients a day. The 120-bed ESI Hospital in Indiranagar, which is flooded with people suffering from rabies, tetanus, measles and chickenpox through the year, is battling severe staff shortage. With all senior staff nurse posts lying vacant for years, things go for a toss during rainy season when dengue and chikungunya cases go up. The situation is no better in other government and private hospitals in the state.

This year, the health and family welfare department of Karnataka has recorded 2,118 vacancies of nurses and 1,504 of paramedical staff in government hospitals. So where all the nurses? Most of them are migrating abroad for better pay and work conditions, say experts.

"We are struggling to manage the hospital given the inadequate staff. Things go out of control during peak seasons, but we somehow take care of patients. The health department has asked us to outsource nurses, but that requires a lot of time and money. The existing nurses may be skilled, but seniors are a must to tackle patients with severe infection," an employee of the ESI Hospital said.

According to Dr Upendra Bhojani, assistant director at the Institute of Public Health (IPH), Bengaluru, India remains a major source of qualified nurse practitioners to many countries. "While better pay is a driving force for nurses leaving the country, there are other factors, including dissatisfaction with the work environment, lack of recognition and respect they deserve in the healthcare system and negative social attitude towards the profession."

Echoing the same, Dr Sudarshan H Ballal, chairman at Manipal Hospitals, said: "Most of them prefer to work in West Asia and the United States, stay there for a few years and come back to India. They do this for financial stability as well as better recognition. Working abroad not only improves their bank balance but also brings good exposure. When they return to India, it's easier for them to get employed in reputed hospitals," he said.

Dr Venkataramana NK, vice-chairman and chief neurosurgeon at BGS Global Hospitals, said: "Shortage of nurses is a reality across the country. On the one hand, we are happy that India is



**NOT-SO-SWEET HOME:** Poor work environment, high stress levels and lack of recognition within the doctor-dominated Indian healthcare system are driving many nurses out of the country

## BETTER CAREER OPTIONS

‘Once a nurse, always a nurse’ is the popular perception. There’s a need to ensure career growth for nurses like in the West. “A career path or progression can be mapped for them since once they become nurses they remain so all through their lives. Nurses can be promoted as nurse practitioners, a popular concept in the US. They are like an assistant to the physician and a lot of pharmacies encourage such practitioners. A generally registered nurse who has acquired the knowledge, complex decision-making skills

and clinical competencies for expanded practice is the one who can acquire this level,” said Dr Sudarshan H Ballal, chairman, Manipal Hospitals. Nurses must also be given an opportunity in hospital administration. They must be allowed to pursue some additional courses that would qualify them for that position. “I have seen several dentists becoming hospital administrators and nurses too can be given similar opportunities. Apart from that a good pay package is a must,” he added.

NUMBERS NOT MATCHING			
CADRE	SANCTIONED	WORKING	VACANT
Staff nurse	7,810	6,215	1,595
Senior staff nurse	600	426	174
Nursing support: Group 2	470	126	344
Nursing support: Group 1	69	64	5
PARAMEDICAL POSTS VACANT			
Junior lab technologies	2,192	1,730	462
Senior lab technologist	554	495	59
X-Ray technician	568	532	36
Radiographer	39	18	21
Pharmacist	2,691	2,009	684
Senior pharmacist	433	265	168
Physiotherapist	43	24	19
Physiotherapist (leprosy)	33	10	23
Social workers	34	18	16

supporting global healthcare, allowing them to have better opportunities with better quality of life. But logistically it creates a vacuum in the delivery of care with senior nurses submitting resignations on a daily basis. Management and nursing directors of hospitals face this challenge every

day. We have to train more people; hospital onsite training should be a must so that youngsters take over the responsibilities quickly. Though it's difficult to match the salaries they get abroad, every effort should be made to retain them by offering better perks and working conditions,” he added.

## MONEY, A CONCERN

“The government has no money to pay the basic salary of nurses. This apart, nurses require allowances for night and extra shifts. If they are paid peanuts, why should they stay back? They hardly get any recognition socially as well as financially. No ambitious student opts for nursing course over other professions that are promoted immensely

**Ivan Nigli** | FORMER MLA, CHAIRMAN OF THE ANGLO INDIAN UNITY CENTRE, BENGALURU

“There’s a perpetual shortage of trained nurses and paramedical staff in hospitals, mainly because of the unattractive salary and stiff working parameters. Even today, people in Karnataka do not consider nursing as a high-class profession like medicine or engineering

**Colonel Binu Sharma** | SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT OF NURSING AT COLUMBIA ASIA HOSPITALS

## Give them resources, respect they deserve

It’s very likely that you’ll find many Indian nurses in a hospital in the UK or any other country. At the same time, we have a shortage of nurses in government and private hospitals in India. Karnataka, home to several nursing training colleges, is no exception.

The prospect of better income is one of the factors that’s driving Indian nurses abroad, but not that alone. There are reasons like poor work environment, high levels of stress and lack of recognition and respect within the doctor-dominated Indian healthcare system. Our three largest cadres of front-line health workers – nurses, auxiliary nurse midwives and ASHAs – are not only women, but also underpaid workers, most of them from marginalized sections of society. Improving the number of nurses in India is as much a social as a managerial task.

We have a lot to learn from the case of midwifery in our own history. After independence, three countries in the region – India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia – were conscious of maternal health needs and the potential of professional midwifery for improvement. India had a comparative advantage as we had a Central Board of Nursing and Midwifery since 1902 and a

separate register for midwives since 1930. We scored better in maternal health than our neighbours. In 1973, the midwives’ profession was merged with the nurses’ in auxiliary nurse midwives. It was a kiss of death for the midwives’ profession.

By contrast, Sri Lanka and Malaysia strengthened maternal care making properly trained

## MY OPINION



**UPENDRA BHOJANI** | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, IPH, BENGALURU



**WERNER SOORS** | RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, ITM, ANTWERP

mothers while giving birth. As maternal health experts Van Lerberghe and De Brouwere formulated it more than a decade ago, “countries that managed to get doctors to cooperate with a midwifery-based policy fared well. Where doctors won the battle for professional dominance – and for their share of the market – women died”.

Today, Indian maternal health is much worse than that of our neighbours. If we want our mothers to live and to retain our people in the country, we have to give our nurses and midwives the respect they deserve, and the resources they need.

# K'taka, TN, AP and Maha have 46% of India's doctors Bigger States Have Fewer Numbers

Chethan.Kumar@timesgroup.com

**Bengaluru:** For a country of 1.2 billion people, 25 lakh doctors are not a luxury. But India is struggling with just 9.5 lakh, with a doctor-patient ratio of 1:1681. This poor state of affairs is not only affecting healthcare services, but also forcing doctors like Dr Pawan Singhal of SMS Hospital in Rajasthan to attend to at least 125 patients every day.

Even among the 9.5 lakh doctors, the distribution is so skewed that just four states – Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and undivided Andhra Pradesh – have nearly 46% of all doctors registered in the country, leaving bigger states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and the other not-so-big states with very few doctors to share between them.

“The number of doctors in the country are just a portion of what’s required to meet the minimum requirement and some states are not even in line with the national average,” said Singhal, an associate professor (ENT) and head and neck surgeon at the SMS Hospital, Jaipur in Rajasthan.

According to the ministry of health and family welfare, out of 9,59,198 doctors registered in the country, 4,36,910 (45.54%) are in the four states (see box).

Rajasthan, MP and Uttar Pradesh have a total of 1,31,554 doctors, making up for 13.7%, while only three of the seven northeastern states have doctors registered with them and add up to 22,201. The rest are shared between all other states. Experts say the situation is worse

than what the health ministry’s statistics reveal.

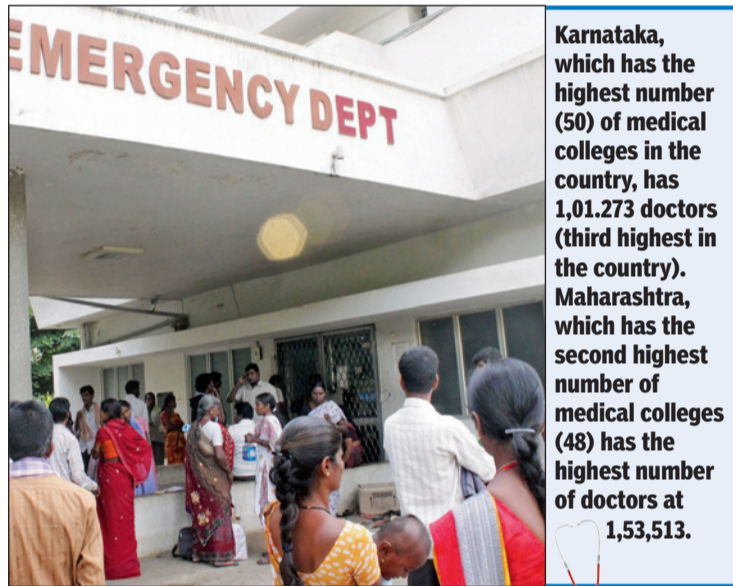
“We have no doubt that there’s an overall shortage and skewed distribution. The problem is that doctors register with the Indian Medical Council or in the respective states when they pass out from the courses and there’s no real update. Many of these 9.5 lakh doctors may not even be in the country,” Dr Upendra Bhojani, assistant director, Institute of Public Health (IPH), said.

That the four states have the maximum number of doctors should come as no surprise though, as they are among the states with the highest number of medical colleges. Together, they account for 69% of all the colleges in the country or 290 colleges out of 422.

Karnataka, which has the highest number (50) of medical colleges in the country, has 1,01,273 doctors (third highest in the country), while Maharashtra, which has the second highest number of medical colleges (48) has the highest number of doctors at 1,53,513.

Tamil Nadu has 1,11,325 doctors and 46 medical colleges, while Andhra Pradesh has 70,799 doctors and 46 colleges. Also, as experts point out, these are also states with a considerable urban population and a good network of private hospitals.

“It’s not just private hospitals that make the difference. Many choose places considering the opportunity to run clinics which is more lucrative in urban areas. Also, they look out for other support infrastructure that is good for their families like schools and so on,” Bhojani said.



**Karnataka, which has the highest number (50) of medical colleges in the country, has 1,01,273 doctors (third highest in the country). Maharashtra, which has the second highest number of medical colleges (48) has the highest number of doctors at 1,53,513.**

## UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION

Maharashtra	Tamil Nadu	Karnataka	Andhra Pradesh*	All India
1,53,513	1,11,325	1,01,273	70,799	9,59,198
State		No. of registered doctors		

Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare | \* Including Telangana

# Salvaging tradition, one hymn at a time

Fr Antonio da Costa is on a mission. A new book by the Arizona-based priest seeks to save Catholic devotional music that has been passed down the generations; for the first time, in a written form

Lisa.Monteiro@timesgroup.com

Traditional hymns, litanies, motets and prayers in Konkani, Latin, and Portuguese, widely sung in churches in Goa and passed down through generations would have died a fast death if Father Antonio da Costa, from Curtorim, hadn’t stepped up to the challenge and written them down from memory.

Composed by *mestres da igreja*, whose names are unknown, many of the hymns have become an integral part of Goan Christian culture after being sung for 450 years, Costa believes.

He has preserved 160 of these hymns that were the “binding glue in all our traditional devotions, whether in individual family homes, in small chapels in each ward or village, at wayside crosses, or in local chapels and churches”, in his latest book Songs of Praise-Adlim Kristi Bhogtigitam, a treasury of Goan traditional Catholic devotional hymns.

A majority of the hymns, Costa says, predate the *Gaionancho Jhe-lo*, the official hymnal of the archdiocese of Goa, produced within a span of a few years after the second Vatican council allowed liturgical services to be conducted in the vernacular instead of Latin. Prior to this, with the exception of a hymn during Holy Communion or at the end of the Mass, all hymns were sung in Latin, using Gregorian or polyphonic music.

The late Dr Jose Pereira, Goan scholar and authority on Konkani, divided the development of the language in four phases.

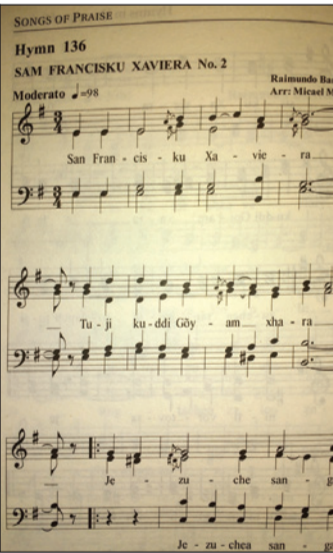
According to his book Konknni Bhagti Gitam in 2004, a majority of the hymns in Costa’s book belong to the ‘dark age’ of Konkani literature, extending over the 18th and

19th centuries, where the dialect is a giveaway.

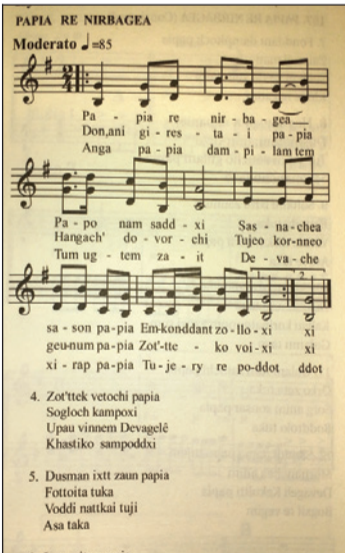
The book has special sections on hymns in honour of Jesus Christ, hymns in honour of the Virgin Mary (which include litanies), hymns in honour of saints, hymns for the Lenten season (including motets), prayers in Konkani, and a Konkani hymn glossary.

The oldest hymn for which the composer and date have been identified is Papianche Xerattinnim, believed to be composed in 1820 by Dona Asuncao Barreto from Margao. The composer of Sam Francisku Xaviera, Tuji Kuddi is Raimundo Barreto from Loutolim, who was the choir master at Se Cathedral in Old Goa. It is believed the hymn was sung for the first time during the Exposition of St Francis Xavier’s relics (December 1890-January 1891). The hymn ‘Carmu Saibinnim’ was composed in 1908 by Antonio Xavier Heraclito Gomes (1864-1937). He had titled it Lurdich Saibinnim. Sam Francisck Xaviera, rhodda kunvra is attributed to Pedro Salvador Carneiro from Ucaissaim.

Back in those days, hours and hours were spent singing motets during the Tenebrae Services, the



**SONGS OF PARADISE:** Composed by the mestres of churches whose names are unknown, Father Antonio Costa wrote down 160 of these hymns from memory



period of darkness, sadness and mourning marking the church’s desolation that came after Holy Thursday until Easter Sunday, from the agony in the garden, to the empty tomb.

The 13th century musical form, essentially a polyphonic choral composition on a sacred text or word, often had no instrumental accompaniment. In the hands of Goan composers, the motet took on a unique form and produced melodies filled with pathos, Costa writes.

“In certain parts of Goa, the church musician also used clarinets and the double bass to accompany the motets. Prior to Vatican II, musical instruments were not allowed during services from the end of Holy Thursday until the Gloria was intoned at Mass on Easter Sunday. Due to the nature of Goan motets and the need to use violins, Goan church authorities were able to obtain special permission from Rome to use the violins, clarinets and double bass during these Holy Week services,” he explains. Together with other priests, Costa founded The Society for the Preservation of Goan Sacred Music, and recorded some motets such as ‘Inundaverunt’ for

their broadcast on Radio Goa in 1965. So many rich compositions of motets have been lost, perhaps forever, since they were only handwritten, he says.

Costa received music training at the Saligao and Rachol seminaries, under late Micael Martins in then Bombay, and later at the prestigious Julliard School of Music and Columbia University in New York. He wrote staff notations for these hymns based on the melodies he had learnt from his father, elders and choir masters of his church in Curtorim during his childhood. One of the sources he used to record the lyrics was an old family hymnal dating back to the 1800s.

Preserving these hymns is something he has been working on right since the age of 16, when, together with choral groups that he founded, he broadcast motets, hymns, mandos, dulcids, dekhnis, and fuggdeos over Radio Goa for a number of years.

“My book is meant to revive old family devotions as well as devotions within the community and in village wards via litanies and the custom of visitation by the statue of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal,” Costa told TOI from Arizona.

## Desecration of idols sparks protest in Srirangapatna

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Mandya:** Srirangapatna town was partially shut on Sunday after three youths were allegedly found desecrating idols. As a result, traffic on the Mysuru-Bengaluru highway came to a halt for hours, inconveniencing commuters.

According to sources, Hindu Jagaran Vedike (HJV) activists caught the trio allegedly desecrating the idols on the northern side of Srirangapat-

na fort on Saturday night. The youths were detained by police. Subsequently, HJV activists called for a bandh in Srirangapatna on Sunday.

Police beefed up security in the town by bringing in additional forces.

The HJV activists claimed police were initially reluctant to register a case against the trio. According to them, the cops took action only after they threatened to stage a protest outside the station.

# TIMES TRIBUTE

To place an announcement Call : 1800 102 1166 (24 x 7)

PAYING HOMAGE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL <http://tributes.timesofindia.com>

## DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS

**SAD DEMISE**

**LION M. SREENIVASU**  
Ex - VJSL, Bhadravathi  
passed away on 22-5-2016.  
Cremation on 23-5-2016  
at Kalpal: Electric Crematorium  
Mourned by  
Family & Friends, Frazertown.  
No : 87623 85789.

Obituary, Condolence, Ceremony and In memoriam messages will be published at a cost of Rs. 750/- for five lines extra line Rs. 143/- (without photo) and Rs.395/- per sq. cm (with photo). Messages accompanied with Death Certificate should be sent to Times Classifieds before 7.30 pm at 40/1, M.G. Road, Bangalore - 560 001. For details contact Ph : 42200017 / 42200016. \*Please note obituary ads on Sunday are accepted only between 5.30pm to 7.30pm

**TIMESCLASSIFIEDS**

## REMEMBRANCES

**50th Birthday Remembrance, KAZAD KEKI TARAPORE**  
23rd MAY 1966-05 APR 1992.  
We often speak of you and share Fond Memories !  
Tribute of our Love-  
Shahvir, Hutoxi, Kashu and Families.

**9th DEATH ANNIVERSARY IN EVER LOVING MEMORY OF**

**R.SUSAIRAJ**  
Late Chairman, Sheen Electroplaters Pvt. Ltd.  
A light from our household gone  
A voice we heard and loved is still  
A place is vacant in our midst  
Which can never be filled.  
A Loving Tribute from  
Board of Directors, Staff  
Sheen Electroplaters Pvt. Ltd. and Family Members

For Remembrance or Obituary ads  
please call Ebenezer Winston: 9986482217

To pay tributes, log on to <http://tributes.timesofindia.com>