# Executive Summary

Nurses are the backbone of health care system at all levels, be it primary, secondary or tertiary. Yet, unfortunately they are perhaps one of the most neglected workers in our society. A majority people in India have held onto the notions of our ancestors that considered stature of a nurse equivalent to that of a servant. As a consequence nurses face workplace exploitation in terms of poor wages, long working hours, no or minimal overtimes, absence of social security benefits and even sexual harassment.

Faced by so many problems, nurses from India and other developed countries like Philippines are migrating to developed countries like U.S., U.K etc. where jobs are better paid and more respectful. The phenomena of migration is likely to gain more popularity in coming years as immigration policies are becoming more open and so are the minds of Indians towards working abroad.

The research attempts to comprehend the scenario of Indian nursing sector. Comparative study of Indian nursing sector with Thailand and Cuba has been carried out to understand how these countries, facing similar problems, are coping up with the situation and whether any system or government policy, that has been advantageous in those countries, can be adopted in India. Since data on migration of Indian nurses is not available directly from any reliable source, indirect means have been used to get an estimate of the present situation. It was felt that the research work would be incomplete without a one-on-one interaction with those whose problems are being studied. Hence, field visits to government hospitals have been carried out for a better understanding of ground realities of the profession. Through literature search and interactions with nurses, several problems were raised, some of which have already been catered to by the government through policies, though extent of implementation remains unidentified. Several new issues have also come into light and few policy recommendations and modifications have been put forth.

* Concept of team nursing- a group of 6-8 nurses is required to serve a patient and obtain feedback from him/her for further improvements. Working in coordination with their seniors, staff nurses can learn a lot and faster.
* The system of regular internal promotion, based on qualifications and additional training, must be introduced for nurses. Job descriptions of each category of nurses need to be regularly revised. System of bridge courses needs to be implemented so that an Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) may be able to upgrade to a General Nurse Midwife (GNM) after undergoing this course. Similarly, a GNM can become a graduate.
* There is a lack of options to the nurses in the profession, in the sense that a nurse in service sector is not able to move into research or education sector or vice-versa. This leads to lot of job dissatisfaction. As a part of their nursing educational curriculum, nurses must be given education and training on harassment and discrimination. Facilities of separate changing rooms for male and female nurses must be available.
* Taking cue of the move by Rajasthan govt. to empower nurses, other state governments and nursing councils must also consider giving nurses the authority to perform preliminary treatment and write prescriptions for common ailments.

In the long run, it is essential to bring about a change in the attitude of patients and doctors towards the nurses, which will begin with boosting the confidence and morale of nurses and raising the stature of their profession. Empowering nurses with right to preliminary treatment and writing prescriptions for common ailments will not only help in this regard but will also reduce pressure on doctors and physicians.