


Human resource management in curative care institutions of Sri Lanka during turbulent times

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The healthcare sector in Sri Lanka faces significant challenges in managing human resources, especially during turbulent times. According to the World Health Organization, there were 36.31 medical doctors, 11.92 nurses, and 24.39 midwives per 10,000 population in 2021. Approximately 53% of the health budget is allocated to health staff and the current human resource profile reflects the government's efforts to ensure adequate staffing in curative care institutions. However, despite recruiting around 4500 physicians, nurses, and midwives annually, various obstacles persist, affecting the effective management of human resources.

One of the key challenges in Sri Lanka's healthcare sector is brain drain, where qualified professionals seek better opportunities abroad, leading to a shortage of skilled personnel within

the country. Additionally, staffing shortages pose a significant issue, particularly in rural areas, making it difficult to provide quality healthcare services uniformly. Furthermore, the heavy workload often demotivates healthcare staff, affecting their performance and the overall service quality.

To mitigate these challenges and improve human resource management in the healthcare sector, the ministry of health has implemented several measures. A notable measure among these is the establishment of the Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) to strengthen workforce planning, enabling better resource allocation and management. The creation of a dedicated unit for human resource management further emphasizes the government's commitment to addressing HR

challenges effectively. Additionally, capacity development programs have been initiated to enhance the skills and knowledge of the healthcare workforce, while the provision of incentives aims to boost staff morale and retention.

Beyond government initiatives, healthcare institutions themselves can play a crucial role in enhancing human resource management. By promoting employee engagement, institutions foster a positive work environment that encourages staff satisfaction and commitment. Implementing flexible work arrangements can

prove beneficial in maintaining a well-balanced workforce. Furthermore, investing in training and development programs is essential to enhance the capabilities of healthcare professionals and keep them abreast of the latest advancements in medical practices. Furthermore, optimizing workforce utilization, prioritizing critical functions, maximizing resource utilization, ensuring optimal resource allocation, communication and engagement, and developing contingency plans are crucial for curative care institutions to prepare for unforeseen challenges and crises.