
UNIT 3 COMMITTEES

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- describe the meaning and concept of Committee;
- explain the need of Committee;
- describe about the formation of Committee;
- explain about the various Committees in Nursing Education and Nursing Services; and
- enlist the steps of arranging Group Committee meetings in Nursing.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the most important and controversial devices of organization is the committee. These days functioning of most organizations are through committees. If the committees function properly, they can be of great help. It brings out the combined wisdom of knowledgeable people who discuss matters concerning the organisation. The members discuss the problem from the various angles and finally reach to a consensus, which is expected to be the best alternative. Various types of committees function in the government sector, in education sector, in the industries sector and in religious sectors. As in any other organisations committees play a very important role in hospital management too.

Committee decisions are particularly useful for policy formulation and planning. The manager should consider to maximise the use of the committees.

3.2 MEANING AND CONCEPT OF GROUP COMMITTEES

Committees are essential for good organization and management. The committee is a group of persons to whom as a group, some matter is entrusted. Committees can also be defined as a group of employees engaged in some aspect of the management function. A committee may have coordinating, informational or advisory responsibility. Sometimes committees are referred to as boards, task forces, commissions or teams. It is the group decision-making and action that distinguishes the committee from other organisations.

At times the experience with committees can be frustrating. There is a common feeling that often committees are appointed to postpone decision-making. Some people say that committees consist of uninformed people, who are against their willingness appointed to do the unnecessary. Yet the use of committees is definitely on the rise. It is extremely important that committees should make decisions avoiding the tendency to postpone the matters indefinitely. Correctly used committee is a highly effective tool for accomplishing certain objectives.

A committee can facilitate coordination of activities throughout an institution. To **handle/** solve **intradepartmental** problems, a committee can be formed having members **representing from** different departments. These committees can help to obtain the information from various departments and they can also disseminate the information to their **departments**.

In order to plan and execute a complex organizational project, the top-level executive may need continuous advice from the various subject specialists, who must contribute towards progress of the project. Regular meetings can be scheduled to ensure the availability of the required advice.

Each institution will have its own need for committees and methods of functioning. The functioning of the committee should be flexible. The decisions should be by consensus. Voting should be avoided as much as possible. Committee decisions are particularly useful for policy formulation and planning.

3.3 NEED OF COMMITTEES

The use of committees are increasing. They are highly effective tools for accomplishing certain objectives. Some of the important reasons for using committees are as follows:

1) Group Deliberation and Judgement

Group deliberation can bring people together with wider range of experience and a greater variety of opinion to solve the problems. Thorough probing leads to clarification of problems and generation of new ideas. Thus it results in better judgement. **When** it is undesirable to give full power to a single individual, delegating authority to members of a **committee** can **help** an organisation avoid mistakes in crucial areas and relieve pressure on top management.

2) Representation of Varied Interests

When there is a difficult problem involving aspects of different departments, the administrator can choose committee members so as to get representation of the interested partners. This helps to ensure that the group develops a sense of loyalty and **commitment** to the decision reached.

3) Coordination of Departmental Policies and Plans

Committees promote coordination among departments. It is useful for coordinating policies and plans. The concerned members obtain a picture of overall plans and their place in them. The members also contribute suggestions for improvement of plans. A committee brings managers together and helps them gain a better understanding of their role.

4) Sharing of Information

All the group members affected by a problem can transmit and share information so as to crystallise the problem.

5) Motivation

If the committees work skilfully and effectively, they motivate the subordinates to take part in making a decision, accept and execute it with enthusiasm and commitment.

6) Avoidance of Action

At times, committees and subcommittees are **appointed** to delay the action. This is done

7) To Diffuse Resentment and Responsibility

When a decision is almost certain to be highly unpopular in the organisation, a committee can be used to diffuse resentment and responsibility.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Define the term committee.

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2) List down reasons for using committees.

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3.4 FORMATION OF COMMITTEES

In this section you will come to know about formation of committee. It is very important for you to prepare a checklist. So **after** studying this section you will learn how to form a group committee.

Committees are successful when they are formally organised, having specific jobs assigned to be done, having a leader acceptable to all the members and the records of their deliberation is kept written and the results are accepted. Committees fail if they are not wisely formed, their purpose is not clear and when the members are not well oriented and are not convinced that the results will be worth the effort or whether the preparation for the meeting is adequate.

Committee may either **be** line or staff depending on its authority. If the authority of the committees involve decision making, effecting subordinates responsible to it, it is a line committee. If its authority relationship to a superior is advisory, then it can be considered a staff committee.

Committee can be formal or informal. Formal committee is a part of the organisational structure with specifically delegated duties and authority. Formal committees are also called as standing committee. A familiar and very widely used example of a standing committee is the Board of Directors, the Finance Committee, and the Audit Committee etc. **Informal** committees are organized without specific delegation of authority and for group thinking on a particular problem. They are also called as **ad hoc** committees. These are normally formed from time to time as and when need arises to accomplish a specific **task**.

To enable committees to function effectively and to overcome some of the disadvantages of the committee system the following checklist is suggested.

Checklist

- 1) **Purpose and Scope:** Is the purpose of the committee clearly defined and its responsibilities, duties and objectives spelled out?
- 2) **Need:** Is the committee the best technique for accomplishing the defined purpose? Should a new committee be formed or an existing committee performs the job? or would just one meeting with subordinates be sufficient?
- 3) **Functions:** Is it going to be administrative assigned definite responsibility e.g. formation of policies? Or is it to be **advisory**, set up to explore, to communicate and

- 4) Size: How many members will it have and how will they and the chairman be selected and appointed? When larger representation is important, subcommittees may be formed with the problems broken down for action.
- 5) How often to meet: How often will it meet? Who will call special meetings? Who should **receive** copies of the minutes? Some committees may need to meet very often initially with **the** frequency of meeting reduced subsequently. For any committee it is better to meet at fixed times or fixed days, for example Board of Directors may have meeting on first Monday of each month.
- 6) Selecting the leader: Would the prospective leader be optimistic about committee's task? Will the prospective leader be able to organise the committee into highly knit task oriented group? Would the prospective leader be able to ask pertinent questions and to listen and comprehend the answers that are received?

The leader's attitude has a definite influence on the group. An employee's performance in his daily work pattern gives the picture of how efficiently he would be able to organize the group.

- 7) Committee Members: A sensitive administrator will carefully select individual who can comfortably work with other individuals. The following questions might be asked of potential members. If answer to most of the questions is 'yes' the members are expected to be more productive.
 - a) Has he the capacity to work constructively in a group?
 - b) Does he relate well with peers within the hospital?
 - c) When there is conflict, can he look at the underlying causes of the problem?
 - d) Does he think critically?
 - e) Can he look past his vested interest and examine all sides of an issue?
- 8) Feedback: Administrator must keep track of what is going on within the committees and give encouragement and support. **Administrator** should let the committee know that he is pleased with the work being done; he should give suggestions on how they can work better and should be available as a resource person.
- 9) Committee Recommendation: Administrator should carefully look at the suggestions and recommendation meet with the committee to understand the logic behind them and then respond to the output of the committee.

3.5 COMMITTEES IN NURSING

Standing and call committees are organised for the purpose of analyzing and handling problems that develop in the administration of nursing service. They are also organised for the conduct of research studies of short-term and long-term nature.

3.5.1 Committee in Nursing Education

The faculty members of School of Nursing or College of Nursing have a wide range of functions to be performed. Some of the important concerns of faculty include:

- a) Admission policies and procedures and selection of applicants.
- b) Promotion of graduation standards, including tasks and plan for evaluation.
- c) Curriculum planning, implementation and revision.
- d) Faculty organisation including personal policies, terms of appointment and in service training.
- e) Educational and housing facilities.
- f) Student's personal services including health, counselling, orientation, co-curricular activities etc.
- g) **Budgeting and finances of the school/college.**
- h) Records and reports including student records, faculty records, annual reports and the **school/college** bulletin or announcements.
- i) Clinical rotation plans, clinical teachings and evaluation.
- j) Publicity and public relations for the **school/college.**

- k) Periodic evaluation and revision of the school/college programme.
- l) Standardization of the curriculum as per society **needs/demands**.

To deal with this array of responsibilities a variety of committees may be formed. Some of the committees in school/college of Nursing are:

School/College of Nursing Advisory Committee

This group is particularly concerned with the welfare of the school/college of Nursing. The function of this committee is to aid in the fulfillment of the school aims and to interpret the needs of the school to the institution's board of control. The membership of this committee should include both men and women who represent the trustees of the hospital, the community, the field of general education, the public health field, the profession of nursing, the profession of medicine, the Medical Superintendent of hospital and the Principal Director of the **school/college** of Nursing as ex-officio members with voting power. Such representation helps to safeguard the educational interests of the school, since it is to work directly with the school, its members should be chosen with the approval of the Director of the Nursing School. Being an advisory group, it can only make recommendations for action to the board of control and request such executive action as may seem advisable. The board should present the report of action in written form to this committee. The functions of this committee include:

- a) Informing itself regarding nursing education and studying the needs of the school.
- b) Nominating the director of the school to the board of trustees.
- c) Passing upon policies recommended by the faculty of the school and supporting the faculty in maintaining their policies.
- d) Seeing that the requisite teaching staff is available.
- e) Delegating authority to the Director of the school.
- f) Approving the budget for recommendations to the controlling body.
- g) Concerning itself with the general welfare and social life of students.
- h) Assisting in interpreting the aims of the school to the public.
- i) Safeguarding the interests of the school in all ways.

Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee has a close relationship with all educational functions of the school/college. It may be headed by **Principal/Director's** assistant, who is in charge of administering the educational programme. Its members include representative from all cadres of teaching including tutors from each clinical field within the **school/college** plus representatives from the nursing sisters who share in the ward teaching programme. It is concerned with the curriculum content, construction of courses, teaching to be laid down as per curriculum content, teaching methods and curriculum revision as indicated by the changing needs of the **society**. Sub-committees may be appointed to consider course content and clinical experience of each of the clinical fields.

Admission Committee

Admission committee deals with defining admission policies, routines and methods. It reviews in detail the application of all candidates for admission whose eligibility is in question. It also makes a final decision regarding such applications. Its chairman may be appointed by the executive committee from among the administrative assistants.

Library Committee

Library committee is very helpful in furthering effective functioning of all phases of the curriculum. The members recommend ways and means of meeting library needs and securing funds for development of the library. The members also assume responsibility for use of library facilities. They endeavour to aid the librarian by consulting with her; authorizing the purchase of new books and publications. They also prepare the annual budget for this department.

Student's Health and Welfare Committee

The committee gives special attention to the health programme of the school, which

programme for students. This committee also looks after operation of other activities pertaining to student's welfare, e.g. Student's Nurses Association. Members of this **committee** should be chosen from those faculty members who particularly understand student viewpoint and who provide desired leadership for the students.

Record Committee

The record committee gives close attention to all records in the school and **makes** recommendations for their modification and development as the needs indicate. They may also assume responsibility for study of the test and measurement programme of the school and its **relation** to student achievement. This committee may also look after the school **bulletin** for all **aspects** of public information pertaining to the school or any other for which purpose it was formed.

All **committees** should have a specified schedule of meetings within the working day of their **members**. This can be circulated to all the members with ample time for all to know the **date**, hour and place. The agenda should be prepared by the chairman. The secretary for each committee is appointed and minutes of the meetings **need** to be maintained. Frequency of **meetings** will depend upon the nature of the **assignment** and need.

General **body meetings** of the entire faculty may be called to receive recommendations from respective committees and to act upon them, to develop joint policies and to present new proposal. Such meetings may be arranged once a month or whenever **necessary**. It provides a source of continuing strength to the educational institution.

Hostel Management Committee

Each nursing institution has a **hostel** management committee for smooth management, so that the academic teaching is **not affected** due to poor living conditions, including fooding. The hostel management committee's existence is ideal. This committee comprises of teachers, wardens and student's representatives.

3.5.2 Committee in Nursing Services

Present day functioning of most organisations is through committees. In a hospital set up various **committees** are also formed of which nurses are the important members. Some of the **committees** in nursing services are discussed here:

Administrative Committee

An administrative committee helps the administrator in the smooth running of the hospital. Administrative committee comprises of the **Chairman/Director**, Medical Superintendent, Nursing Superintendent, Principal, School of Nursing (if there is a school), Finance Officer, **Personnel** Manager and Assistant Administrator and other administrative officers. The responsibility of this committee includes:

- a) To help the administrator in the day to day running of the hospital with maximum efficiency by framing rules and regulations,
- b) To help in **framing** of policies and consider the need of development of the hospital
- c) To carry out studies for optimum utilization of resources — personnel, building, land and finances
- d) To help in preparing the annual budget

Medical Board

This committee **includes** Medical Superintendent, Nursing **Superintendent**, and Heads of medical and **paramedical** department and Assistant Administrator. The administrator will be a **permanent** invitee. This committee helps the administration in all matters of planning and **development** of hospital particularly medical care, fixing priorities etc.

Medical Audit Committee

This committee is **required** to improve patient outcome. It is responsible for the quality control of the clinical activities in the hospital. This committee comprises of Medical superintendent, Nursing superintendent, one member from each of the major departments, **librarian** and others like Pathologist/Microbiologist can be co-opted as necessary. The

monitors the professional activities. It helps to ensure that the highest standards of patient care is provided and maintained. It reports to the administration where there is need for improvement, suggesting suitable steps. It also makes recommendations on record keeping procedure. The scrutiny of the records should be conducted impartially. Whenever necessary the case should be discussed with individual doctor before sending the final report to the administrator.

Infection Control Committee

Hospital presents situations of easy spread of infection unless careful watch is kept. The infection control committee is responsible for reduction of infection in hospital and to prevent cross-infection. This committee comprises of Medical Superintendent, one member from each of the major departments, Nursing Superintendent, Nurse-Incharge of Operation Theatre, Incharge of Central Sterile Supply, where the Microbiologist is the member secretary. This committee develops a policy for infection control in the hospital and reviews it periodically. It takes steps to educate all hospital staff on prevention of infection, to trace source of infection and develop a policy of use of antibiotic in hospital. It develops policies regarding admission and management of infectious diseased patient, isolation facilities and bamer nursing. It develops disinfection procedure of contaminated articles and ensures proper handling and disposal of wastes and excreta. It enforces proper Functioning of central sterile supply.

General Hospital Advisory Committee

This is purely advisory committee to help in the harmonious functioning of the hospital. It comprises of the Administrator, all Administrative Officers, all Heads of Departments and Sections including Nursing Superintendent and all ward sisters together with a representative of other staff. The main function of this committee is to discuss problems and issues, especially of an interdisciplinary nature and make appropriate recommendations.

Coordinating Committee

Ideally speaking every hospital should have a complete set of well-developed personnel policies before it begins to function. These policies need to be reviewed to meet present and future needs. A coordinating committee of interested hospital personnel is appointed to coordinate the work. The Assistant or Personnel Director, Director of nurses or someone from her office should be its member. Director of nurses having close contact with a large proportion of the employees of the hospital becomes an important member of this committee.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Enlist the committees, which can be formed in School of Nursing/College of Nursing.

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- 2) Explain the function of various committees in the nursing services.

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3.6 ARRANGING COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN NURSING

3.6.1 Preparation

- i) Explore alternatives to meeting
 - a) Ask yourself, "Is this meeting **necessary**?"
 - b) Postpone the **meeting** if you can. Consolidate the agenda with that of later meeting.
- ii) **Keep** the participants to a minimum. Only those who are necessarily required should **attend the meeting**.
- iii) **Choose** an appropriate time when all the necessary facts and people would be available.
- iv) Choose an appropriate place. The location should be easily accessible, the room should be of adequate size and all equipment should be available.
- v) The purpose of the meeting should be clearly stated and an agenda stated down.
- vi) The agenda of the meeting should be distributed to the members in advance. It helps the participants to come prepared.
- vii) Time of the meeting and the agenda. Allocate a time to each subject proportional to its relative importance.

3.6.2 Implementation

- i) Start on time. Tell all the participants that there is no alternative due to other schedules in queue.
- ii) Start with and stick to the agenda **e.g.** 'We are here to..., the purpose of this meeting is....., the next point to be decided is.....'
- iii) Place the **most** important items at the beginning of the agenda to ensure that only the **least** important will be left **unfinished**.
- iv) Avoid any **interruptions**. Allow interruptions for emergency purposes only.
- v) Accomplish your purpose. Has the committee been able to accomplish the purpose of **the meeting**? To analyze a problem, to generate alternative, to arrive at a decision etc.
- vi) Restate conclusion and assignments to ensure agreement and to provide reinforcement or a reminder.
- vii) Finish on time. The meeting should be adjourned as scheduled so that the participants can be left for resuming their own unfinished tasks.

3.6.3 Evaluation Analysis

- i) Use a **meeting** evaluation checklist as **an** occasional spot check. Questions should be answered by each participant before **leaving**.

Some of the questions, which can be included in the checklist, are: Was the purpose of the meeting clear? Was the agenda received in advance? Did the meeting start on time? If not, why so? Was the agenda followed adequately? Was the purpose **achieved**? Were assignments and **deadlines** that were fixed appropriate? What percentage of the meeting time **was not** effectively utilized?

The evaluations unsigned should be collected for the chairman's immediate review.

- ii) **Expedite** the preparation of the minutes. Concised minutes should be completed and distributed within 24 to 48 hours. Minutes are a reminder and a useful follow up too.
- iii) **Provide** follow up to ensure the implementation of decisions. Uncompleted actions **should** be listed **under** 'Unfinished Business' on the next meeting's agenda.
- iv) Abolish the committees when they have accomplished their intended purpose.

Check Your Progress 3

Enlist the points you will keep in mind while preparing for a group committee meeting.

3.7 LET US SUM UP

The committees are in wide use in all types of organisation. Committees play a very important role in all the institutions. They are very effective tools for accomplishing various objectives. They are a success when they are formally organised and have specific jobs to be done. Membership of standing or special committees provides for active participation of staff members in problem solving.

3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Committees can be defined as a group of employees engaged in some aspect of management function.
- 2) Reasons for using committees are:
 - a) Group deliberation and judgement.
 - b) Representation of varied interests.
 - c) Coordination of departmental policies and plans.
 - d) Sharing of information.
 - e) Motivation of subordinates in decision-making.
 - f) Avoiding or delay the action.
 - g) Diffusing resentment and responsibility.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1)
 - a) School of Nursing Advisory Committee
 - b) Curriculum Committee
 - c) Admission Committee
 - d) Student's Health and Welfare Committee
 - e) Record Committee
- 2) Refer to sub-section 3.5.2

Check Your Progress 3

Refer to sub-section 3.6.1