

Pakistan's Nursing Workforce

**Export Potential, Challenges, and
Recommendations**

**Pakistan Business Council
in collaboration with the
Aga Khan University – School of
Nursing & Midwifery (AKU-SONAM)**

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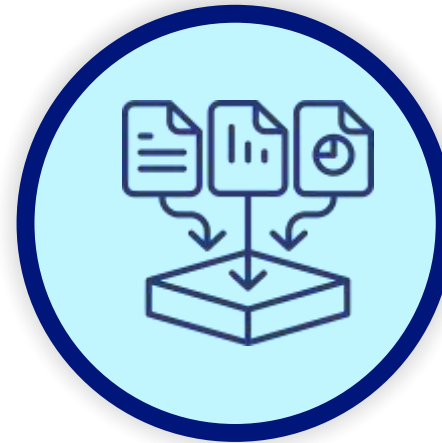
Introduction

Study – A Part of PBC’s Analysis of the Services Sector

The Study has been conducted under the pillar of **“Make-in-Pakistan”, “Serve More, Serve Better”**.

Objective

To suggest strategies to **elevate nurses’ skillset and overall quality of care**.



Goal

To **evaluate the potential of nurses to contribute to Pakistan through remittances** and identify **specific challenges that hinder** their acceptance in global markets.

Methodology

This report uses **secondary data** and **relies extensively** on interviews with key nursing professionals, Overseas Employment Promoters (OEPs), and other migration related organizations.

Global Trends of Nurses Migration





**1 in every 8 nurse
practices in a country other than the one
where s/he were born or trained in**

2023 – Estimated 29.8 million Nurses Globally

- WHO predicts a shortage of approximately **4.1 million** nurses by **2030**.
- Most significant gaps in **Africa, South-East Asia, the Eastern Mediterranean Region, and parts of Latin America**.

Major Exporters of Nurses

The **Philippines** and **India** are the leading exporting countries for nurses, with their professionals highly sought after in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, etc.

Impact of COVID-19

The pandemic underscored the **critical role of the global nursing workforce** and highlighted the **need for more sustainable and equitable international nurse migration practices**.

Global Regions for Nurses Careers

A Comparison



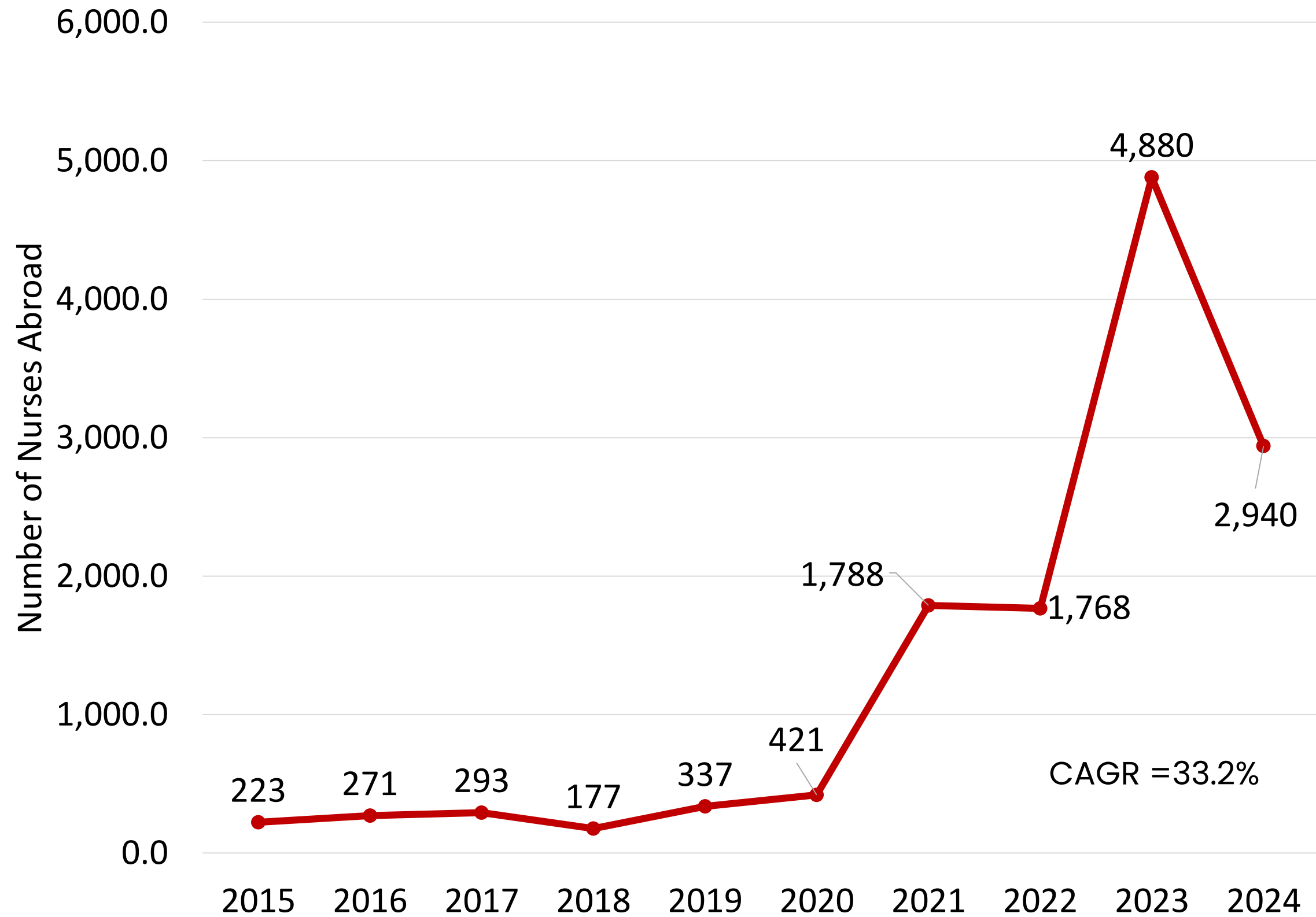
Comparison of Global Regions on a Set of Criteria for Nursing Careers

- **Core Anglosphere (U.S.A., U.K., Australia, New Zealand and Canada), GCC, Europe, Nordic Region, and Developed Asian Countries** were compared for the prospect of nursing careers.
- **Licensing/Registration** processes are complex, rigorous and lengthy for Pakistani nurses applying to all of these regions.
- **Earning Potential, Benefits, Healthcare systems, and Cost of Living** are similar for all these regions.
- Biggest incentive to locate to the GCC is **tax free income**, however, **benefits, labor laws, worker protection, professional development** and **career advancement** is limited.
- Core Anglosphere, Nordic Region and Europe are attractive for **well-defined residency pathways, adjustable culture, and freedom of movement of workers**.
- **Language Barriers** are strong for **EU, Nordic Region** and **Developed Asian Countries**.

Pakistan's Nursing Workforce



Nurses Migration Trend from Pakistan



Source: BE&OE

- There has seen a dramatic increase in nurse migration, especially from **2020 onwards** due to the **COVID-19 pandemic**.
- A CAGR of **33.2%** indicates a very rapid and sustained growth trend over the **10-year period**.
- In **2023, 4,880 nurses** migrated abroad from Pakistan which reduced to **2,940 in 2024**.

Pakistani Workers Registered Abroad

Rank	Professions	Number in 2024	Percentage of the Total 2024	CAGR (2019-2024)
	Total	727.4	–	3.1%
1	Laborer	364.6	50.1%	8.4%
2	Driver	185.2	25.5%	0.2%
3	Manager	24.8	3.4%	23.4%
4	Technician	15.9	2.2%	–1.2%
5	Mason	14.9	2.1%	–5.3%
6	Salesman	12.1	1.7%	5.1%
7	Supervisor	11.0	1.5%	7.3%
8	Electrician	10.9	1.5%	–6.4%
9	Cook	9.7	1.3%	6.3%
10	Mechanic	8.9	1.2%	–0.2%
20	Nurse	2.9	0.4%	54.2%

Source: BE&OE (2025)

Key Nursing Statistics of Philippines, India, Pakistan & Bangladesh as per the Latest Year Available

Nurses Density (per 10,000)



Philippines
42.1



India
17.2



Pakistan
5.2



Bangladesh
5.0

Nurse Graduates Per Year



Philippines
7,204



India
292,564



Pakistan
5,600



Bangladesh
10,064

Nurse-to-Doctor Ratio



Philippines
5.3



India
2.4



Pakistan
0.4



Bangladesh
0.7

Industry's Insights



State of Nursing in Pakistan



Shortage of Nurses in Pakistani Hospitals and Nursing Institutes



Not Enough Nurses to Fulfil Demand Abroad



Nurses are not Involved in Key Decision-Making Roles



A Negative Image of Pakistani Nurses is being Portrayed by Pakistani Media



The Stigmas Related to the Nursing Profession are however Gradually Decreasing

Nursing Education in Pakistan



Sub-Standard Mushroom Nursing Institutes and Fake Degrees



Lack of Monitoring of Nursing Educational Institutions



Inconsistent Admissions, Assessment and Grading in Pakistani Nursing Education



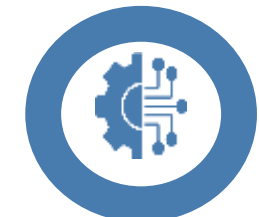
There is a Theory-Practice Gap & the Clinical – Academia Divide



Limited Specialization Options in Pakistani Nursing Degrees



The Dual Impact of PEEF (Pakistan Education Endowment Fund)



Inadequate Access to Modern Teaching Technologies



International Mobility of Pakistani Nurses



Demand and Supply Imbalance



Delayed Document Verification Procedures



Accreditations, Pre-departure Training and Exams/Tests are Expensive



Constraints with Pakistani Nurses Locating Abroad exist



Lack of Support by Pakistani Missions and Government Emigration Bodies



National Curriculum Barriers Hinder Nurse Licensing Abroad



Recommendations

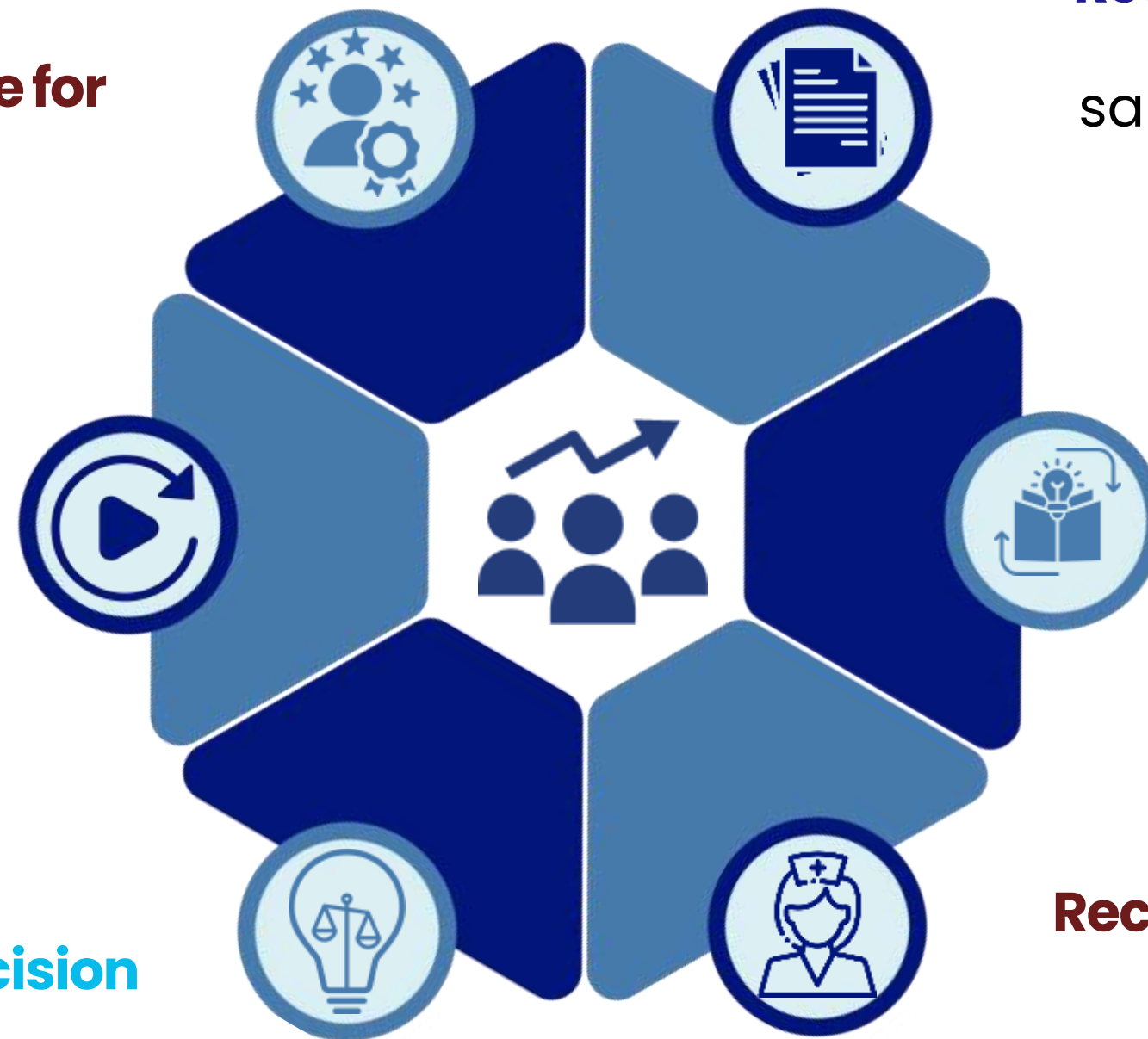


For the Improvement of the State of Nursing in Pakistan

Leverage Overseas Expertise for Nursing Leadership

Use the Media to Improve the Image of the Nursing Profession

Involve More Nurses in Decision Making for Nurses



Retain a Portion of Nurses in Pakistan improving and standardizing salaries, benefits, career paths, and overall welfare

Elevate Nursing Leadership Through Merit-Based Appointments not just seniority

Recognize and Empower Advanced Practice Nurses

For the Improvement of the Nursing Education in Pakistan

Provide Scholarships and Interest Free Loans to Nursing Students

Standardize the Practical Application of Soft Skills in Nursing Education

Introduce Multiple Annual Intakes in Nursing Institutions

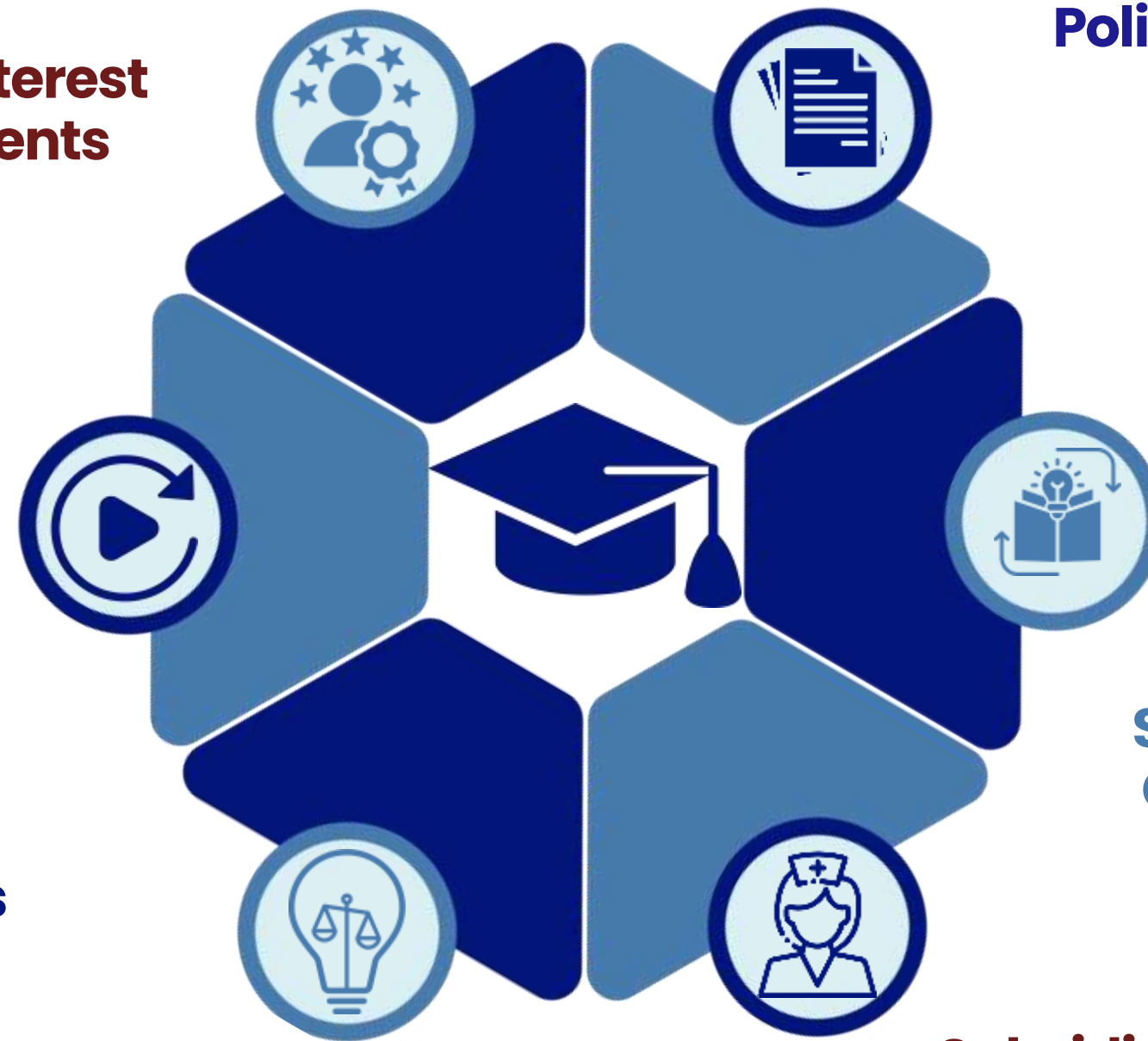
Regulate Nursing Institutions Affiliations

Policies to Produce Specialized Nurses in Pakistan

Integrate Clinical Practice and Academia in Pakistani Nursing

Standardize Teaching, Admissions Criteria, Assessment and Training

Subsidize Advanced Medical Equipment and Simulation Technologies



For the Improvement of the International Mobility of Pakistani Nurses

Integrate **police checks, subsidize licensing, and create a job registration system** to streamline overseas deployment

Reduce Financial Barriers for Nurses Applying Abroad through “employer-paid placement fees”

Streamline Overseas Nurse Employment through direct “Government-to-Government” Collaborations



Train Specific Batches of Nurses for Specific Countries

Pakistani Missions Abroad and Government Bodies Need to Facilitate Pakistani Overseas Nurses

Address Curriculum Terminology and Accreditation Discrepancies

Thank You

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