

Shriansh, I have restructured your debate. A suggestion- do not repeat Ladies and gentlemen.

“We must not confuse the protection of human rights with the disregard for human lives.”

A very good afternoon to this august house. Today, we are gathered to discuss the proposition: “It should be illegal for doctors and nurses anywhere in the world to go on strike.” To begin with, I urge you to focus on the phrase *‘anywhere in the world’*—a deliberate choice meant to emphasize the global significance of this issue. In this context, it underscores the essential, and I repeat, essential role that doctors and healthcare professionals play in societies worldwide. While it is true that doctors and nurses have valid demands for better safety, fair wages, and reasonable working hours, we believe that striking is not the right approach to address these concerns. We will demonstrate why such actions are not the solution to the challenges they face.

While I argue why strikes by doctors and nurses should be illegal, the Deputy Prime Minister will discuss their consequences, and the Whip will provide supporting examples.

First and foremost, going on strike is a direct violation of the Hippocratic Oath. Doctors and nurses swear to prioritize their patients' well-being above all else, and striking represents a blatant abandonment of this sacred commitment. Withholding care for personal or professional reasons is a grave betrayal of the duty to heal and protect life, eroding public trust and putting countless lives in danger. This is not merely unethical; it is a profound breach of the very principles that define the medical profession. As Former Advocate General of the Bombay High Court, Shreehari Aney, states, once the oath is taken, failing to uphold it is a breach of moral and professional duty.

We have all heard of Florence Nightingale and Albert Schweitzer, who devoted their lives to caring for others. Nightingale improved hospital care in the 19th century, while Schweitzer treated diseases like malaria in Africa in the early 20th century. Both were pioneers in medicine, prioritizing their patients' well-being.

I’m sure the opposition will present newspaper reports and quotes from doctors feeling unsafe in hospitals due to assaults from patients' relatives. But is a strike really the solution? Is threatening relatives with legal action—when they are already under immense stress—truly the answer? Rather than escalating tension, shouldn't we focus on more transparency, regular updates, and psychological support for both doctors and relatives? Only then can we build trust, strengthen relationships, and ensure that doctors and relatives don’t view each other with suspicion, but with understanding and respect.

Strikes should never be the option when addressing grievances in healthcare. Instead, we must prioritize dialogue, collaboration, and constructive solutions. Doctors and nurses should have access to clear, transparent communication channels with hospital administration and government bodies to address safety concerns, wage issues, and working conditions. Additionally, establishing regular feedback mechanisms, offering mental health support, and implementing mediation services can prevent conflict before it escalates. These alternatives promote positive change without compromising patient care or public trust, ensuring that healthcare professionals and patients are never abandoned in their time of need.

As **Florence Nightingale** once said, “The very first requirement in a hospital is that it should do the sick no harm.” Striking is harm. It undermines the trust patients place in healthcare professionals. Let us not condone it. Let us choose a path of responsibility, compassion, and unwavering dedication to those who need us most. Thank you.

To conclude, let me leave you with this thought: when doctors and nurses go on strike, they are not just walking away from their patients—they are walking away from their oath to protect and save lives.