

NURSE AND THE EMERGENCY

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The word emergency is a common term with great significance for nurses. Nurses come across emergencies day in and day out. The casualty department in a hospital is an emergency department.

Emergency may be said as a state or condition wherein the very basic fundamental matter is at danger and any further delay at that stage may cause further danger. In such state of affairs the medical man who is the custodian of the health, cannot be a silent spectator. He/she has to act at once to overcome this crisis.

Today we hear the word emergency in our country. Emergency in a country is declared under extraordinary conditions when the very democracy of that country is in a state of danger. Today's emergency is almost identical with a medical emergency. The Prime Minister of our country declared a state of emergency few months back viewing the circumstances well. We as nurses belonging to a profession which is wedded to the welfare of the society, have to understand the fundamental factors of democracy. This does not mean one should enter actively into politics. Our country is a sovereign democratic country with a Constitution of its own embodied with :

Justice—social, economical and political.

Liberty—of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship.

Equality—of status and opportunity.

Fraternity—assuming the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation.

These above assurances are well explained further through the funda-

mental rights guaranteed to all citizens of the country. Some of these are: right of equality, right to freedom, right against exploitation, religious freedom, cultural and educational rights, right to property and right for a healthful living, etc.

Through this Constitution the citizens of our country gave certain directive principles to the policy making so as to undertake several welfare measures. These measures are intended to enable the common man to have adequate living standards, maintain good health and to be free from illness, to have free and compulsory education for children, a better economical and social security etc. Unless all these are achieved it may be difficult to reach the real goal of democracy i.e. to build up a socialistic pattern of society.

These rights are given to the citizens of the country and nurses also enjoy these as citizens. Nurses should remember that firstly they are the citizens and secondly they belong to a profession. It is their responsibility to know their rights as citizens of the country and their duties as nurses. Their most important duty is to raise the standards of health and eradicate diseases. The International Council of Nurses has rightly pointed out the threefold duties of nurses namely : (i) prevention of diseases (ii) promotion of health (iii) and assistance to medical man in curing the diseases.

It has been observed that poverty and disease go hand in hand. Wherever there is poverty, diseases exist there and wherever there are diseases poverty comes there. Unless these are rooted out the nation cannot go forward to achieve its goals of democracy. The government at its end is making all earnest efforts to give better economic and

social security to the backward communities. The nationalisation of banks, special privileges to backward and scheduled castes and tribes, liberalisation of loans to agriculturists, property ceiling both urban and rural, the recent agricultural moratorium, rooting out corruption and inefficiency are some of the positive bold steps taken by our beloved Prime Minister in the interest of the common man and the nation at large. These steps taken in a critical time, undoubtedly have paved way in rooting out poverty in course of time.

It is not just sufficient if poverty is rooted out. The illness should also be rooted and attempts should be made to promote health among the citizens, and this is the responsibility of the nurses. It is the duty of every citizen also to make efforts to achieve the goals. Nurse is the pivot of the health team and her services in the welfare of the society are unquestionable and indispensable. Positive health among the people cannot be achieved by mere ethical and legal obligations but much more can be achieved by working hard and conscientiously, contributing her share in building up the health of the nation. Nurses have a special obligation in this state of emergency to impose self-discipline and pledge to be more devoted and dutiful in serving the humanity. Nurses have this special obligation because of the fact that people of India have given them the opportunity to get educated and become more skilful, proficient and efficient in their own field. The nurses are well protected today under law by legislation and are given professional privileges. The nation expects from the nurses to do their best and bring positive health and eradicate the illness from the country. Every effort should be made to educate the people towards their own civic responsibilities and also preach and practice the gospel of health. Let us at this juncture pledge to gear up our energies, work hard and go forward to reach our destination—the promotion of health and prevention of diseases.