

In Support of Health for All

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DURING the last five years, the role of national nurses' associations in the implementation of the Primary Health Care Programmes has been debated and discussed at all levels, both national and international, which has created a new awareness among the Nursing professionals.

During the conference in 1981 on the theme of 'Health for All by 2000 AD: the Role of Nursing in the Health Services in India', it was realised that nurses need to be open to change. They should be encouraged to have an enquiring mind to think and act independently and provided enough opportunities for developing their professionalism. This would be a stepping stone to success of the Nursing profession in realisation of 'Health for All by 2000 AD'.

Nurses are re-examining their specific role at all levels of health programmes and becoming more conscious of the issues evolving in the country. They are getting ready to assume suitable roles to meet the challenges preferred by the changing needs of the society.

To discuss the role of Nursing in support of 'Health for All by 2000 AD' it is necessary to discuss what Primary Health Care means for a nurse. Primary Health Care addresses the main health problems in the Community providing promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative services through Community Health Nursing with emphasis on community diagnosis, nursing processes and physical assessment.

Primary Health Care is likely to be most effective if it employs means that are understood and accepted by the community and applied by nurses at a cost the community and country can afford.

In India as in many other developing countries the development of health services did not keep pace with the changing needs of the population either in quantity or in quality and as we know the Nursing profession also faces the same problem because it is a part and parcel of the total health care system. Any effect on the health care system directly or indirectly affects the Nursing system.

If the goal of universal health coverage is to be attained via Primary Health Care, the services must be efficient, appropriate and consistent with the basic needs of the community. Here nursing has the full potentiality to broaden its perspective and to advance the role of Nursing to meet the challenge.

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We all know that goals have been set for professionals in order to help the attainment of 'Health for All by 2000 AD'. With these basic goals in view the professional nurse has to examine how best she has been able to play her role in the total health care system. She can review her performance and evolve strategies for Nursing profession.

I feel that Nursing education should be oriented towards Primary Health Care and related manpower development.

It should incorporate Nursing research in all facets of Primary Health Care.

As a professional nurse in deeply contact with the community, she can influence people at community level to make use of health care services, she has to help strengthen the health care system, by ensuring proper delivery of health care services. She has to modulate her different roles. This indeed is a challenge to her profession. She has to encourage more of team work rather than individual approach because that will help her to motivate the community as a whole and not by part.

We all know that the goal of Primary Health is ultimately to develop or prepare the community for self care and for self-reliance. If nurses at all levels understand this and take action with regard to the development of self care and self-reliance in the community they would be doing what is essential without wasting their valuable time and energy.

Community Health Nursing

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The Health Visitor has been abolished in most places and a new Health Supervisor or health Assistant has taken her place under the Multipurpose Health Scheme. The concept of public health nurse is gaining ground gradually.

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