

Nursing Leadership for Population Control

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THE key role of Nursing in implementing the essential changes in Primary Health Care is recognised and accepted by various quarters like W.H.O. Nurses have always had a strong commitment to social causes and thus have a responsibility to lead the change. They need to identify the strategies and actions that will be required to exercise their full leadership potential. They need to look beyond the expansion of traditional nursing roles. In this pursuit often they come across various questions that need to be answered.

Mr. Robert Maxwell, Secretary of the King's Fund at an International seminar on nursing leadership said "It is better to know some of the questions than to know all the answers". If we ponder over this statement we can see how true it is. We in nursing are always buried in our efforts to find answers to our problems. Before we solve one problem, another one is already in the offing. We all know that the health care needs and possibilities are increasing faster than the resources to meet them. This leads to a need to control expenditure. In the already curtailed financial outlay for nursing, how are we going to achieve it successfully? This is something to be thought over carefully.

Leadership is a partly about power and partly about a personal quality that enables an individual to influence other—but it is by no means solely about these two qualities. It has to do with the totality of identifying needs, analysing possibilities, communicating, picking right person to work with and helping them to grow in this process. This requires one to stick to essentials and even willing to experiment and even mistakes at times without trying out things, how can one be sure of success or failure.

Nursing personnel are one of the most valuable assets of any health care system. Leadership in nursing is required at all levels of health system, but it can be effective only with adequate support from Govt., voluntary organizations, health professionals etc.

Nursing profession now needs to produce the leaders to unfold this potential force. It is sure to face resistance, yet must take up positions from where it can voice its opinions at policy and decision making levels. The key elements in determining the future roles and responsibilities of nurses are the changes they can bring about and the influence they are able to exercise.

Leadership for population control requires radical moves and it presents nursing with a number of dilemmas. Nursing traditionally is heavy with sub-

ordination without influence and power. It is characterised by obligation without total authority even to direct, head and control its own education, practice, research and management. This acts against the emergence of positive initiative in nurses. There is an urgent need for leaders who have the capability to convince their colleagues of the enhanced role of nursing. Majority of leaders must accept responsibility but the sad fact is that many do not at present show these attributes required of leaders who can bring about successful change in health development. Nurses have to come up to this level by answering questions like :

What should the nursing leadership be ?

What is missing in the present set up ?

Why is there lack of integration between Patient Care, education and management ?

How can they be closely integrated ?

Why is it that senior nurse managers shy away from their expanded roles ?

Can nurses contribute to find solutions to some of the management issues and problems ?

Why is it that nurses are not involved increasingly in family welfare programmes.

Can nurses effectively participate in family welfare services ?

Can nurses take some responsibility to control this enormous population growth ?

These are to be thought over seriously.

On July 11, 1987 the world population crossed the five billion. The world population growth at the rate of 150 a minute, 2,20,000 a day and 80 million a year. As per the calculations, the 6th billion will arrive well before 2000 A.D. History shows the world figure that it took millions of years to touch the first billion, 2nd billion by 1930, 3rd by 1964, 4th by 1974 and fifth billion by 1987. Now we are almost on a double march.

The corresponding figures for India too are alarming. Undivided India in 1930 had 300 million, after partition by 1964, it became 460 million by 1974 it became 580 million and in 1987 we are almost 760 million. Statistics show that 9 out of 10 children born are in the third world and western countries like West Germany, France and USSR are having falling birth rates.

From the above statistical facts we can see that the growth rate is alarming and is likely to cause a disaster to the living causing shortage in all facilities like housing, drinking water, food supplies, schools, colleges, jobs and what not. The effect of overcrowding we are already facing in our everyday lives and

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this will be on the increase. It is high time for us to pause, look at the problem and do something seriously.

Here comes the family welfare & population control programmes. If we trace the history we can see that family planning programme took its birth through a lady, a nurse, who witnessed the agony of a women in labour. Nurses predominantly being women and engaged in a service which allows closeness with the patients and relatives than any other group can take the lead in educating them of the urgent need for a small family norm. By her constant effort and reminder and influence, she is in a better position to motivate couple to adopt this. So far nurses have not been given such recognition and responsibility especially in India. Countries like Thailand and Indonesia have gone far-ahead in this area and evaluative studies have proved it to be a great success.

According to reports from population Institute in Washington DC, the world population will reach 11 billion by 2050 and result in a crisis in the deve-

loping world—characterised by poverty and misery. He says that India is one of 20 countries which account for 69% the world population. India which has 76 crores people now will have nearly 100 crores by 2000 A.D. This is a very serious matter for one and all.

At this juncture it is important for us nurses to introspect ourselves the role we can play in this crucial matter of life and death. Let us rightly ask for our involvement and role at each level from decision making till its implementation. If all nurses including nursing students make it a point to educate at least one person each day of the advantages of a small family norm and motivate them to adopt these methods, it is not a small measure. In addition there can be planned teaching to groups formally. Considering the seriousness of the problem, let us pledge ourselves to work in this direction. We also need to conduct studies and publish reports for the use of nurses around the country. And share ideas and concerns in our professional conferences. This is sure to raise us to the level of accepted, responsible health care professional country.

Core Lists of Periodicals

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can be used as useful decision making model regarding journal subscription. In this paper 63 Journals have been taken for the preparation of core list and 5 Journals have been identified as core list for a Nursing College Library.

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