

Recent Social Development and its Resulting Concepts in Nursing

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(A paper presented at the Seminar on "Patient Centred Nursing Care" held at the time of the Madhya Pradesh State Branch Conference in September 1967)

WHEN studying the social development and its resulting changes on any profession it is not difficult to discern that changes are affected by many social developments. Nursing is no exception to this rule. In the past, nursing has been affected by, and in the present is being influenced by many powerful social developments. There is no doubt that both social developments and their resulting changes are affecting each other. Nursing is influenced by the following powerful social developments :

Fundamental Rights, general education, status of women in society, population changes, wars, industrialisation and urbanisations, the advance in medical science and technology, religious and other influences, national and international plans and programmes. Nursing as a social institution is influencing trends and has brought about changes in such areas as public attitudes towards health and health promotion, public attitude towards nursing, and long-term planning in nursing.

This topic is so vast that it is almost impossible to do justice to even one social development in a few minutes. Therefore I am presenting to you only a few and selected social developments and their resulting changes in brief. These are :

1. Population Expansion

India is the seventh largest and second most populous country in the world. The 1961 census showed a population of 439 million. It is currently estimated to be about

512 million with an increase each month of approximately one million, and a projection of a possible 1,000 million by the turn of the century. Thus population explosion is constantly posing the problem of shortage of all kinds of nursing personnel throughout the country. This statement is evident by examining the nurse-patient ratio. In 1964 there was one nurse to 11,700 population which gives a clear picture of the shortage of nursing personnel. This population explosion however has resulted in many new concepts in nursing. To mention a few :

- (a) The concept of utilising of married and inactive nursing personnel either full time or part time in any field of nursing is evident.
- (b) The concept of utilising auxiliary personnel in larger numbers is being realised by both the State and Central Governments.
- (c) The concept of changing role of nursing personnel is being realised by the nursing personnel as well as individual institutions. Every nurse is expected to be a teacher, to teach about health and family planning at every opportunity available ; to be a propagandist in order to present the meaning and value of family planning to most of the people and psychologist as well in order to be able to understand patients' hesitations and refusals towards family planning.

- (d) The concept of greater responsibility on nurses of utilising the patients illness as an opportunity to reach not only patients but also relatives in family planning.

2. Advance in Medical Science

Advance in medicine is so great and rapid in comparison to nursing that nursing can hardly keep pace with it. Progress in science has opened many new fields for specialisation which demands co-operation and a greater support of the specialists in order to give comprehensive nursing care. The concept of team work has become an essential feature for all health personnel. Nurses are important members of this health team.

The gap in nurses knowledge brought about by this rapid advance in medicine, in drugs and mechanical procedures must be filled if the nursing profession has to exist on the level of other professions. The greater responsibility rests with the nursing leaders of each institution to plan and implement the continuing education for personnel of their own institutions in order to keep abreast with the changes. I must take this opportunity to emphasise more on the planning and implementing of the inservice education programme. This programme could be very challenging and of practical value. The concept of inservice education is bound to come in force in the near future ; so why not take this opportunity now ?

3. Great Emphasis on General Education

To influence human behaviour

THE NURSING JOURNAL OF INDIA

is the basic aim of education. In recent years great emphasis is being placed on the progress of general education, compulsory education for children upto 12 or 14 years of age has been recognised in many of our States. People are becoming more and more aware of their fundamental rights, that is, the right to be educated.

- (a) The concept of better education for nurses and opportunities for advancement in their knowledge of nursing is becoming today's demand in order to be better prepared to give comprehensive nursing care.
- (b) Nurses are demanding better working conditions.
- (c) The concept of realisation of the worth of individual is being realised by most of our nurses, which attracts their attention to provide patient centred nursing care rather than disease centred or procedure centred nursing care.
- (d) Greater responsibility is being expected from nurses

for assessing the needs of patients to provide quality nursing care.

- (e) Nurses are becoming more and more aware of their work for which they expect recognition by public as well as from their health team. They are no longer satisfied to be simply the servants of doctors. Nurses are awakening and have started realising the importance and potential of professional autonomy within the health team.
- (f) People are becoming conscious of their health. They are becoming aware collectively towards community development.
- (g) Greater responsibility on nurses of imparting health education to public is expected by public.
- (h) Individual thinking is encouraged. Nurses are no longer merely accepting orders from doctors without questioning when and where necessary. There is a tension

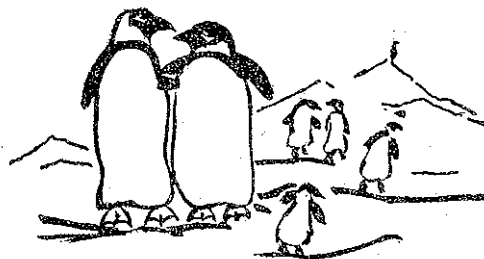
regarding this purposeful, constructive development and logical thinking is demanded from nurses.

- (i) Teachers are required and forced by circumstances to increase their knowledge of subjects and not only to keep it up-to-date but also to utilise their knowledge properly so that they may not have to be frustrated when students know more than teachers.

4. Development in Social Science

The development in social science is demanding that nurses equip themselves with proper and adequate knowledge of their society, community, nation and world (international) at large. The scope of learning is no longer limited narrowly. Greater responsibility is expected from nurse to be able to understand behaviour of her patients. To be effective in interpersonal relationships, emphasis is being given on effective communication which is the basis of human understanding and interpersonal relationship and definitely the way to success in all that the nurse does.

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