

Inter-Relationship of the Individual, his Family and Community and Relationship between Environment and Health

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YOU have already heard from the speaker previous to me about some of the changes that have come about lately in the society and the resulting changes in the concepts of nursing. (*The first paper presented on the theme "Patient Centred Nursing Care" by Miss S. Patras appeared in the February 1968 issue of the Journal ...Editor*). With the Indian Nursing Council accepting the purpose of Nursing Education as the preparation of nurses for first level positions in Hospital or community, the application of nursing knowledge and skills is becoming more and more concerned with situations and with people. The nurse in the Hospital today is interested in 'health' and her functions are not only limited to care of the sick individual but also through the sick individual she seeks to extend health to his family and community. In order to equip the Nurse to fulfil these demands she needs an awareness of the social nature of man and the ability to see the patient as a person belonging to a family and community. Also, for applying the social elements of illness in the care of the sick, the nurse is required to have adequate knowledge about the community as well as the intimate relationship that exist between the individual, and his family and community environment particularly, with reference to the influence of that environment upon his health. This knowledge for the nurse is an absolute necessity for identifying the needs of patients, and nursing, therefore, is now turning to social sciences,

specially, behavioural sciences and sociology.

Before we discuss the relationship of man with his family and community let us consider what sort of animal is this man? To quote Aristotle man is a social animal. He is certainly a very complex one and one not easily categorised. He does not always do things which he knows he ought to do e.g. there is no necessary correlation between health knowledge and healthy living. He does things because they are the done things and to a very marked extent he is a creature of habit, doing things because he has often done them. He is somewhat a creature of reason basing his action on careful consideration of relevant knowledge. He is sentimental in developing attitudes toward himself, his health, his fellow beings their activities and institutions. He is often found doing things consistent with his emotional make up. If man is something like this our next question will be what makes man like this? And in what sense does he belong to society? Man and society are peculiarly and intimately interdependent. Evidences have proved that man from the very beginning lived in society. His relationship to social heritage is more intimate than that of the seed to the soil in which it grows. To illustrate this relationship let us take the example of a human child born into a family. The infant is born as a non-social biological being. He grows and reacts with people from within and

outside his house. He makes demands upon his society to fulfil his requirements and the society makes demands upon him. In the process of this interaction between himself and the society he becomes social in nature and gradually develops into a personality. Thus, it is clearly seen that through the social experiences the child grows up to a socialised adult, and in his contact with men he becomes a human being. The quote Mac-Iver "Society is more than our environment, it is our nature, it is within us and around us". The cultural influences go very deep into the personality. It is a fact that the stage of civilisation, superstitions, beliefs, religious taboos and such other cultural components of personality affect man when he falls sick. The treatment the patient receives will largely depend upon the idea of his family about diseases and other treatment. It is the duty of every nurse to understand and to find ways to correct these cultural influences that are evil. Our challenge is to understand them and to make use of the good and to replace the bad.

The family acts as the link between the individual and the society in that it is the most important primary group in the society on which the whole social structure is built. The family continues to serve as a total community for the lives born within it. The family is the most effective agency for transmission of cultural

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International Instrument on the Status of Nurses

At the meeting of the ICN Council of National Representatives held in Evian in June 1967 the following resolution was passed :

International Instrument on Nurses :

"That the Council of National Representatives request the International Labour Office to work on an international instrument on the status of nurses for the improvement of nursing services,

and

that the World Health Organisation be asked to support the request and collaborate in the preparation of the instrument".

This resolution was transmitted to the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation who assured that it would be carefully considered in programme planning, and to the Director-General of the World Health Organisation, who replied assuring support and help.

In December, the Sixth Session of the Advisory Committee on Salaried Employees and Professional Workers convened in Geneva and Margrethe Kruse, Executive Secretary of the Danish Nurses Association and Chairman of the ICN Professional Services Committee represented ICN as observer at this meeting. Due to the work of Margrethe Kruse at the meeting, and the help and support given by the Danish Nurses Association in interesting their Minister of Labour in the resolution, the following was agreed :

"Resolution concerning Employment and Working Conditions of Nursing Personnel, with Special Reference to Nurses.

The Advisory Committee of the International Labour Organisation on Salaried Employees and Professional Workers.

Having been convened by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office.

Having met at Geneva at its Sixth Session from 4 to 15 December 1967.

Considering the importance of the duty of the nursing staff to conserve life, alleviate sufferings and promote health.

Considering the general public interest in meeting the existing shortage of nurses through planned policies,

Believing that systematic investigation of job analyses and conditions of work in the nursing field should be a means to promote recruitment and more effective utilisation of nursing personnel so as to provide improved nursing care,

Bearing in mind that the Committee considered questions relating to nursing staff at its Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Sessions.

Adopts, this 14th day of December 1967, the following resolution :

"The Governing Body of the International Labour Office is invited to request the Director-General to submit to it, after consultation with the World Health Organisation, proposals for the preparation of an international instrument on the status of nursing personnel, with special reference to nurses."

You will note that the resolution has been widened to include "nursing personnel, with special reference to nurses".

ICN believes this to be an excellent outcome of the meeting. It was not an easy task and ICN is indebted to Margrethe Kruse for being largely instrumental in the result.

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heritage from generation to generation. All these go to prove that there is an inseparable relationship between the individual and his family and community. Individual, family and society are three different sides of one reality which is the personality. No longer is a patient regarded as a leg or an abdomen or an eye.

Now coming to the relationship between health and environment, environment is not merely something external that which encircles and supports man and society, but it interpenetrates life

everywhere and it is the living garment of the society.

Individuals resemble or differ from each other as a consequence of the interaction between heredity and environment. Heredity makes up our internal mental equipment, but it is developed, moulded and shaped in the environment. Environment is everything that is not inherited. It includes the food we eat as well as the air we breathe, it includes the cultural and psychological setting of our lives as well as housing, sanitary services and conditions at work and school. Of

particular importance to nurses is the fact that it includes the pre-natal and intra-natal environment.

Florence Nightingale said "The secret of National health lies in the homes of the people". She fully realised that preservation of health and prevention of diseases depend to a large extent on the environment in which people are born, grow, eat, drink, travel, work and relax. Therefore, the aim of every nurse today should be to help every one to live in a happy home and in an environment conducive to health.