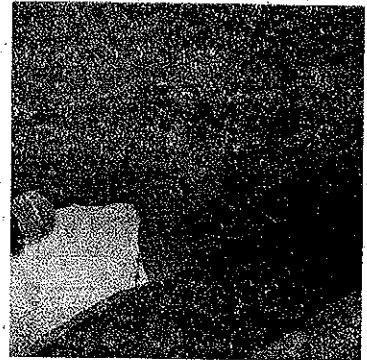


Key Note Address by Dr. (Mrs.) Sulochana Krishnan
Nursing in the New world of Health Care : A Vision (Scientific Session - II)

Nursing is an essential component in the process of treating the sick, whether in an institutional or home setting. It is equally sought after by the aged, for their overall well being.

The role of nurses and nursing profession in restoration of health is being recognised from times immemorial. References to nursing services are found in the ancient *Charak Samhita*, a renowned Indian medical treatise of yore and works of Sushruta, among others. In post-independent India, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, former President of India and Dr. Lakshmana Swamy (former Vice Chancellor, Madras University) were among those who advocated for bringing the field of nursing under the mainstream education at the University and Secondary levels.



Nurses have been contributing immensely in pre-natal care of pregnant women, safe delivery of babies and post-natal care. For quite some decades, there has been increased awareness among people about safe delivery by pregnant women – thanks to the programmes of government and organisations like TNAI. The normal physiological process of child birth in homes by the rural trained midwives (Dais) is disappearing. Now, most of the deliveries are taking place under institutional system in hospitals and nursing homes where nurses have key role, both in urban and rural areas.

In this age of specialisation, the multi-speciality nature of Nursing is coming to the fore. Nursing the sick in the hospital under various specialisations is not the same as normal midwifery as practiced in Public Health. As on date, numerous nursing education institutions are offering specific, specialised courses in nursing.

Nurses have very little or no say in politics. The simple reason is, they have not emerged as a homogenous group by far. It is rather regrettable that Presidents of our country have not ever invited a nurse to be a member of Lok Sabha. It is time that nurses unite and consolidate as a pressure group. To attain this objective, they have to strengthen their local and regional associations, and build up ties with the media.

Going into the philosophy of nursing, all the religions profess, propagate and advocate actual service to the human beings as the supreme duty – the service rendered for mitigating the suffering of the sick and the suffering people is the biggest observance of religion. This is epitomised by Swami Vivekanand when he said, "The hands that help are holier than the lips that pray". From this perspective, in many ways, nursing can be considered as a Practical Religion.

- ♦ It is upheld that the principles and precepts of the popular group, "The Art of Living" founded by Shri Ravi Shankar can go a long way in motivating, improving and blessing our lives.
- ♦ The practice of these principles can foster deep understanding of human values that unite us as a single human community.

We need to celebrate distinct traditions and diversity while simultaneously creating a greater understand and appreciation of our many shared principles. This practice will lead to evolution of a peaceful, just and sustainable community. The major planks of the Art of Living are, commitment, responsibility, hard work, character and efficiency.

Note: The write-up has been developed on the basis of script of Powerpoint presentation presented at CENTCON 2008, held in Mumbai.

❧