



HEALTH FOR ALL AND MEDICAL SOCIAL WORK

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ABSTRACT

Medical social work is application and adoption of methods and philosophy of professional Social work in the field of Health care and also in medical education. Medical science gives emphasis on disease but ignores the importance of the diseased person but medical social worker studies the diseased person viz the social aspect of disease which contribute to prevention of diseases, planning of rehabilitation , clinical management of the patients There is urgent need to change the health culture of people to achieve a goal Health for All Health care is complex phenomena .Health reflects the existing social, cultural, economic situation of individuals as well as of the community. Health cannot be separated by social determinants like educational level, housing conditions, income, food habits, cultural practices, religious background, political system, gender issues and also of individuals attitudes ,perceptions ,outlook ,cultural practices, literacy status, family size, various psychosocial problems and issues viz bias about free and government health care facilities. Medical social workers can play the role of catalysts in achieving Health for all.

Key words: Medical social work, Health for all.

INTRODUCTION

Medical science gives emphasis on disease but ignores the importance of the diseased person but medical social worker studies the diseased person viz the social aspect of disease which contributes to prevention of diseases, planning of rehabilitation, clinical management of the patients. There is urgent need to change the health culture of people to achieve a goal Health for All. Health care is complex phenomena .Health reflects the existing social, cultural, economic situation of individuals as well as of the community. Health cannot be separated by social determinants like educational level, housing conditions, income, food habits, cultural practices, religious background, political system, gender issues and also of individuals attitudes, perceptions, outlook, cultural practices, literacy status, family size, various psychosocial problems and issues viz bias about free and government health care facilities Medical social workers can play the role of catalysts in achieving Health for All. It is known fact that India is in the pangs of poverty & illiteracy which

are the two dimensions of same coin, in such a socio economic scenario of our nation the goal Health for All is a mirage as the underlying root causes are complex in nature & need flexible strategies to tackle them. Medical social workers can play the role of catalysts in achieving Health for All. Global Definition of the Social Work Profession “Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing [1].

Professional Social work and Health care

Social work in medical setting is termed as medical social work.

It is the application and adoption of the method and philosophy of social work in the field of health and medical care. Branch of social work and deals with the social, physical and psychological aspects of patient. These uses relevant social skills and knowledge to help the patients.

Medical social work deals with the prevention of disease, after care of the patients and social rehabilitation of patients, and not just limited to the treatment of diseases. A developing country like India's, hurdles of development are burning social problems like poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, conservatism, un-employment, gender bias such social, political and cultural factors have led to a number of multifaceted and complex problems of vicious nature. Among all the developmental issues health care, health promotion has to be given a special priority.

The goal "Health for all" is crippling due to various factors. Management of health care services especially in rural areas is challenging. It is known fact that India is a land of villages, Agriculture is back bone of our country 70% (2010) [2] of population are rural dwellers and all rural communities with typical Characteristics

Significance of Study: The birds view of health scenario is alarming, health needs are more demanding, the goal which aims at "Health for all" by 2000 A.D, which was initiated during 1977 (30th May 1977) by World Health Assembly. WHA decided to launch social, global target "Health for all by 2000 A.D" defined as attainment by all the people of the world, a level of health, which will enable or permit every individual to lead socially and economically a productive life" is tough task which is striving very hard to achieve the goal. As the health of the Indians is in the pangs complex causes which are inter-related these factors make the task more difficult but not an impossible one. Unless we go for the scientifically effective & affordable strategies, it becomes a distant dream [3].

Social factors influencing health and health care service utilization are the important factors which reflect in health status of public. Health awareness play a vital role in health care seeking behavior whether a community is urban or rural its members are influenced by a unique socio cultural milieu of its own

Health care is tough task to country like India due to the pangs of poverty, illiteracy, ignorance & conservatism. Public health care professionals are striving hard to focus more on prevention rather than on curative & rehabilitative services as preventive services are simple, affordable, easy & most suitable techniques of handling health care. Common practices like healthy life style, vaccination, sanitation, & hygienic practices like use of handkerchief, balanced diet avoiding bare foot walking & washing hands have proved that these practices greatly contribute to the healthy life [4].

Medical social work has grown in to an important field of social work and an integral part of medicine, Medical social work uses case work as its main technique

to find out the social background of illness, this information helps the doctors in arriving at a social diagnosis, treating illness & estimating the prognosis. The purpose of medical social work is to help sick people – individual by individual, both through the best use of the patients capabilities & community resources in matter of personal & social adjustments in the community, including rehabilitation. The person who can best do this type of work is one who had special training in social case work [4].

Role of the Medical Social Worker

In the modern era of varied and complex diseases for which the medical science is unable to find out remedies, the function of a medical social worker attains much importance. One such example in recent times is the emergence of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) as a major threat to community health, for which there is no effective medicine or vaccines till date. The disease has already created panic among the planners, medical professionals as well as the social workers. The reported cases of irrational and inhuman treatment of AIDS patients by the medical professionals, their family members and the society are clear-cut evidences to such irrational panic or, to coin a term "AIDS Phobia". Lack of awareness regarding various issues related to AIDS such as how the disease is transmitted, what are the major precautions to be taken for prevention and besides, the belief that AIDS is transmitted only through sexual promiscuity especially that of homo-sexuality, are the underlying causes for such a panic. Here the role of medical social worker varies from clarifying the doubts of the people to the myriad social, psychological and economic problems related to AIDS. Rehabilitation of the patient to his/her own family and the society is one of the major concerns of medical social work. At the preventive level the medical social worker can help the people by giving counseling to reduce high risk behavior such as prostitution, intravenous drug use, homosexuality etc. The social worker can create awareness regarding the need for use of only HIV negative blood for transfusions, safe sex practices etc.

The same functions of medical social workers are applicable to all other serious diseases in India such as TB, Leprosy and Cancer etc. Except in case of AIDS, there is an effective treatment available for them in modern medicine especially if diagnosed early. The medical social worker with the skills in understanding the person in his 'totality' and with the application of various social work methods such as case work, group work, community organization, social work research and social welfare administration can influence the treatment and rehabilitation process. By using social case work methods, which is an enabling process of one-to-one relationship. The medical social worker can interpret the nature of the disease and its implication to the patients and their families, and can study the socio-economic conditions of the patient to provide necessary emotional support during the crisis situation, use the

technique of environmental modification, if necessary, so as to enable the patient to benefit from the prescribed treatment. He/she can also interpret the patient's psychosocial problems to the other members of the family.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- Medical social work is a very powerful and essential branch of medicine for realizing a comprehensive and qualitative health care.
- As it is considered as a branch of social work, it draws little attention by the medical personnel and health planners.

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- Medical social workers can play the role of catalysts in achieving Health for all
- Time has come to consider it as a part and parcel of medical education and health care.
- Medical social work is a demanding job.
- All the sanctioned posts should be filled at the earliest

SUGGESTIONS

This issue has to be brought to the notice of Universities, MCI, UGC and other concerned (higher education, medical education & human resource) departments for further action.