

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION—PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Primary health care to be successful should be based on practical, scientifically sound and acceptable methods and technology, which is universally accessible to individuals and families in the community and at a cost that the community and country can afford. The core content of primary health care is the full participation of the community and the spirit of self reliance. It becomes clear that the Government has a responsibility for the health of the people but it is just that it is practically impossible for any State alone, however affluent it may be, to provide health care to its citizens from womb to tomb.

Hence all persons have the right and duty to participate individually and collectively in the planning and implementation of their health care. Therefore the role of private sector for the planning and successful implementation of primary health care is vital. Private sector being part of the local community is most psychologically and practically suited to spearhead the theme of primary health care. Private sectors also have a duty as well as right to participate in the implementation of primary health care. Private sectors should treat their participation in primary health care both as a challenge and an opportunity. Primary health care is an integral part of our socio-economic development and hence in turn, the private sectors are the direct as well as indirect beneficiaries, as improved health of the people of the community results in improved quality of life. Private sectors hence have an obligation to the community in providing and/or supplementing promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and emergency care appropriate to meet the health problems in the community. Primary health care is an integral part of this comprehensive health care.

The private sectors could directly invite themselves in providing or creating environment of appropriate training, supervision, referral, logistic support as well as providing adequate manpower in health and related sectors. Main emphasis of primary health care being the direct participation of individuals in the community, the private sectors being a part of the local community is most suited to spearhead the community participation and motivate individuals in their active participation in the programme of primary health care. Private sectors, be it non-Governmental or voluntary, non-voluntary, hence have a decided role in technical and financial support as well. Large and medium private sectors could establish their own primary health care programmes for the workers, members of the families of workers and also to individuals of the community in their respective areas. Some sort of dispensing system along these lines being already provided for in most of the private and public sectors, it should not be difficult to alter the type of their services and thus provide benefits of comprehensive primary health care programme from the existing centres. This would cost no extra administrative set up or gross financial burden.

These centres in fact are most suited to serve the problems mutually perceived by the community and health system that is culturally acceptable, technically appropriate, manageable and appropriate selected interventions that meet the local needs. Another vital area where public sectors could play their role is the research in the programmes of primary health care in terms of identification, development, adaptation and implementation of appropriate technology and derive at scientifically sound conclusions adaptable to local need and acceptable to the people themselves. Private sector mutually as well as with the governmental organisation can monitor, collaborate in evaluating the work, exchange information and also in giving feedback for early identification of problems and also the success. Involvement by private sector in primary sector in primary health care will help to counter the wrong assumption that it implies the cheapest form of medical care for the poor, with the bare minimum of financial and technical support. Public programme has invariably arisen from the sustained and committed efforts of these sectors. To leave the entire success of programmes of primary health care to the Governmental bodies is neither wise nor practical. Without the active involvement of private sector, some

sort of vacuum is sure be left in the system of primary health care. The role of private sectors in programmes of health care is one of active participation as well as fill in the areas of achievements otherwise undone.

The private sectors are known for their leadership which is essentially effective management. Consequently private sectors are most suited to give this much needed important tasks of management including certain aspects of interpersonal relationship.

For at the local level for example, leadership of a primary health care team is especially important for achieving coordination and mutual relationship.

In conclusion, the private sectors have a duty as well as a right in the programmes of primary health care. The role is one of providing leadership, planning, pioneering, setting objectives, organization for implementation, supervision, promotion of community involvement, development of intersectorial co-operation, education, evaluate programmes and to inspire and motivate personnel and give direct support.

