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MENTAL HEALTH AMONG RURAL PEOPLE AND SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION

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Abstract:

Mental health is a state of successful performance of mental function resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people and the ability to adapt to change and to cope with adversity. India being predominantly an agricultural country, majority of our population is involved in agricultural activities and staying in rural areas. Everyman's right to health has been accepted in all international treaties as a social right which implies all other rights. According to the world health organization (WHO) mental health is a condition which permits optional development – physical, intellectual and emotional development of the individual, so far as this is compatible with that of other individuals.

KEYWORDS:

Health, Rural Area, Social Work.

INTRODUCTION

India is a large country, geographically as well as population wise. Majority of the population lives in villages. Most of rural areas are not connected by roads or have an access to health services. It is the challenging task before the government to extend services to remote rural areas. There is a continuing need for studies to assess and monitor the availability, accessibility, affordability, quality and outcomes of mental health services for individuals in rural and frontier areas. Currently there is a severe shortage of mental health professional in rural areas throughout India. Without adequate mental health care, mental health problems often worsen, negatively impacting productivity in the agricultural and food sectors, quality of life among rural residents and rural community's vitality.

MENTAL HEALTH :-

The concept of mental health is as old as human beings. Mental health comprises those behaviors, perceptions and feelings that determine a person's overall level of personal effectiveness, success, happiness and excellence of functioning as a person. Bhatia (1982) describes it as the ability to balance desires, feelings, ambitions and ideals in one's daily living. It may also be understand as the behavioral characteristics of a person. According to Kumar (1992) mental health is an index which shows the extent to which the person has been able to meet his environmental demands- social, emotional or physical. A mentally healthy person shows a homogenous organization of desirable attributes, healthy values a balanced self concept and a scientific perception of the world as a whole.

Mental health presents a humanistic approach towards self and others. It is an important factor that influences an individual's various activities, behavior, happiness, and performance. Mental health represents a psychic condition, which is characterized by mental peace, harmony and content. It is

identified by the absence of disabling and debilitating symptoms, both mental and somatic in the person. (Schneiders,1964).

DIMENSIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH :-

Mental health is an indivisible part of general and wellbeing and a concept reflects the equilibrium between the individual and the environment in a broad sense. Mental health can be described in two dimensions.

Positive mental health :-

Positive mental health considers mental health as a resource. It is essential to subjective wellbeing and to our ability to perceive, comprehend and interpret our surroundings, to adapt to them or to change them if necessary, and to communicate with each other and have successful social interactions. Healthy human abilities and functions enable us to experience life as meaningful, helping us to be, among other things creative and productive members of the society.

Mental ill – health :-

Mental ill- health is about mental disorders, symptoms and problems. Mental symptoms and problems can also exist without the criteria for clinical disorders being met. These sub clinical conditions are often a consequence of persistent or temporary distress. They too can be marked burden to individuals, families and societies. In theory, the aim of mental health promotion is to increase and enhance positive mental health and that of mental ill health prevention is to protect individuals from mental health problems. In practice, however, many activities have both promoting and preventive aspects.

Factors of mental health :-

Following are some basic factors that decide the mental health of individuals.

- Heredity
- Physical factors
- Social factors
- Satisfaction of basic needs

Mental health of disadvantaged :-

- Depression
- Disabilities
- Stress and anxiety
- Loneliness or rejection
- Problems with family or friends
- Worries about being bullied

Magnitude of mental health problems in rural India :-

The public health burden of mental illness is huge in India. The projected burden of disease percentage attributed to mental behavior disorders of total DALY (Disability Adjusted Life Years) lost world wide in 1990-10 percent, 2002-13 percent and projected to be in 2020 as 15 percent. National survey sample organization (NSSO) 2012 reports of 1.8 percent suffer physical and mental disabilities. There are approximately 18.5 million disabled persons in India (Annual Report, 2003-2004 ministry of social justice and employment, Govt. of India)

Promotion of mental health in rural areas :-

Mental health promotion requires multi-sectoral action, involving a number of Govt. sectors and non-Govt. or community based organizations. The focus should be on promoting mental health throughout the lifespan to ensure a healthy start in life for rural people and to prevent mental disorders in adulthood and old age. The following steps may be taken to promote and protect mental health in rural areas.

Empower mental health service users and families :-

Governments should support the creation and / or strengthening of mental health service user and families organizations in rural areas. Such groups are in the best position to highlight problems, specify their needs and help find solutions to improving mental health in countries and have a crucial role to play in the design and implementation of policies, plans, laws and services.

Change attitudes and raise awareness :-

Ministers of health, mental health, service user and family groups, health professionals, NGO's academic institutions, professional organizations and other stakeholders should unify their efforts in educating and changing public attitudes towards mental illness and in advocating for the rights of people with mental disorders.

Improve human rights in mental health facilities :-

Mechanisms to monitor human right should be established to protect against inhuman and degrading treatment, poor living conditions and inappropriate and arbitrary involuntary admission and treatment. People should also have access to complaints mechanisms in cases of human rights violations.

v Adopt policies, laws and services that promote human rights :-

Countries should put in place mental health policies, laws and services that promote the rights of people with mental disorders, empower them to make choices about their lives, provide them with legal protections and ensure their full integration and participation into the rural community.

The mentally ill, in the rural areas suffer in silence due to problems of transport cost of treatment, lack of awareness of the available help and wrong beliefs in supernatural causation.

Mental depression in rural areas :-

Everyone feels mentally depressed at sometime in their life for any number of reasons. An event like the end of a relationship gives everyone feeling of sadness and loss, but these subside over time and normally prevails again. In the case of clinical depression, the feelings are generally more intense or of much longer duration or both. Along with feeling of sadness, depression also causes a number of physical symptoms, the most obvious being fatigue through which the problem is magnified.

Poverty and social isolation are associated with increased risk of psychiatric problems in general. The relationship between stressful life events and social support has been a matter of debate, the lack of social support may increase the likelihood that life stress will lead to depression or the absence of social support may constitute a form of strain that leads to depression directly. (Monroe 2007).

Influencing factors on the mental health of rural people :-

- The environmental factors
- Social problems
- The family
- The physical health
- The cultural factors
- The genetic factors
- Lack of access to resources

NEED FOR PROBLEM SOLVING TREATMENT IN RURAL AREAS :-

Problem solving treatment is a brief psychological treatment that has been adapted and developed for particular use in primary health centers. The treatment takes a psychological approach to the management of psychological disorders. The theoretical assumptions underpinning problem solving is that the psychological symptoms of depression and anxiety are often caused by practical problems people face in rural areas in their everyday life. Problem solving treatment is therefore viewed by the patients as a sensible and appropriate intervention. Problem solving treatment is focusing on current difficulties and setting future goals. It does not dwell on past relationships and past mistakes. There is good evidence to support the use of problem solving in treatment of patients with depression. Emotional disorders, and

after episodes of deliberate self-harm problem solving has been developed as a brief. Feasible, psychological treatment that can be delivered by non-specialist social workers. It also increases patient understanding and ability, teaches patients how to solve the problem. Produces more positive experiences (Laurence 2005).

UGGESTIONS FOR MENTAL HYGIENE :-

Face troubles, worries and fears, handle them and turn attention to more pleasant things.
Find desirable ways to express disturbing impulses and emotions rather than suppress them.
Avoid strain, develop serenity, relax all muscles that are not necessary for the task at hand.
Realize that time heals many wounds, be patient and hopeful.
Be courageous in crises.

ROLE OF COMMUNITY :-

The most significant challenge regarding mental health care in rural India is the lack of health care providers and services. In recent years, health policy experts and health care providers have begun to encourage closer integration of mental or rather, behavioral health and primary care services for rural areas. It is assumed that integration will increase access to mental health care services and increase quality of care through enhanced co-ordination of services. In rural areas, where behavioral health workers and primary care givers are in short supply, integration is vitally important. Integration of these services is an effective strategy for maximizing the use of scarce rural health care resources and improving the quality of care for both behavioral health and primary care patients. The prevalent social stigma that prevents many rural people from obtaining needed services of the mental health care centres should be addressed and mental hygiene encouraged.

CHALLENGES IN RURAL AREAS :-

For rural people mental health awareness still remains remote and inaccessible because of socio-cultural, economic traditions and practices. The misconceptions, myths and cultural taboos associated with mental illness may be the most significant barriers that keep persons with mental disorders from seeking and receiving treatment in rural areas. Inadequate knowledge about mental illness even in the medical profession fear of and prejudice towards those with mental illness and hesitation on the part of people with mental illness to get treatment create an atmosphere of disgrace and shame in some rural communities. This stigma combined with other challenges can cause the mental health care seeker to feel insecure.

EFFECTIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS :-

Guidance of social workers and other important professionals.
Access to mental health and other helping professionals.
Consistent expectations and support.
Love, help and encouragement of family and friends.
Channelization of stress into constructive avenues should be target to reduce stress. Social workers and other helping professionals support rural people in their efforts to achieve their best.

GEOGRAPHICAL EFFECTS :-

Rural communities are located in the remote areas. Psychiatric morbidity across rural and urban areas specific clusters of high levels of specific disorder have been described have been described. The prevalence of schizophrenia specific areas of very high and very low prevalence have been described throughout the world.

TASK OF SOCIAL WORKERS :-

Professional social workers have to play a major role by organizing periodic awareness programmes and health education programs. More number of social workers with mental health knowledge should come forward to work in rural areas. At present, more than 70 percent of the educated social workers are working in urban areas. Early intervention by social workers through case work, group work,

community work and social research coupled with proper guidance given by them will help the rural people to come out of their depression and mental health problems.

Social workers should work with rural people, educators and other mental health services providers to help rural people to develop residence, competence and treat people having mental health problems in the following ways.

- Help rural people to develop skills to solve conflicts and problems independently.
- Teach people social skills, self management and coping strategies.
- Prevent/intervene early to minimize the occurrence of mental health problems.
- Work with rural people to create positive environments.
- Increase awareness of mental health stressors and strategies to cope and trained people.
- Screen for mental health and learning problems.
- Persistent help towards their psycho-social development.
- Proper guidance may be provided to rural people.
- Help people deal with crisis and loss.
- Work directly with people to address barriers.
- Educates the community, other professionals about preventive aspects and promotion of mental health.
- Trains community leaders and other care givers.

INITIATIVE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA :-

Government of India has executed mental health care through national mental health program (NMHP-1982). District mental health program, district hospital psychiatric units (DHPUS) and general hospital psychiatric units (GHPUS) some of the initiatives are.

With active involvement of department of health and family welfare. The national rural health mission (NRHM) under the universal health program was formulated to address the needs of India's rural population. Union health and family welfare minister Shri. Ghulam Nabi Azad has made the following offer for medicos, do a one year rural stint, get 10% marks in the national medical entrance exam for post graduate courses, do a two year stint, get 20% marks and three years gets 30% marks (To I-2009).

CONCLUSION :-

Mental health care in rural areas suggests that there is a big. Scope for organizing basic services. People in rural areas generally show greater community acceptance of mentally ill. The mental health programmes need to be tailor made rather than ready made so as to cater to the needs of the rural community. Rural family often provides a major portion of the care for mentally ill patients, hence organizing the family self help group, support groups, skill training and networking needs to be started and strengthened that would disseminate knowledge and thereby pave way for the attitudinal changes.

Rural community development programs and primary health centres should co-ordinate with the community to provide access to mental health services. The study of rural mental health is not only a new trend of thought but an essential social paradigm.

Rural mental health focuses on helping the individual, the family and the rural community to interact in more adaptive ways so that mental health is maintained. All mental health professionals such as the psychiatric social workers, psychiatrist and clinical psychologist need to work in a multidisciplinary team approach towards promoting rural mental health through practice measures and team effort.

Devoted social workers in community is very much essential for promoting better mental among rural people. The development of rural mental health services has been linked with general health services and primary health care. A number of non governmental organizations have also initiated activities related to rehabilitation programmes, human right of mentally ill people.

Despite all these efforts and progress, a lot has still to be done towards all aspects of mental health care in India in respect of training, research and provision of clinical services to promote mental health in all sections of society. Educational initiative that provides evidence based information has reduced stigma to some extent. The root cause of the problems can be solved only by social worker and other helping professionals help.

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