

The Neurosurgical Unit

It is indeed encouraging to know that His Majesty's Government of Nepal has finally decided to start a Neurosurgical unit in Bir Hospital. Establishment of new subspecialities to deliver specialised curative services alongwith expansion of promotive and preventive measures seems a logical approach of providing efficient health care to the people.

Since we have to meet the diverse health problems with limited resources, health planners have to give priorities to the most fundamental health problems that the majority of the population is affected with. Thus much stress has been given in the past to expand the peripheral network of Health Posts in order to deliver 'Comprehensive Health Care' to the community. But a responsible government cannot ignore the health problem of even a minor fraction of the population; because the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being. In this context, the government cannot disregard their responsibility of providing adequate curative and rehabilitative service to the poor victims affected with neurosurgical maladies. Referral of these patients, requiring specialized medical care to other countries for treatment, may not tax anything directly on the national budget; but with the majority of the population below the poverty line how many Nepalese can afford to go abroad for medical treatment ?

Thus the commitment of the Department of Health to start a Neurosurgical Unit in Bir Hospital, it appears, heralds the opening of few other subspecialities in the field of medicine to meet the total health need of the Nepalese within the country itself. This decision is applauded all the more because it has come out in such a time when we have just come to know that the Institute of Medicine does not have any plan of having the Neurosurgical Unit in its new teaching hospital going to be constructed by the Japanese.

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