

## ABSTRACT

The present study entitled "Involvement of Traditional Medical Practitioners (TMPP) in Primary Health Care (PHC)" was carried out in the Kegalle District of Sabaragamuwa Province, Sri Lanka during 1987/1988.

The general objective of the study was to understand the profile of TMPP in Kegalle District, so as to explore the feasibility of promoting their collaboration and active participation in the delivery of health services with special reference to PHC.

The study was designed in two phases.

Phase 1:- A complete survey was carried out in the district to enumerate all health care providers in the private sector. In this study some 102 Registered Diploma holders (RD), 228 Registered Traditional practitioners (RT), 779 Non Registered Traditional practitioners (NRT), 144 Traditional birth attendants, 489 Astrologers and 690 Faith healers (Spiritual healers) were enumerated.

Phase 2:- Three categories of TMPP (RD, RT and NRT) were selected for the present study. Three independent samples were drawn from each category and interviewed by the researcher and trained health workers using a structured pre-coded questionnaire.

Of the 1110 TMPP 9.2%, 20.62% and 70.18% belonged to RD, RT and NRT categories respectively. The ratio of three categories in the study population can be expressed as 1 RD: 2 RT: 7 NRT. The TMPP were mainly elderly Sinhalese Buddhists

with a high literacy level. About 80% were males.

The registered diploma group has shown a higher level of knowledge, attitude and practices pertaining to PHC compared to the other two groups. Their practice of medicine is more professionalized and more or less similar to that of western practitioners.

The RT and NRT practitioners were more elderly community leaders practicing mainly at their residence, usually for more than 20 years in the community. Some 80% of NRT group practiced medicine as a secondary (part time) occupation. These two categories have also fulfilled most of the requirements to be PHC workers.

All three categories have shown an equal interest in participating in the PHC programme of the Ministry of Health and expressed their willingness to participate in a proposed training on PHC.

A scoring system was developed to identify the important categories of TMPP who could be used in PHC. Mean scores for RD, RT and NRT categories were 73.13%, 62.14% and 54.02% respectively.

From the angle of their attitudes towards PHC the results of this study indicate that the RD category has more favourable attitudes towards PHC. However, as far as their community membership and direct involvement in community activities are concerned the RT and NRT categories appear more appropriate to be mobilized in PHC efforts.