

IDEA OF 'DOOR-STEP DOCTOR' FOR THE NEW AGE

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"The door-step doctor will revolutionise modern medicine and will inject an infectious consciousness of change among the populace. The will to get here is what visionary governance and commerce must work to achieve."

I grew up studying medicine where patients were protected in the hospital by an army of doctors, nurses and physicians-in-training. The poor would be examined time and again as teaching hospitals have a mandate to do so, subject to patient consent needless to say. But this did not fascinate me. Putting myself in their shoes, I came to believe that, it is not how medicine should be taught. Just because someone is poor cannot be a reason to be exposed to about 10-15 physicians-in-training during teaching sessions. The ethical considerations of healthcare is a different subject matter altogether.

But what we need to think through is that patients who arrive at the hospital, come for curative treatment and are often in pain, with multiple problems, scared, worried and not sure what their tomorrow holds. Worst still, the hospital is not a place where they can find their comfort zone, their peace.

It is here that pharmaceutical companies, corporate social responsibility partners, legislative leaders must begin to bring healthcare to the homes. When a door-step doctor is put in place, s/he not just understands medicine through the lens of symptoms and signs, but also rises to build a grass-root healthcare system which factors in social determinants of health. Healthcare today and for the ages must be viewed as a social collective, not through battery of tests and umpteen number of referrals

led by market driven interest. The door-step doctor can be the health champion of the region, capture reports for discussion on the click of a WhatsApp Messenger and seek guidance from the referral hospital. However, when companies engaging in CSR venture into this model, they must not bargain and compromise cost to support initiatives of this nature. The door-step doctor need not be government driven, it can be the manifestation of a responsible society who become the end user for the same.

It takes effort, sweat, patience and toil to build power from below and the best source of building power from below is to empower community healthcare by providing door-step doctors.

It is not easy to practice medicine with limited resources and not everyone can even venture to do this. It is here that government departments, multi-national companies, public sector units, visionary pharmaceuticals must honestly think through of how they wish to commit to the cause, greater than the sum of individual equations and limited narratives. Whether it is a fulltime employee or a part - time employee, a flexible work pattern will be the final victory if healthcare should improve in low and middle income worlds.

The door-step doctor can be the local physician, can be the counsellor and the go-to person for any suggestion and must be the public private link in the chain of healthcare. Health systems ought to evolve aided by field based philanthropy, social responsibility beyond the general nature of publicity under the garb of commitment and work along with faith based coalition in ensuring humanity wins at large.

We do not need to see healthcare through statistical observations, is something I have always believed in. Grandmothers' common sense with 21st century technology will put in perspective what we desire. Perhaps, we can begin to prepare and envision this new reality for our brothers and sisters the world over.

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