PREFACE

Studying the dynamics of change and the determinant factors has been of interest to Anthropologists. But the role of communication in health management, especially in the chronic diseases with psychosocial implications, has gained its importance over the past one and a half-decade, as a potential field of research for the students who pursue Medical Anthropology. There is also a growing realization among the Medical Fraternity in the country, about the importance of behavioural inputs while treating chronic illnesses.

Leprosy is one such chronic illness, notoriously known for creating psychological trauma right from the disclosure of diagnosis. Conventionally, services of individualized need-based formal communication that are often identified as counselling, are felt necessary and are provided to a few specific patients with manifested abnormalities requiring greater skills of curative treatment for correction. And a large number of other patients with pathogenic symptoms are treated either through communicating a standardized common, package of information informally under the garb of health education, or totally left to the influence of indigenous communication channels. Majority of such patients develops abnormal and non-complying behaviour that could have been avoided with a little effort of individualized and preventive nature.

While, feasibility of incorporating individualized need-based communication inputs in the process of routine treatment for chronic illnesses remains as a subject for discussion, the present study is an attempt to appreciate the process of communication between the counsellor and the patients employing Anthropological technique of observation and to gauge the relative impact of individualized need based formal communication and non formal communication on the adjustment patterns of leprosy patients during their treatment.

M. S. RAJU