Jamkhed Dr. Rajanikant Arole

Magsaysay awardee Dr Rajanikant Arole, who pioneered the 'Jamkhed Model' of health system, was 77. Dr Arole had launched a rural health initiative in 1970-71 in the drought-prone Ahmednagar district along with his wife Dr Mabelle Arole.

Dr Arole was born in September 18th, 1934, at Rahuri in Ahmednagar district and he died in May 25th, 2011. Raj Arole did his BSc in 1954 from Wilson College in Bombay and later got his MBBS degree in 1959 from CMC, Vellore. He went to learn higher skills in the US, working at Cleveland Clinic and John Hopkins two of the most renowned programs before returning to India in 1970. Arole came back to India in 1970.

He chose to practice in Jamkhed in Ahmednagar district in 1970, he had prepared meticulously and thoroughly conducted a research on the communities there. He had joined a small voluntary hospital in Maharashtra before going to US for further studies.

He selected a region Jamkhed where the villager's existence was grim and seemingly hopeless. Leprosy and tuberculosis were prevalent, although often unreported. Infant mortality ranged between 50 and 80 per 1,000 live births. Malnutrition, especially among children under five years of age, was widely reported that time. Gastrointestinal diseases were prevalent owing to the consumption of contaminated water taken from streams and ponds.

The simple curative medical practice begun by the Aroles in a small lent cowshed in Jamkhed won them acceptance by community leaders there. Dr. Raj Arole, says that village health workers, often illiterate older women, were nominated and trained to give simple treatment and bring serious cases to a mobile medical team weekly. "Their work in rural health formed the basis of today's National Rural Health Mission,".

Seeking to reach the goal of health for all, General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) in partnership with the Council of Evangelical Methodist Churches in Latin America and the Caribbean (CIEMAL) and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and other countries in Africa and Asia; and with Dr. Rajanikant Arole of India--participates in a program of assessment, training, and implementation in several countries around the world. This program prepares lay and professional health promoters from both rural and urban areas.

According to Dr. Raj Arole, three principles serve as the basis for the Comprehensive Community based Primary Health Care (CCPHC) programs.:

- **The first principle is 'Equity':** The program must reach everyone, including the poorest of the poor.
- **The second principle is 'Integration':** Not only curative and preventive medicine but medical attention must be integrated with other factors that enhance life and health, such as agriculture, education, and a safe water supply.
- **The third principle is 'Empowerment':** Poor people who receive knowledge, Information and models of organizing realize that they have the power to transform their own reality.

With these principles in mind, a CCPHC promoter needs to go to a community with humility, honesty, boldness, and faith. The health promoter must go to the people, live with them, learn with them, love them, begin with what they know, and build with what they already possess. Then they will be able to say: "We achieved it and we'll work hard to sustain it and improve it.

"Dr Arole enabled the promotion of preventive community-based health care and also made sure that communities have access to quality curative care through hospital, clinic, or health post, as appropriate. There is no either/or when it comes to institutional and community-based health care. Both are important and should be utilized in ways appropriate to the needs of the community, as determined by community members. According to Dr. Raj Arole, "Community health is a spiritual thing." One of the health workers at Jamkhed summed up the impact of CCPHC training in her life in these words: "As I change, I change the world around me."

Dr Raj Arole was the proud recipient of ‘Ramon Magsaysay’ award in 1979, the award known as Noble of Asia region for his remarkable contribution in the field of Health sector. He was honored with ‘Padma Bhushan’ in 1990 and ‘Mother Teresa International’ award in 2005. Despite suffering ill health for a long time, Dr Raj Arole continued with his social work till his last breath. He was involved in the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and also served in the Planning Commission of India. In memory of his wife Dr. Mabelle Arole who died in 1999, a Fellowship named after her was founded in 2001. The Fellowship is given annually to a recent college graduate to study community-based primary health care, and to live and learn in Jamkhed for a year to imbibe Dr. Mabelle wisdom and healing spirit.

Dr Raj Arole efforts to combine community development with a comprehensive approach to rural health care using the ‘Jamkhed model’ have been recognized by numerous International Organizations. He worked Health Project in Jamkhed among the rural poor and marginalized for over 40 years. His mission is to provide basic healthcare to the rural poor by providing health training to downtrodden and illiterate women. The 'Jamkhed Model' won him wide acclaim and was emulated in other countries as well, because of his yeoman services.

*Information till August-2011*