

The Place of Church-Related Schools of Nursing in the Health Care system of India—an abstract

Ruth May Harner*

This study has been done at a time which has been termed a "crossroads" for nursing in India, and is one of crisis in financial support and availability of sufficient qualified teachers for Church-related schools of nursing in the country. Three purposes were: to help provide a basis for increased understanding of influences affecting development and changing patterns in nursing; to select and describe significant societal factors and forces which are important in India; and to describe schools of nursing related to Christian mission hospitals.

The method used was that of an area study in Comparative Education. Nursing education systems in India have been described, especially in regard to Church-related schools and their contributions. A historical approach was used to discover factors in society which have been influential in the past; and some of the important and complex relationships between nursing and Indian society have been analysed hoping to help the profession make intelligent and needed reforms in the nursing curriculum so it will be more responsive to present health needs of the nation.

A model which may be used as a guide to curriculum development was devised to indicate relationships between societal determinants and nursing education as it has developed in India. The influence of these factors differs in various societies, and therefore they have to be considered in each situation if nursing is to help meet development needs in the health field. Factors

of particular importance were found to be Hindu, Muslim and Christian beliefs and values as they affected social structures; the family; the position and status of women, their education, and types of occupation they were permitted to follow; health problems aggravated by socio-religious beliefs, customs, superstition and ignorance; the political system, its method of organizing health services and delivery system for India, as well as the place given to health in the Five Year plans; and the depending economic crisis due to drought, high costs of oil and energy, inflation and the complexities involved in provision of social justice for an ever-increasing population.

Church-related schools of nursing made important contributions to both nursing and nursing education in India through early establishment of organised training programmes and examinations preceding the formation of State Nursing Councils; through a philosophy of social service and concern for individual's welfare; through leadership development, and preparation of nurses whose quality is widely recognised. Quantitatively, these schools constitute about a third of the general nursing, midwifery and post-basic diploma programmes and the Christian nursing college has helped to provide a model for nursing degree programmes. Statistical indicators show these schools to be well above average in administration and finance, faculty qualifications and participation, selection of students and in meeting Indian Nursing Council requirements in regard to teaching facilities and curriculum. Christian^a nursing schools and organisations have been outstanding in planning of inno-

vative and challenging experimental programmes for improving nursing education. In addition to problems due to the changing patterns and philosophy of Christian missions the Church-related schools show weakness in curriculum preparing nurse for community-oriented nursing services, especially in rural health. Present trends in Indian society, in political goals for social justice, and increasing involvement of churches in ecumenical, innovative, demonstrative projects in delivery of basic health care to neglected populations through teams of health professionals and auxiliaries make it imperative that nurse educators implement curriculum revisions designed to prepare nurses to take an active and worthy part in making the health services tools in the process of human development.

The TNAI Executive & Council Meetings

SATURDAY—OCTOBER 25, 1975

9 a.m. Executive Committee meeting

SUNDAY—OCTOBER 26.

2 to 6 p.m. Council Meeting

MONDAY—OCTOBER 27.

8 to 9 a.m. SNA Executive Committee meeting

9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Council Meeting

5 to 6 p.m. Executive Committee meeting

* Miss Harner is working with Voluntary Health Association of India as Nursing Education Consultant.