

Part one of the report examines professions in general and the present status and future prospects of nursing among the professions.

ABSTRACT

Social change in the last century has created growing interest in the study of occupations and their quest for professional status. The nursing occupation is a prototype of those engaged in this struggle for upgrading of rank and status in the occupational hierarchy. Sociologists interested in this broad area of study, the Sociology of Work, have found the hospital setting a unique laboratory for the study of the complexes of social relationships involved in the professionalization process.

This is an exploratory study of two Nursing Schools in Kingston, Jamaica. The general aim was to understand the organizations of these schools and the processes at work in the transformation of the lay individual into a professional person. It was assumed that too little was known of these organizations to attempt a priori the setting up of specific hypotheses for testing, or to examine relationships between predetermined variables.

The fieldwork was done in the only two nursing schools in Jamaica which offer general nursing courses, one attached to a Teaching Hospital, University Hospital of the West Indies, and the other attached to the Government Hospital in Kingston.

The study is based on the combined use of observation, interviewing and documentation. The report falls naturally into two parts - the first mainly descriptive and qualitative based on materials from documentation and on the writer's participant observation. The second, mainly analytic and quantitative is based primarily on data derived from structured interviews with a sample of nursing students from both schools.

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CHAPTER I

Then it traces historically the interplay of social and cultural features of Jamaican society as they have shaped the organizational contours of Jamaica's nursing service. This section receives fairly detailed treatment because of its value as a broad socio-cultural background for the rest of the study, and its historical significance to the understanding of nursing in Jamaica today. Furthermore, the relative scarcity of any collective historical report on nursing in Jamaica, makes this exercise useful in terms of its value as a source of reference material.

Part two includes analysis of the student's perception of occupational roles and self-image. It reviews a number of role relationships in which the student is involved, and the implications of such relationships for her professional socialization.

The report sometimes suggests or implies certain policy guidelines relevant to the field of nursing, though it has not been possible to address all of the important problems and issues that confront contemporary nursing.