

Chapter 11

Portrayal of Female Nurses in Indian Cinema

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ABSTRACT

Hollywood and film industries in India continue to portray the character of female nurses, which remains a debatable topic from time to time. When it comes to the portrayal of female nurses in Indian films, it creates a significant amount of discussion. Since the gender issue in India is a unique issue in India, understanding the representation of female nurses in films is of paramount importance. Mostly, the characters of female nurses are represented in a bad light. Sometimes their characters are comically or sexually depicted. Films in India have a more significant influence on society and vice versa. Moreover, the Indian film industry has its own identity. The way the films depict the characters of nurses raises ample issues in the nursing profession as well as in public. Nurses wonder why writers, journalists, producers, directors, etc. do not have an accurate image of the nursing profession. This chapter attempts to understand the characters of female nurses in Indian films.

INTRODUCTION

Nursing considered to be a noble profession. It is a profession just like engineers, doctors, IT etc. It is one of the most essential and in-demand jobs globally. Nurses render health care services to promote health, thwart diseases and help ill patients irrespective of showing favours on caste, creed, colour, religion and region (Chitty & Black, 2005). Nurses are the advocates and health promoters for patients, families and communities. They provide direct patient care by implementing the systematic assessment of patient symptoms, needs and provide the treatment services to the patients as per the physician's prescription (Weis & Schank, 2009). Nurses work for patients with a lot of dedication, compassion, and continually evolved to work and address the needs of the public 24/7.

Nurses can tag in both art and science; a heart and a mind (Shahriar, Mohammad, Abbaszadeh, Bahrami & Fooladi, 2012). The nursing profession provides clear educational programmes, which has three and a half years of diploma programmes, four years of graduate degree programmes and two years of

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master degree programmes. All these years, students have to study and learn more than 40 subjects with a broad range of theoretical and clinical practice in the hospitals, almost equal to an MBBS doctor degree. They have to put up an ample of substantial efforts to pass the exams in these years (Astorino, 2006).

In the earlier era, before the seventeenth century, a formal nursing profession was not established in India. A *dai*/birth attendant was usually present in the villages to deliver mother and child care services. The modern nursing profession was introduced by military nursing in the seventeenth century. Later St George had started a hospital in Madras with nursing courses. In the year 1708, Fort William hospital has come up in Calcutta, which has mainly focused on rendering maternity services. Later on Civil hospital in Amritsar CMC, Ludhiana had started the nursing education (Nightingale, 1992).

Nursing a Profession

The nursing profession called a noble profession because nurses deliver health care services to the patients in a whole society rendering unconditional love, compassion and enthusiasm. They are committed to the profession by safeguarding the practices as per the guidelines given by the statutory bodies such as the Indian Nursing Council. The highest essential goals of nurses are to take care of the people who require health care services (O'Brien, Mooney & Glacken, 2008).

Nursing courses considered to be the best course for people who choose to serve sick and poor humanity. If people are compassionate towards this profession, they will gain immense will -power and spiritual control by serving diseased, sick and ill patients. It is one of the main reasons for nurses to work for long hours. Even in a stressful environment, they work joyfully. Nurses can manage different phenomenon in various situations and show a positive attitude to adopt the environment, people or technology efficiently (Mooney & Glacken, 2008).

Globally nursing profession has a high demand. This has coupled with the requirement of better facilities and services by clients for nurses in the health care system. In addition to this, the rapidly growing population also is one of the reasons to increase the demand for nurses across the globe. However, there is a significant shortage of nurses across the world for nurses. One of the significant reasons is fewer takers for the nursing course. In public, the nursing profession does not have an identical image. Majority of nurses come for this profession after losing chances for other classes such as medical, dental etc. The migration of nurses from India to other countries has increased for four decades, especially from south India, as there is a high demand for highly skilled nurses abroad. These days European countries are attracting nurses providing with better payment and the provision of better living conditions (Allan & Aldebron, 2008).

OPINION ON NURSING PROFESSION

Florence nightingale saw a nursing career as an independent profession. She intended that the nursing profession should not be the subordinate to any other jobs like the medical profession. However, the medical profession has strongly dominated the nursing profession. As a result, it had strongly impacted the image and the position of nurses in the health care delivery system. The media has taken advantage of projecting the nurses in such a way that nursing work is not an officially demanded profession. The nurses are servants to the doctors. It has created an immense wicked impact in the view of the public about how nurses seem to be viewed womanly and caring but not as an independent health care provider.

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