

CHILD WELFARE PROGRAMME IN COLONIAL MYSORE

Dr. THRIVENI

MAHARAJAS COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF MYSORE, MYSORE
Email: thriveniurs@gmail.com

Abstract- Princely state has adapted some scientific measures to provide female medical aid and for improving the health of babies most effectively serving individual children in order to raise the level of community health. The high rate of infant mortality exists in the state due to the shortage of child welfare activities and other medical facilities.

I. INTRODUCTION

The princely state of Mysore was one among six hundred and forty eight native states which were indirectly controlled by the British Paramount power in India.

The research article focuses on the welfare measures in Infant Health in Princely State of Mysore from 1881 to 1947. This is the period of conservation, preservation and creativeness with thrust on Public welfare. The Mysore rulers were farsighted, responsible and intellectual; their liberal and able administration brought tremendous welfare which consequently made Mysore a successful State in imperial India.

“Bestow blessings on those little, innocent lives bloomed on earth, who have brought the message of joy from heavenly garden”. Rabindranath Tagore.

National policy for the welfare of children, the nation’s children are a supremely important asset, their nurture and solicitude are our responsibility. Every nation, developed or developing links its future with the status of the child. Childhood holds the potential and also sets the limit to the future development of the society and the children are the greatest gift to the humanity.

The high rate of infant mortality due to the shortage of maternity and child welfare centre and other medical facilities besides deeply sunk in poverty it was impossible to take adequate care and protection of the children by means of feeding, nursing and medical assistance, the bad housing conditions in sanitary environments also contribute to increase in the death rate. There was high mortality among infants under one year of age in improving the health of Babies, to provide female medical aid in the state has received the attention of the government at the commencement of the 20th century.

Philanthropy, Former Dewan, M. Kantharaj urs, donated Rs. 1, 20,000\ to establish a Trust in the name of his mother Gunamba. The Gunamba Maternity and child welfare trust, which was established on 21st may 1924, The Trust started working in the building of Ayurvedic hospital under the officers of Dr. A. Hardi Bank and Mathura boi. A committee was also formed by His. Highness, and according to their

recommendations Medical investigation of natal treatment was started by Doctors. House to house survey was conducted and two centers were opened at Mysore. Nutritious food and milk were provided freely, made arrangements to give medical education through magic lantern slides and lectures. The trust was consisting the staff of 3 trained midwives, 2 nurses and 2 assistant dais with medical kit and other equipment of weighing mission bathing tub, milk bowls, and medicine kit. Expenditure of the trust was 1,500/ month.¹

Gunamba Maternity and child welfare center operating through trained intelligence and scientific methods, most effectively serving individual children in raising the level of community health appreciated by Dr. Fredrick Robinson, the well-known American Educationist, President of the collage of the city of New York in visitors Book. Mr. Allen Lane, the famous London Publisher wrote, I can only say that I honestly congratulate all concerned in this magnificent work.² A voluntary organization Red Cross Society joined their support in 1925, under the guidance of Sir Charles Todhunter, private secretary to the Maharaja was specially note worthy in combating the ignorance which is responsible for so much suffering and in establishing the maternity homes and child welfare centers and it organized Baby week in Jan 1925 for 5 days and then extended its activities to all over the state.³

The civic and social progress association was established in the year 1930, it started maintains a Milk center at Ganigarpet in Bangalore city to which the municipality contributed a sum of Rs. 30 per mensem. A crèche opened by the maternity and child welfare association near the Binny Mills, and 4 child welfare centers were started working in Kolar Gold Field area.⁴

Milk Centers: These centers were established under supervision of medical officer of Health department in 1930. The essential provision for center was a well-equipped lady health visitor, who was assisted by a trained Dai. The center consisted of a small dispensary, lady health visitor, mid wife, and a trained Dai in close proximity to the welfare center with a large compound as play ground for the children. A lady health visitor and midwife annually attended to about 200 to 240 births, 200 infants and

¹ Maramath Dpt file no B-13 of 1915, p. 162. Divisional Archives Mysore.

² Mysore Information Bulletin, Mythic Society, vol-IV, Bangalore.

³ Shamrao M. Modern Mysore. P-421 & 422.

⁴ Mysore Administration Report 1930, P. 6.

about 600 to 700 pre school children. A midwife should have to attend to 100 births. A lady superintendent was supposed to spare some time to assist the lady health visitor in her work.⁵

A visiting lady medical officer attends the centers once or twice in a week. She was a specialist in diseases of women and children besides taking care of antenatal and baby clinics. One or two trained dais and mid wives were attached to the center to render assistance. Specialist Doctors also attend the center once or twice a fortnight to provide medical and hygienic advice to the mothers and were persuaded to bring their children to the centers for periodical check up. Leaflets in different languages distributed to give instructions regarding maternity and child welfare work, milk was supplied free of cost to children.⁶

Maternity and child welfare work advanced in the year 1930, Annual baby shows were held and about 7-8000 babies came under expert scrutiny of doctors. A baby and Health week celebrations were held in 49 places.⁷ A Successful Health and Baby week was organized in the year 1932 Mysore, which secured a certificate of Merit from the "All Empire Baby week committee London". Mysore state got 2nd best in the world. Two more maternity and child welfare centers, a toddler's center in Gajasala and a Crèche in the Krishna Rajendra Mills were opened. The civic and social progress Association at Mysore and Bangalore was established to maintain child-welfare and milk centers.⁸

The Gunamba maternity and child welfare trust maintaining 5 milk centers and one crèche. 32,332 babies availed the humanitarian service of the trust. Baby clinics were running by the Wesleyan mission in Shimoga, in Bangalore by the Mahila Seva Samaja and a child welfare center by social welfare committee in the Military area at Hebbal.⁹

At Dasara session of the representative assembly held in 1934, the Dewan specially called attention to the great need for extending medical aid to women and children. He pointed out that the deaths from plague; Cholera and smallpox put together were less than 1/3 of the deaths of women in child – birth and of children in the first two years of their life. The Government extended the employment of midwives and also made special arrangements for appointment of lady doctors to extend their activities by visiting places within reach from their head quarters. All empire competition and Baby week shows begun and held, Mysore was ranked in the 2nd, 1st and 3rd places respectively in the year 1932, 1933 and 1934.

The Vani Vilas shield for the Best Baby week campaign in 1935 was awarded to Mandya branch of the Red Cross society, 35 maternities and child welfare organizations existed in the year 1935.¹⁰ Baby and health week celebration were held throughout the state the Mysore state secured the 3rd place in imperial Baby week challenge shield competition and the 2nd place in the Vani

Vilas shield for the best Baby week campaign in 1934 was awarded to French Rocks. There were 17 maternity & child welfare organizations working in the state. 10 in Bangalore district, 5 in the Mysore district and one among these in the Shimoga district and one in the Tumkur district The Gunamba Maternity and Child Welfare Trust maintained 6 centers, two nursery schools & a crèche at the Sri Krishnarajendra Mills.

In order to organize maternity and child welfare work under the department of Health, Dr. Mrs. Erika Deussen Rosenthal, M.D. was appointed towards the close of the year as organizer of Maternity & child welfare work in the state.¹¹

The Indian Red Cross Society of Mysore Branch Started 26 new branches in the state making a total of 43 branches of maternity and child welfare centers. A Doctor from Mysore state represented the 16th International Red Cross conference held in London. A medical officer from the Gunamba maternity and child welfare trust Mysore was the recipient of the Carlo Forlanini Institute scholarship of Rome for a course of study in the treatment and care of Tuberculosis.¹²

Anti natal Clinics: In 1938 there were 43 anti-natal clinics were working, of which 20 were in rural areas. The Government appointed a whole time officer to organize & co-ordinate the maternally & child welfare Movement.¹³

School Clinics: Medical Department made certain important suggestions such as the establishments of school clinic for the follow-up causes, provisions of midday meals or other nutritious feeds to the children. Provisions of better hygienic requirements & better seating arrangements in schools, introduction of systematic physical education, introduction of shorter periods, arrangements of periodical talks with the parents for improvements in the nutrition of care of the children, and supply of free cod-liver oil to deserving cases on the recommendation of the medical inspector of schools.¹⁴

Nursery Schools: Sir, Charles Todhunter who had established a child welfare centre, a nursery school and a solarium in each of the Mohallas of the city of Mysore.¹⁵ Nursery schools were established in Mysore, Bangalore and Chikballapure in the year 1938, and continued excellent work. The state had given high priority to improving child nutrition the children attending the solarium during the early morning hours were given graded sun bathes, milk, eggs, fruit Juice and cod-liver oil for their nourishment. They are weighed and examined every week for testing their progresses in health. 50 maternity homes were in existence in various parts of the state. The organizing secretary

⁵ Mysore Administration Report MAR 1930 p. 60

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Mysore Administration Report, 1932

⁹ Mysore Administration Report, 1933, P- 138

¹⁰ Mysore Administration Report, 1935

¹¹ Mysore Administration Report , 1934, P-135

¹² Mysore Administration Report, 1945, p. 69

¹³ Mysore Information Bulletin. Vol-III, Mythic Society, Bangalore.

¹⁴ Mysore Information Bulletin., 1939, vol-II, Bangalore.

¹⁵ Ibid

did five propaganda tours and delivered 25 lectures in different parts of the state.¹⁶

Bureau of maternity and child welfare: With a view to organize a regular and efficient service of child welfare throughout the state, a bureau of maternity and child welfare was opened in the year 1945. With the object of inspecting the working of Crèches, Nursery schools and Milk centers.¹⁷ In the year, 1946 (77) seventy-seven maternity homes were visited and their work were examined and the establishment of crèches was suggested. The established nursery schools were inspected and useful instructions were issued for the proper feeding of children and their periodical medical examination. Milk centers were started with free supply of milk to poor children in the sub-health units of (places called) Mandya, the Mahila Samajas of Chickballapur, Hassan and Shimoga. The scheme of 20 stipendiary pupil midwives, on a scholarship of Rs.15 each per month, for undergoing training in midwifery was sanctioned.¹⁸

II. CONCLUSION

The infant mortality rate was considerably reduced with the introduction of modern system of midwifery and rapid implementation of maternity and child welfare services. The child welfare centers had increased from 4 to 32 during 1881-1947 in Co-operation between Government, Local bodies & organization of Red Cross society.¹⁹ 54 hospitals among 419 Medical institutions were considered as Women's and children's, and 25, 94,251 children were treated in the hospitals of the state.²⁰

¹⁶ Mysore Administration Report, 1938, P- 151.

¹⁷ Mysore Administration Report 1944, p.147

¹⁸ Mysore Administration Report, 1947 p. 143

¹⁹ Mysore information Bulletin, May, 1940

²⁰ Mysore Administration Report, 1946, p. 147