

# Organization of Public Health Department in Princely Mysore

Dr. Thriveni

Maharaja's College, University of Mysore, Mysore, India

**Abstract-** There was a serious shortage of medical personal and medical facilities in India and especially in Mysore State. To provide more medical facilities both in rural and urban areas, certain efforts were made by the rulers of Mysore by establishing the Public Health Department which played an important role in disease prevention.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Public Health is a modern concept although it has roots in antiquity from the beginnings of human civilization. The Government establishments had the responsibility of developing Public health policies and programme in order to give some understanding to the causes of disease. The Modern era of public health began in 1880's around the world. Public health began to put more focus on epidemic diseases such as cholera, small pox and plague and other diseases like fever, dysentery, diarrhea, tuberculosis, etc., also take away a large toll.

In 1875 a severe famine struck the Mysore State and thousands lost their lives. Nearly 1/5 of the population succumbed to the famine and related epidemic diseases. The rulers of Mysore had modern views in redressing public grievances and were determined to protect their subjects. Many hospitals and dispensaries were established in different parts of the state to provide free health care to people.

During the year 1831, His Highness hospital at Mysore was only hospital was working. After the 1831 it was stationed at Bangalore and had charge of the Bowring civil Hospital, Leper Hospital and the Lunatic Asylum. There were only 3 Medical Administrative Divisions and a Civil Surgeon at the head quarters of each division, who was a Superintendent of the all-medical institutions within the limits of the division The Deputy Surgeon General was withdrawn and his duties were transferred to the Surgeon to the Mysore Commission.<sup>1</sup>

In 1834 Mark Cubbon was appointed as Chief Commissioner, the period of his administration was marked by steady progress on public health. The department of medical was established and started working with the establishments of dispensaries. The Department of Public Health was reconstituted during the year 1881 with Senior Surgeon as ex-officio Sanitary Commissioner and a full time Deputy Sanitary Commissioner to assist him in controlling & administrating the department. A definite scheme was laid down for a medical service composed of only qualified Indians in the year 1884. As per the scheme three competent European Medical Officers were The Medical

Department has been successively administered by Doctors J. Houston, J. Henderson and T.J. Mecgann. Senior Surgeon to the Mysore Government, the Durbar Surgeon at Mysore and Medical Officer of Public Health, the native Medical officers were appointed in three grades to the Hospitals. Surgeon of 3 grades on a pay of Rs.350, 450 and 500 respectively. And an Assistant surgeon of 3 grades on a pay Rs.100, 150 and 200.<sup>2</sup> In order to increase the efficiency of the department and to attract better talents a grade of Senior Hospital Assistant was created and in 1888, a grade of Sub- Assistant Surgeons of 3 classes on Rs.80, 100 and 120. In 1897, a grade of specialists for officers engaged on special lines of medical work was reorganized as oculist and chemical examiner.<sup>3</sup>

In the year 1919 the Government of Mysore appointed a committee, to reorganize the Medical department with Senior Surgeon as President, consisting of three official & 3 non-official members to study and purpose improvement in the working of Medical Health Department . In 1929, the Sanitary Department was separated from the Medical Department and was put under the control of full time Director of Health and a Board of Health was appointed to act as an advisory body on public health matters. The committee also made following recommendations,

1. Opening up of 110 new dispensaries within the next five years to be managed chiefly by Sub-Assistant Surgeons.
2. Posting of Sub-Assistant Surgeons in additions to Assistant Surgeons to certain important dispensaries.
3. Development of district hospitals so as to bring them up to date standard.
4. Construction of new and up to date building for Lunatic Asylum
5. Extension of medical relief through Unani and Ayurvedic dispensaries with properly qualified vaidyas from the Ayurvedic College, Mysore.
6. Providing each taluk head quarter with a female dispensary in charge of a Lady Assistant Surgeon and two midwives.
7. Opening of a maternity at each district headquarter with facilities for training dais in midwifery.
8. Construction of a building for the maternity hospital at Bangalore and provision for their facilities for training dais in midwifery.
9. Starting a medical faculty in Bangalore in connection with the Mysore University and establishing a medical

<sup>2</sup> Mysore Administrative Report, 1881-86, p. 114

<sup>3</sup> Hayavadhana Rao Mysore Gezetteer, Vol- IV, P- 422

<sup>1</sup> Hayavadhana Rao, Mysore Gezetteer, Vol-IV, P. 420 -21

college at an initial and recurring cost of Rs 8, 25,000 and Rs. 60,100 respectively.

10. Fixing a programme of expenditure for the next five years are as follows.

Sl. No.	Year	Amount
1.	First Year	9,27,012
2.	Second Year	9,55,094
3.	Third Year	10,18,086
4.	Fourth Year	10,71,048
5.	Fifth Year	11,34,064

11. Continuing the maintenance of district Head quarter Hospital from State fund.

12. Appointment in equal share of the maintenance cost of the dispensaries in rural areas, between the State and the District funds, the initial cost being met by State funds.

13. Raising the minimum pay of the Sub Assistant Surgeon to Rs. 50

14. Improvement of the pay and prospect of compounder.<sup>4</sup>

Government generally approved the above recommendations of the Committee and promised that the same could be given effect to as and when funds became available. In 1925 there were fifty Gazetted officers of whom as many as ten held professional qualifications obtained in British Universities and two had the benefit of foreign travel and study or working experience in different countries, while the rest were graduates in medicine and surgery of the Indian Universities. By the year 1928 there were 330 Surgeons 40 of them were private medical practitioners residing in Bangalore and Mysore cities.<sup>5</sup>

The Government Policy towards expansion of medical relief in the State, particularly in rural areas had led to a steady increase in the number of medical institutions in the State.<sup>6</sup> In the year 1925 there were 50, gazetted officers, 10 held professional qualifications obtained in British Universities, the rest were graduates in Medicine & surgery of the Indian Universities. Thirty-four (34) new dispensaries were opened during the year 1920-25. Action was taken towards improving district hospitals at Shimoga, Hassan and Chickmagalur. In 1928, 330 Surgeons were practicing in the State. There was a Surgeon for every 18000 people.<sup>7</sup> In the year 1930 under the advice of Rockefeller foundation, a scheme for the improvement of the Health Department a Board of Health was also created to advice the Government. Government introduced scheme for the improvement of the Health Department in the year 1930, under the advice of experts Dr. Sweet and Mr. J.J. Mioldazis, a Sanitary Engineers of the International Health Division of the Rockefeller Foundation of America. The Health Department was recognized and constituted important seven bureaus for carrying on the work of the Department. For the effective working of the Department a

number of Bureaus were set up with in the Department with specific functions, they are:-

- 1) Bureau of Administration
- 2) Bureau of Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases.
- 3) Laboratories
- 4) Vital Statistics
- 5) Health Education
- 6) Sanitary Engineering
- 7) Rural Health.<sup>8</sup>

(1) Bureau of Administration: This Bureau which was working under the supervision of the Director of Public Health administers the general direction, control, co-ordination, finance, supplies and the personnel requirements for the Department. The other members being the Senior Surgeon, the Chief Engineer, the Representatives of the Rockefeller Foundation, 2 qualified in health matters. One Member of the legislative council and one of Representative's Assemblies to be nominated by Government Administration.

(2) Bureau of Laboratories: This bureau was headed by a Deputy Director of Public Health. Manufacturers of plague, cholera and T.A.B. Vaccines and examines samples received for Medico-legal and chemical examinations.

(3) Bureau of Epidemiology: This bureau undertakes study and research regarding the major communicable diseases, directs and design programmes for the prevention and control of epidemic diseases and evaluates the results of field activities. This Bureau undertakes the training of the personnel technical equipment.

(4) Bureau of Malariology: This bureau undertakes institutional studies and research in malaria. It directs and supervises the execution of preventive and control measures of malaria. It also trains the personal and looks to regular supply of material and technical equipment. The bureau in close co-operation with the Rockefeller foundation of America had organized a Malaria Research Station at Sakaleshpur.

(5) Bureau of Vital Statistics: The bureau of vital statistics compiles the statistics like birth rate, death rate, and mortality rate in the State of Mysore, and preparation of annual reports and issue of birth and death certificates.

(6) Bureau of Health Education: The bureau educates the public on health matters through propaganda, publicity and exhibitions. The Government Policy towards expansion of medical relief in the State, particularly in rural areas had led to a steady increase in the number of medical institutions in the State. In the year 1936, a Health training-cum-Demonstration Centre was founded in Ramanagaram with the financial and technical assistance of the Rockefeller Foundation.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Mysore Administrative Report, 1881-86, p. 114

<sup>5</sup> Haryavadana Rao. c. Mysore Gazetteer, Vol-IV, P.435

<sup>6</sup> Hayavadana Rao. C., Mysore Gazetteer, Vol-IV, P. 426-427.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Shamarao M. Modern Mysore, Vol – II, P. 418-419

<sup>9</sup> Suryanatha kamath, Karnataka Gezetter, p.675

## II. CONCLUSION

The department of public health undertook intensive propaganda in the matter of village sanitation and personal Hygiene. The number of institutions began to grow to serve a wider public purpose. In the year 1946, 419 Medical institutions were working along with district, the district board, Taluks, rural, municipal and the Itinerant dispensaries. 74 among 419

institutions were classed as Urban and 345 as Rural Institutions for every 17,114 of population.

## AUTHORS

**First Author** – Dr. Thriveni, Maharaja's College, University of Mysore, Mysore, India