



Growth and development of Sanitary Measures in Princely Mysore

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ABSTRACT

This historical research article makes an attempt to document and provide a ground level view of the Sanitary measures, which were introduced by the rulers of Mysore, who had modern views in redressing public grievances and determined to protect their subjects. The paper highlight the efforts of the rulers of Mysore to develop urban cities and villages of the state and to improve the health and quality life of the people during the outbreak of epidemic disease in the state during pre independence India.

Keywords: MAR=Mysore Administrative Reports, Karnataka State Archives, Bangalore

Introduction:

Rapid urban growth is a relatively new phenomenon in India. The cities & towns with more than 20,000 inhabitants have grown more rapidly only during late 19th centuries.¹ Outbreak of epidemics in India paved the way for measures and a greater commitment to the Idea of Sanitation. One of the earliest attempts in urban planning appeared in India during 1864, Indian government appointed a sanitary commission in the presidencies of Madras, Bengal & Bombay.

Background:

plague commission strongly advocated that sanitary improvements as the best & only effective measure to check the epidemic diseases. This development was an important measure on the process of urban sanitation in the Princely state of Mysore when plague breakout in the state during 1898. Social, economic & political factors led to the migration of people in large number towards cities & towns led to the overcrowding, congestion, growth of slums and unhygienic living conditions which led to the high rate of mortality and epidemics. The government realized the importance of civic amenities. The outbreak of Plague gave a momentum to the beginning of sanitary reform measures to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the population which was shaped & guided by colonial administrators. It performed important functions like, supply of clean water for drinking, proper treatment and disposal of waste such as garbage refuse, night soil & disposal of sewage.

Measures:

In the year 1859, nearly 40 citizens of Bangalore City wrote a letter to Captain J. Puckle, the Executive Engineer of Bangalore division, expressing their willingness to pay the taxes voluntarily and sought the establishment of a Municipality for Bangalore. As a result the commissioner of Mysore established 3 Municipalities on experimental basis at Bangalore city, Cantonment & Mysore in 1862, the main functions of the Municipalities were to provide basic requirements like roads, hospitals & sanitary arrangements such as putting up of latrines, removal of refuse checking of dangerous diseases.² In 1881, A Sanitary Commissioner was appointed for the Supervision and control of epidemics. In the year 1889 and 90, Princely state devoted the large some of Rs.27, 15,221 from state revenue for the improvement of sanitation throughout the state.³

Rs.20, 804 were spent on construction and repair of drains and Rs. 29,629 on the opening up, widening and improving the narrow and crowded streets. During the drought of 1885,

money was placed in Deputy Commissioners to sink wells for drinking purposes. In Davangere, a large pond was constructed at a cost of Rs.4, 700 to afford a permanent supply of good drinking water. Measures were also taken at Shikarpur and Siralkoppa subject to water famine. All district officers were alive to the importance of keeping towns and villages clean, supply good drinking water, preserving streams, river banks, tanks, and wells were reserved for drinking purposes from being polluted.⁴ In the year 1905 one sanitary officers to each district were appointed to supervise the sanitary operations in the state. A separate sanitary department was organized in 1907. The department of Public health was constituted during the year 1908 with Senior Surgeon as ex-officio Sanitary Commissioner of a full time, Deputy Sanitary Commission to assist him in controlling and administering the department. The state divided in 3 divisions for sanitary administration, each under Divisional Sanitary officer, district Sanitary Officer appointed for each eight district in the state. Sanitary Inspector and assistant Sanitary Inspector was in each taluk and Municipality. Sanitary Advisory boards constituted a central sanitary board consisting Sanitary Commissioner, Revenue Commissioner, the Chief Engineer, the Deputy Sanitary Commissioner and the Sanitary Engineer.⁵

Urban Sanitation:

The outstanding features in recent developments in urban sanitation consist in an increased attention to water supplies and in the laying out of well-planned extensions were furnished with pipe water derived from public water works (Jewell Filters.) The results of the investigations carried out by Dr. F. Smeeth, State Geologist in Mysore.⁶

Town Planning:

Town planning, an important branch of sanitary effort being considered as part and parcel of schemes for improving town drainage, water supply and conservancy.⁷ during the year 1910 a sum of Rs.1, 34,957 was spent on sanitary works, of which a sum of Rs.33, 700 was spent on works executed by the several Municipalities and the remaining Rs.1, 01,257 was spent on works executed by the Public Works department. The Central Sanitary Board examined schemes estimated to cost Rs. 38,718. The works executed by the several municipalities were construction and improvement of drains and latrines, sinking and repair of wells, opening of roads, etc. The inspection work was conducted by the Sanitary Commissioner. Col. Smyth, the Sanitary Commissioner, was deputed to Ahmadabad to study the working of the system there and submit a report to Government.⁸

The attention was paid to the improvement of drainage and to the removal of rank vegetation, and night-soil from the surroundings of houses. Manure pits were removed in 1,994 villages; stagnant pools were filled up in 617 villages; and notice boards warning people against defiling the water were put up near wells, tanks and other sources of water-supply in 322 villages. The cremation of dead bodies by the side of Streams, Nalas, etc., was stopped in 50 villages.⁹ The Central Sanitary Board examined several big sanitary schemes amounting Rs. 3, 68,049 in carrying out works of a sanitary nature. The Deputy Sanitary Commissioner attended the All India Sanitary Conference held at Luknow and submitted a report with several suggestions.¹⁰ The sanitation work continued with construction of public latrines and closing of insanitary pits, construction of a slaughter house and mutton markets.¹¹ Public Latrines, urinals and baths were provided in all congested areas where there were no regular latrines for houses.¹²

Bureau of Sanitary was established:

The work of the bureau included the preparation of projects for water supply, drainage, town planning, village planning, sinking of bore wells and maintaining of water supply and execution of works. The bureau maintained the water supply installed in 27 places, 22 bore wells were in progress and 306 borehole latrines were installed. 2838 flush out latrine came into existence. 9.699 stray dogs were destroyed.¹³

Rural Sanitation:

The improvement of rural sanitation received the greatest attention. In 1917A large number of Village improvement Committee had been established under the Panchayats.¹⁴ At the Budget Session of the Representative Assembly in 1928 the Dewan made a clear enunciation of the sanitary policy related to the rural parts. "The crying needs of the people, especially of those living in the rural parts that form the bulk of the population," he said, "have yet to be met and no administration worth the name can remain indifferent to those wants. The Government of Mysore cannot feel happy that they have discharged their duty to the people unless successful efforts are made to secure to every village of any size in the State which does not possess a drinking-water well without drying up when water is most needed, a tank in good repair not silted up with the sluice neglected, a satisfactory school with at least one competent teacher, a well-managed co-operative society and a dispensary with sufficient stock of medicines." Rural uplift was one of the Government's most urgent, as it was one of their most sacred, duties.¹⁵ Provision of drinking-water wells for every village in the State was a matter of supreme importance and funds were allotted on a large scale for the purpose in 1930-31 there were 1, 00,000 of drinking-water wells and 1, 14,000 tube wells making a total of 2, 14,000. The general scheme of rural electrification made steady progress and the lighting service was started in 1930.

Environmental Hygiene:

Improvement of environmental health was a major concern of the government disposable of human excreta, food sani-

tation and housing which are fundamental to health in this regard. Public Health Department & officers were eternally vigilant. Food samples were taken & examined, day after day to see that the citizens should not get adulterated food. During July 1939, samples of ghee were subjected & 11 were condemned. As many as 135 baskets of fruits were destroyed as unfit for consumption, Hotels, Coffee & eating houses were regularly inspected, In July 1939, alone 19 notice were issued, under hotel bye-laws, there were 14 convictions & 6 licenses were refused & fines realized, amounted to Rs.58.¹⁶ Inspection & enforcement of hotel bye-laws always result in immediate improvements- sterilization, white-washing, keeping up of alarms & dust fly-proof cases, & use of genuine things in all preparations.¹⁷ 17 samples of ghee, 14 of butter and samples of the other foodstuffs were examined regarding their fitness for human consumption. In 16 cases, action was taken under the prevention of Adulteration Regulation and the Municipal regulation. At a marriage party, 150 persons suffered from food poisoning causing diarrhea, vomiting and collapse.¹⁸

The campaign of weekly intensive cleaning was carried on in Bangalore City. The sanitary staff visited several houses and defects were noticed under different sections of the Municipal Act. Two thousand five hundred and ninety-seven (2597) notices were issued. Strict inspections of hotels, coffee-clubs, markets and slaughter houses were conducted and defects noticed were promptly rectified. Four thousand and sixty-three (4063) stray dogs were destroyed.¹⁹ In Mysore City, regular inspection was undertaken of hotels, eating houses, bakeries, soda factories, private medical shops, etc., and necessary action was taken to rectify the defects wherever noticed. Two thousand three hundred and seventy-four premises were visited by health staff in connection with the observance of the rules of sanitation. Notices were issued to 612 persons under various sections of the Municipal Act. Two thousand two hundred and ninety three stray dogs were destroyed.^A

Poor fund & Houses for Poor:

A detailed survey was conducted the housing conditions, especially in the poorer and more congested parts of the city, government undertook the construction of cheap and sanitary houses for the poor and the discouraged 119 houses build on Karohatti road, Mysore city Municipality. Poor Proposals for acquisition of suitable sites for Adikarnataka extensions in 18 villages was set up. ^B Government started a poor patient's fund also to improve the healths who were engaged in the work of the municipality.^C

Conclusion:

Mortality rate of the state population was considerably reduced after the rapid implementation of modern civic amenities. The period witnessed reforms and changes in sanitary improvements.

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