

INTRODUCTION OF WESTERN MEDICAL SYSTEM IN TRAVANCORE -A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Among the native state in India, Travancore stood out of its impressive achievement in the field of public health. The indigenous medical system began to decline due to the emergence of new medical system in Travancore. In 1811 at the time of Col.Munro as the Dewan of Travancore, the Western system hospitals were established at Trivandrum, Quilon and Alleppey. Maharaja Uthran Thirunal (1829-1847) three hospitals were established at Trivandrum, Quilon and Alleppey. Maharaja Uthran Thirunal (1847-1860) took special interest in the western medical system. Ayilyam Thirunal (1860-1880) took a series of measures to develop the medical department and the number of medical institutions increased steadily. The introduction of medical school and civil hospital in Trivandrum and vaccination system helped to develop the western medical system in the state.

Keywords: Western medicines, Sarkar ,Establishment new Hospitals. Hospital, Medical Schools;

INTRODUCTION:

The state Travancore is familiarly known throughout India as Dharma raj yam. From time out of mind charity has been regarded by Travancore as one of the cardinal duties of the state¹. In Shirker hospitals there were no trained doctors. Lack of trained doctors created immense hardships for the patients. To tide over the situation a medical school was opened in 1862 to provide better treatment to the public. This medical school helped to popularize the western mode of treatment. Experts in the field were invited to impart education to the students of the medical school. Dr. Ross was appointed as Durbar physician and principal medical officer in 1863. He delivered lectures on physiology for the junior branch and on medicine for the senior branch². In order to give special coaching and practical training to the students a number of physiological models were brought from Madras through the Arbuthnot company³.

Year after year the medical department expanded to cope with the increasing demands for medical assistance. To accomplish this in 1868, the then maharaja sanctioned an annual expenditure of Rs.20,000/- towards the extension of medical aid to the people. Besides, new hospitals were opened in different places. Alleppey, though a large town had just a small dispensary with a sole dresser to look after the bulk of the patients. With a view to remove the hardships properly qualified medical sub-ordinate to this station was appointed. As such an apothecary who had acquired many years of practical experience was engaged in the year on a salary of Rs.120 per Menem and posed to Alleppey with a suitable establishment of servants. Thus, in course of time, the medical department grew big enough to meet with the requirement of the ever increasing population. At Kottayam the government purchased a large bungalow for a sum of Rs. 6000 and converted it into a hospital⁵. In Mavelikkara, medical sub-ordinates were posed in 1868. The want of a medical establishment had been keenly felt and a dresser was

appointed⁶. Most of the hospital at the time of inception had only dressers.

Civil Hospital

The appointment of Dt. Ross as durbar physician and principal medical officer of the state, in 1863 ushered in a new era. With his assistance in 1864, the foundation stone was laid for civil Hospital in Trivandrum. The civil Hospital which was inaugurated in 1865 by the maharaja was brought under the supervision and controls the durbar physician⁷. In course of time, the number of patients increased rapidly; huge crowds thronged the premises of the hospital to get medical assistance. Therefore the hospital was enlarged. Women patients hesitated to go into the building which was chiefly occupied by the other sex, a separate ward was set apart in the civil Hospital for the treatment of diseases of the eye.

Training to the Medical staffs

The death rate among the in patients was high and this aggravated the popular dislike for the western system of medical help. With a view to removing these defects and to restore public confidence several changes were introduced in 1869. An experienced Ayurveda physician was added to the staff of the civil hospital

Above all, steps were taken for the dissemination of medical knowledge by opening a vernacular medical class at Trivandrum⁸. To improve the efficacy of the medical staff a scheme was put forward. It aimed at the education and training of the sub-ordinate personnel in this service. It was proposed that each course should extend to a period of four years each year comprising two sessions each of six months duration. The number of students was to be fixed every year on the basis of the requirements of the department. Every batch of students had to pass through a four year course study, before joining the department, prior to which they had to pass a qualifying examination also⁹. Native women were appointed in the departments .

midwives and were given instruction in practical nursery and mid-wifery. These measures not only reduced the death rate but saved the public from contagious diseases too.

The clinical teaching of medicine and surgery was carried out by the Durbar physician in the civil hospital and with very satisfactory results. As early as 1869, the need for separate accommodation for the treatment of insane patients had begun to be keenly felt and a building near the civil Hospital Trivandrum was purchased for this purpose. The building served as a temporary lunatic asylum. A separate asylum was opened for the female lunatics to avoid the unpleasant incidents that might happen because of the male and the female lunatics being housed together¹¹. Gradually, facilities were provided for the treatment of inpatients. A separate building was constructed for this purpose in the civil hospital at Trivandrum in 1869. In the early days very poor people afflicted with incurable diseases alone came to this hospital as inpatients. Want of space for the reception of inpatients in the civil hospital was a serious problem. Additional building to the hospital was constructed. It provided 36 more beds for the accommodation of inpatients.

In order to prevent the spread of contagious diseases, especially cholera and small pox, facilities were provided for giving vaccination. The introduction of vaccination so early as 1813 laid the foundation of preventive medicine in the state. It was with the organization of a separate vaccination Department in 1865-66 that regular efforts for ensuring health were first made and the public health institution in the state was established.

Conclusion

Thus the introduction of western medical system in Travancore opened a new era in the modern medical history of Travancore. Medical school opened in Trivandrum provided better medical assistance to the public. The medical school started at that time later grew into the Medical College Trivandrum. Civil Hospital started in 1865, developed itself into the present General . People who were affected during epidemics like cholera and small pox were given medical aid. Preventive system with the establishment of a vaccination department in Travancore.

REFERENCES

1. Raman than, A Brief Sketch of Travancore, Trivandrum (nd), p.198
2. Report of the Administration of Travancore for the year 1870 PP 92-93.
3. Neettu. Vol.69343, May 1862
4. In 1868, three new hospitals were opened - one each at Alleppey, Kottayam and Mavelikara
5. Kottayam is a town of some importance containing a mixed population of Hindus and Christians. It is the principal station of the Church Missionary Society and the headquarters of the Syrian metropolitan.

