



THE ROLE OF 'ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION' TOWARDS MEDICAL FACILITIES IN THE PRINCELY MYSORE

Sowmya.A

Lecturer, Department of History, Post Graduate Centre, Hemangotri, University of Mysore, Hassan, Karnataka.

Abstract

The present article is named “**The Role of ‘Rockefeller Foundation’ towards medical facilities in Princely Mysore**” gives a clear picture regarding the various activities of “Rockefeller Foundation”, taken up in the State of Mysore, which is one of the most important States, on its invitation. In the beginning part of the 20th century, and also this article discusses regarding the suggestions and advices given by this American organization, which was striving to bring about awareness regarding health and sanitation throughout the world, the advice, directions and co-operation given to the State of Mysore, and also the studies conducted in controlling the contagious diseases, in addition to the controlling programmes taken up, cleanliness maintenance programmes, and also the public awareness regarding health and sanitation.

Introduction

The health administration in India, which was following Ayurveda medical system from time immemorial, after the effect of East India Company, started using the western Medical System, which is Allopathic Medical System. Still, the Medical system which started in the year 1870, was a kind of limited system. After 1799, when the Mysore Province came under the rule of British, after 1831, though a lot of changes were found in the Medical System of Mysore, still total modernity was not implemented in the system. Whatever modern allopathic medical systems came to use, they were only found in the treatment of British military areas, to treat the soldiers, but was not found among the general public. Diseases like Plague, Malaria, Cholera, Hook Worm, etc. were terrifying the general public, and the Government showed interest in keeping up the health of general public.

The properly organized Health Service has a history of more than a century. The first public Health Service taken up by the Government of Mysore State was diagnosing the diseases and providing vaccination services to stop the Small Pox and Chicken Pox. In addition to this, the programme to administer drops for all the children below the age of one year, was started in Bangalore in the year 1922. A Health Committee was established in Mysore in the year 1908 itself, with a view to improve the health of general public. The Government also appointed Medical Officers as Chief Sanitary Commissioner, and additional responsibilities were given to them. As per this, the Civil Surgeon was appointed as the District Sanitary Officer, and for every district, an assistant Surgeon was appointed, and under his directions, mobile clinics were opened. In spite of starting all these programmes, deadly diseases like Malaria, Cholera, and Hook Worm could not be brought under control. With the result, in the year 1930-34, during the rule of the Wodeyar, these infectious diseases broke out again. It was a great problem to bring them under control, during this time. Therefore, in the areas of drought, though programmes were taken up - to feed the public free of charge, to shift the people from the drought-hit areas to safe areas, and to arrange to give them suitable inoculations, - the grave situation could not be brought under complete control. In this time, the Nalvadi Krishnarajawodeyar, who was ruling the State of Mysore, and his Diwan Sir.Mirza.M.Ismail, thought seriously in terms of solving this problem. Sir Mirza expressed his opinion of opening Medical clinics and their branches, and also availing the services of qualified medical experts for solving this problem¹.

As per this, many medical experts and medical organizations were invited to the State, obtaining their opinions and advices, many improvements were made in the Medical areas and programmes were implemented. Rockefeller Foundation is one of such organizations. This organization, in the year 1927, as per the request of the State, took up the Survey of the health of citizens of the State of Mysore. Subsequently, it lent the services of a Public Health Consultant and a Sanitary Engineer, and set up Malaria Field Stations².

This Rockefeller Foundation is a Private Organisation and is on the fifth Avenue of New York City with Door No. 420, This company was started by **Mr. John D. Rockefeller**, who is the owner of Standard Oil Company, along with his son **Junior Mr. John D. Rockefeller**.

Its stated mission is “promoting the well being of humanity throughout the world”³

This organisation, in the beginning was a big industry later extended its interest in improvement of public health. Similarly in 1909 they founded the Rockefeller Sanitary commission for the eradication of hook worm disease from the South America where hookworm and malaria affected labour productivity in the farms and the mills. And also it was found that one of the reasons for the spread of epidemics was the connection with the outer world through trade and pilgrims and so the foundation, in order to spread the anti-hookworm activities, encouraged the National Sanitary Commission. Hence in June



13, 1913, the National Commission founded to control hook worm at the United States, extended its work area as an International Commission. Geographically, the Rockefeller Foundation Sanitary Commission that extended its work area, has been working against the epidemics in 6 continents 52 nations and 20 islands and has been creating awareness internationally about the essentiality of Public Health and Environmental Sanitation. The Chief Lieutenant and Chief Officer John D. Rockefeller has donated \$100,000 to the organisation and this has been a helping hand in the successful work undertaken internationally by this organisation⁴.

The internationally identified organisation, after the First World War, began its activities even in India. The Annual Reports of Rockefeller Foundation reflect that this organisation has worked in various places like Kolkata, Madras, Trivandrum, Mysore, and so on. As per these, in 1927, the Mysore Government,

In this way, the Rockefeller Foundation, which conducted the Survey of Public Health, subsequently, it lent the service of a Public Health Consultant and a Sanitary Engineer and set up Malaria Field Stations⁵.

In the years 1927-28, The Rockefeller Foundation conducted surveys regarding Malaria, Hook Worm, Smallpox and other contagious diseases, and made some recommendations to the State Government. They are:

- a. Establishing Village Health Centres.
- b. Opening Research Centres to study contagious diseases like Malaria etc.
- c. Starting separate Health Department⁶.

As per the above recommendations, the Government of Mysore took up several programmes. The Sanitary Department was separated from Health Department, and the same was made to operate independently. This Department which was named Health Department, was made to operate under the Director, the Public Health Department. The implementation of City Programmes, Under-ground Drainage System, Construction of Toilets, Purification of Water, Drinking Water Arrangement etc were under the Sanitary Department, and this Department was established as per the suggestion of the Rockefeller Foundation⁷. In the year 1930, with an effort to improve the Health Department, Board of Health was organized, and the suggestion of Dr. Sweet and Mr. J.J. Mioldazis, a Sanitary Engineer of the International Health Division of the Rockefeller Foundation, was taken. To carry out the smooth and organized working of this Health Department, this Department was divided into seven separate bureaus.

1. **Bureau of Administration** : This bureau has been operating under the Public Health Director, and many other officers were co-operating with this. The member being the Senior Surgeon, The Chief Engineer, The Representative of the Rockefeller Foundation, and other officers also were co-operating in the management.
2. **Bureau of Laboratories** : This has been performing its duties under the direction of the Deputy Director of Public Health, and with the co-operation of this bureau, the vaccinations for Plague, Cholera and T.A.B. were produced in Mysore itself.
3. **Bureau of Epidemiology** : This bureau was established for the studies of deadly diseases, and also for the purposes of their research.
4. **Bureau of Malariology** : This had the purpose of studying the disease Malaria, This bureau with the close co-operation of Rockefeller Foundation, America, organized a Malarial Research Station at Sakaleshpur.
5. **Bureau of Vital Statistics** : This bureau was established with the purpose of recording the Birth Rate, Death Rate and the Mortality Rate in the State of Mysore.
6. **Bureau of Health Education** : This bureau educates the public on Health Matters through propaganda, Publicity, and Exhibitions. In the state, especially the rural areas, the Government has to increase the number of Hospitals, if the people have to be healthy. In the year 1936, a Health Training –cum-Demonstration Centre was founded in Ramanagaram, with the financial and technical assistance of Rockefeller Foundation.
7. **Public Health Institute** : In the year 1895 itself, in Bangalore, Public Health Institution was established, and it was further improved on the suggestion of the Foundation. On request, the Foundation carried out a Public Health Survey. Subsequently, it lent the services of a Public Health Consultant and a Sanitary Engineer, and set up Malaria Field Stations⁸.

In this way, the Health Department was divided into 7 different bureaus, and through them, the Public Health Management was taken up to be done. It may be observed that in the year 1931, The Mysore Medical Regulation Act and Industrial and Inspection Laboratories were established in this direction only.

As per the request of the Government of Mysore, the Rockefeller Foundation, which visited the State, performed a very significant role in eradicating the infectious diseases spread in this area. Mainly, deadly diseases like Malaria and Hookworm



had spread a very serious anxiety among the people, and even though the State had taken up many different programmes to eradicate these, significant progress were noticed in the field of Health, only after the International Health Unit “Rockefeller Foundation” came to India. The State received the health care of internationally known Health Experts like Dr. Sweet. Due to the Survey conducted under his supervision, Malaria Laboratories were established in Nagenahalli, Mudigere and Hiriuru⁹. In addition to this, four Medical graduates were sent to America, for obtaining training in sanitation¹⁰.

In Mysore, valuable experiments on rural Malaria Control through cheap methods were being conducted¹¹. And also, an experimental rural health unit was established. Malaria Commission held an important role in controlling the infectious disease like Malaria. In places like Malenaadu (rainy, hilly places) and Marikanive, where a lot of dirty water stagnates, and a high density of mosquitoes of the breed “Anopheline” were noticed, the bite of which mosquito brings Malaria, many steps were taken to control this. Bureaus namely Epidomiology and Malariology were established in the Health Department.

These were managing the Malaria eradication programmes. D.D.P. was sprayed in these areas of Malarial spread. Essential equipments and technical devices were made available to the staff. And in Bangalore City, Hiriuru and Nagenahalli, in addition to the use of Paris Green, experiments were conducted for ascertaining whether larvicidal fish ‘Gambusia’ could be used successfully for the eradication of anopheline larvae breeding in wells. Actual result showed that the fish compare favourably with Paris Green as a larval control measure in wells¹². This way, in all places where contaminated water stagnates, these methods were followed. In addition to this, with the co-operation of the Rockefeller Foundation of America, Malaria Research Station was established in Sakaleshapura.

In the year 1931, Mr. Smith published the article named “Dissection of Female Anophelines in Mysore State” in the magazine “Records of Malaria in India” Dr. V.G. Heiser M.D., the Far-Eastern Representative of the Rockefeller Foundation, Major Covell M.D., IMS Acting Director, Central Malaria Bureau, Kasauli, the Director of Public Health, Baroda State, and Dr. Timbren, Medical Officer of Health, Shantiniketan Bengal. Etc., visited the units of Malaria Studies¹³. In addition to these, Prof. Buxton of the London School of Tropical Medicine, and Mr. Dyen, Sanitary Engineer of the Rockefeller Foundation, visited Mysore, Mandya, Nagenahalli and Hiriuru, in the course of their Malaria tour¹⁴. As per their suggestion, the Malaria Survey was carried out in Tumakur.

K.G.F., RayanakereDiary Farm, and Narasimharajapura, they were instructed to use Paris Green and ‘Gambusia’ fish. Along with this, the Government brought “Malnad Improvement Scheme” into force.

Another disease, in which Rockefeller Foundation took interest and carried out eradication programme, was “Hook Worm”. About 25 % of the population of the whole world were troubled by this epidemic. In Mysore State, especially the horticultural areas like Hassan, Kadur, Shimoga and Mysore areas, this was found. The awareness programmes of these problems had already started in the year 1931. And continued in 1932 also. The government which conducted a survey regarding this also, took up programmes for the eradication of this problem. In addition to these, diseases like Plague, Guinea Worm, Leprosy, Small Pox and Venereal Disease etc had spread throughout the State of Mysore, and made the people suffer immeasurably and the Government took up various steps to control the same. And in the programme of eradicating these diseases, the suggestions and recommendations of Rockefeller Foundation were used extensively.

Creating awareness and Co-operation : The Health Education Programme

With the purpose of creating awareness regarding deadly diseases, many educational programmes were organized. In the year 1930, as a part of the Public Health Department, Bureau of Health Education was established. This bureau which was established as per the recommendation of the Rockefeller Foundation, with a purpose of creating awareness regarding the health problems, took up programmes to bring about changes in their life styles, which were responsible for bringing out the deadly diseases. Throughout the State of Mysore, to make this health education programme successful, huge quantity of printed posters, pamphlets, books, periodicals and newspapers were printed and distributed. In the years 1930-31, many hand outs were printed giving information regarding many contagious diseases like Malaria, Hook Worm, Smallpox etc., and also providing information regarding the first aid and were distributed free of charge. And also awareness was brought out among the public through broadcasting programmes on the radio. For this purpose, it was decided to start many medical establishments in the state. In the year 1936, Health Training programme and a Public Exhibition Centre were established in Rockefeller Foundation, Ramanagar¹⁵. Also it announced to provide financial help for a period of 2 years for different activities of the Health Education Bureau. It carried out the role of effective publicity regarding health by educating the people how to remain healthy, and thus effectively publishing the important points.

The Public Health Department introduced a new scheme for creation of awareness among the public through cinema shows, and the cinema shows on health subjects were arranged all over the state by the cinema staff, which travelled with the



equipment in the Department van¹⁶. These cinemas were purchased by different national and foreign organizations, which started bringing out awareness among the people through these mediums. In addition to this, several Health Exhibitions were arranged throughout the state. (Ex. : Mysore Dasara Exhibition.) Many Health Museums were established. Also, several lectures were given to the people on different methods of avoiding the infection, and on the usefulness of sanitary latrines¹⁷. Information was given regarding the cleanliness of the drains. The hand bills and posters regarding these matters were exhibited on the walls. We can also recognize the part played by the Municipalities in such activities, controlling the infectious diseases.

Conclusion

The duration of the beginning of the 20th Century is a time when the whole world suffered from deadly diseases, and during this time, many new infectious diseases, in addition to many traditional contagious diseases already existing, started and put people in great anxiety. To control these, many Government and Private organizations have been making efforts, and among them the "Rockefeller Foundation" of America is also one. This organization has been bringing awareness throughout the world, regarding Health and sanitation, and offered complete co-operation to the local government, in the Mysore State, which is one of the most important States of India. Also it took up the Survey of contagious diseases prevalent in this area, and also took up programmes to eradicate these infectious diseases, and also to bring awareness among people regarding these diseases, through activities in various areas like financial, educational, scientific etc. This help is being continued even today, and the laboratories in Nagenahalli, Mudigere and Hiriuru are witnesses to the fact of Rockefeller Foundation's involvement. In addition to the 'Malaria Commission' of the 'League of Nations', which visited Mysore State on its invitation in the year 1929, carried out different studies connected with Malaria, in the laboratories of Nagenahalli and Mudigere, they also expressed appreciation regarding the anti-malaria programmes taken up in Bangalore, and this proves the efficiency of the Foundation.

Footnotes

1. Gazetteer of India, Karnataka state Gazetteer, Mandya district, revised edition, page no.807-808.
2. M.Kabir, Beyond Philanthropy: The Rockefeller foundation's public health intervention in Thiruvithamkoor, 1929-1939, september 2003, page no.06.
3. The Rockefeller foundation, Wikipedia.
4. M.Kabir, *ibid*, page no.10
5. Kogi kawshina, Missionaries and a Hindu state, Travancore, 1858-1936, oxford university press, delhi, 1998, page no.122-124.
6. S.Nagarathamma -Mirza.M.Ismail kalada aarogya sudharana kramagalu, page no.443.
7. Government of Mysore, Administrative Report of the public health department, Mysore, for the year -1930.
8. Dr.Triveni urs, unpublished Ph.D. thesis submitted to The University of Mysore, page no.40-43.
9. Dr.Triveni urs, *ibid*, page no.87.
10. Government of Mysore, Administrative Report of the public health department, Mysore, for the year -1930
11. M.Kabir, *ibid*, page no.32.
12. Dr.Triveni urs, *ibid*, page no.89.
13. Government of Mysore, Administrative Report of the public health department, Mysore, for the year -1931
14. Dr.Triveni urs, *ibid*, page no.93.
15. S.Nagarathamma, *ibid* page no.
16. Dr.Triveni urs, *ibid*, page no. 44.
17. 17.Government of Mysore, Administrative Report of the public health department, Mysore, for the year- 1930.