

A study of public health in Bombay Presidency

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This work attempts to understand colonial rule and their policies with regard to health education system, health care services; introduction of new facilities like vaccines, various disease control programs, public health infrastructure, funding and management and also to understand the strength and weaknesses of the existing organization and administrative structure of British rule.

Indian history can be studied from various aspects and each of these has contributed in a distinct manner to the restructuring of history. The history of public health has also played a significant role in our understanding of the past. The knowledge of the state of science, technology as well as medicine in a given period of history has a place of prominence in developing a socio cultural perspective of that period.

Establishment of the Grant Medical College during the colonial rule in the year 1845 was an important landmark in the transition from the traditional and age old Indian system which was cheap, time tested and did not offend the long established religio-cultural beliefs to the more professional and evidence based Western medicine with emphasis on preventive as well as curative aspects.

The administration of public health during the colonial rule was through the establishment of various departments. The issues of public health addressed through these agencies mostly included infectious diseases like cholera, small pox, plague and diarrheas, various fevers and other abdominal diseases. The steps also included preventive measures like vaccination drives, sanitary measures and segregation of affected people.

The present study is based upon published and unpublished primary source material consulted at Kolhapur Archives as well as Mumbai archival.

Establishment of medical college to train Indian doctors in western medicine promoted delivery of public health services along the lines of western medicine. The efficacy of public health services in controlling epidemics and other infectious diseases helped popularize the western medicine amongst Indians. Public health services however were used as a tool by the colonial rulers to further the imperialist designs of the colonial rulers:

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