

ABSTRACT

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This is a research that attempts to investigate into the history of Public Health in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) under the British Colonial Government. The study is confined to the period 1858 - 1926, a period during which the initiation of the Western system of Public Health in the country developed. Significance of this study will be that the final analysis will help the present-day Public Health professionals to be informed of an authentic history of Public Health in Ceylon.

In this dissertation there are six chapters. The introductory chapter attempts to deal with the definitions given to Public Health as well as terminology and synonyms used in the Public Health Service such as 'Social medicine', 'Community Medicine' etc. This chapter also discusses the significance of this research study. It will also elaborate the general objective and specific objectives of the study. The chapter ends with a brief note on the methodology of research.

The second chapter is devoted to a brief discussion of the Public Health problems that existed during the period of study.

An attempt is made to determine the health status of the people by looking into the health problems they experienced at the time. The chapter begins with a description of population growth, birth rates, death rates indicated by means of statistical tables. The life span tables from 1881 to 1887 are reproduced for the purpose of enabling those interested in the problem to understand the health status of the people better. Thereafter major communicable diseases such as cholera, Smallpox, Malaria, Hookworm disease etc. which were then serious health hazards are discussed with greater emphasis on morbidity and mortality due to these diseases.

The third chapter deals with Public Health Policies, the British administrators followed in Ceylon during the period. From among these the following received specific attention. (1). Policy on the control of smallpox and cholera. (2). Delegating the health responsibilities to Christian Missions and voluntary agencies. (3). The policy of establishing an independent 'Civil Medical department'. (4) The government assuming responsibility for the provision of medical and health care etc.

Chapter four traces the origin and the development of a Department of Health in Ceylon during the period. The following developments have been discussed. (1). The establishment of a Civil Medical Department in 1858.(2)The establishment of Municipal Councils in the main towns of Colombo, Kandy and Galle in 1867. (3). Initiation of the Dispensary system in 1877. (4). Establishment of 'Local Boards of health' in 1877. (5). Initiation of the 'District Hospital' system in 1880. (6). Establishment of 'Sanitary Boards' in 1892. (7). Establishment of the 'Sanitary Branch in 1913. (8). Initiation of the 'Health Unit' system in 1926. (9). Increase of the administration strength of the Civil Medical department. (10). The reorganization of the Civil Medical department in 1925.

Chapter five deals with the Public Health measures and procedures the British Colonial government adopted in Ceylon during this period. Many health measures were adopted by the colonial government and these measures were always associated with particular health problems as well. In order to present a clear picture of these health measures and procedures they are discussed under the following headings. (1). Control of Communicable diseases. (2). Environmental sanitation.

- (3). Provision of Medical and Health care facilities.
- (4). Education on Community Health.
- (5). Collection of vital statistics.

In chapter six are the conclusions based on the findings of the investigation. It will summarise the most significant issues concerning Public health issues in Ceylon during the period 1858 - 1926 of British Administration.