

PUBLIC HYGIENE MANAGEMENT IN CHITTOOR IN MADRAS PRESIDENCY

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ABSTRACT

A town is a place for every citizen to work and reside-in. Of all the amenities, good hygiene of its inhabitants is most essential for the hygiene development of any town. The hygiene environment of the town is not satisfactory in pre-1917 period. Council tried its best to maintain the hygiene environment. Maternity and Child Welfare Centres played vital role in meeting the needs of the town. It took firm action in dealing with epidemics. Compulsory vaccination, taking firm steps in dealing with Food Adulteration are some of the effective step taken by the municipality. I made an effort to study the various aspects of Hygiene Management council in this paper. I consulted Municipal rewards. Government letters, Government orders, Revenue Disposals Council Resolutions in addition to published works on madras presidency.

KEYWORDS: Hygiene Environment, Welfare Centre, Vaccination, Food Adulteration, Rewards

INTRODUCTION

Hygiene

Of all the amenities, good sanitation and proper drainage are most essential for the healthy development of a town. The main responsibility of a civic body is to keep the town clean and healthy by maintaining good sanitation for healthy and happy life of its citizens.

Sanitation is the most important public health service provided by the Municipality. Due to the high mortality rates in the military camps, a Royal Commission was constituted in 1859 to enquire into the causes of Disease and high death-rate among the European and Indian soldiers in India.¹ While reporting on the causes of ill – health among the troops, the commission pointed out the evil effects of the in-sanitary conditions in the country. As per the recommendations of the commission, Sanitary Boards were constituted in 1864 in the three presidencies - Bombay, Calcutta and Madras mainly for the army, and also for the general care of the public health. The Bengal Sanitary Board was replaced in 1866 by a Sanitary Commission, and a similar change was carried-out by the Governments of Madras and Bombay Presidencies. In 1880-81, the Sanitary and Vaccination Departments were amalgamated. The superintendents of vaccination were made Deputy Sanitary Commissioners to supervise general sanitary work including vaccination.² The municipal authorities were given greater powers to deal with all sanitary problems and large funds were made available to them.

Another important change in the field of sanitation was appointment of Sanitary Engineers in all big provinces in 1888. They supervised the general condition of the sanitation. In 1893, Sanitary Boards were established in all the provinces. The Sanitary Engineers became the Technical Advisors of these Boards. Their powers and functions varied from time to time and from province to province.³

As far as Madras presidency was concerned, Madras Local Funds Act IV and the Madras Town Improvements Act III of 1871, were the earliest enactments in sanitation.⁴ These Acts were later superseded by the Madras District Municipality Act of 1884. In 1889, on the recommendation of the Sanitary Commissioner, the old masonry fixtures used

for collecting the rubbish were replaced by movable corrugated iron or wooden-dustbins, Conservancy work was not done systematically. From 1910, the position improved, as large amounts of money was spent on street conservancy and better supervision was provided.⁵

Prior to becoming Municipality, Chittoor was under the control of Chittoor District Board. The Board did not pay proper attention to the sanitation of the town.⁶ The town was dirty since many houses did not have proper cess-pools to collect used water and there was no regular drainage.⁷ Thus, at the time of the constitution of the Municipality for Chittoor in 1917, the sanitation of the town was in a very deplorable situation. Epidemics visited the town and often caused havoc due to the in-sanitary conditions. However, Chittoor Municipality took effective measures to prevent large scale deaths. The Municipal council deliberated on this issue and asked the officials to prepare drainage scheme for Chittoor town.⁸ A rough drainage scheme was worked out in 1921. Proposals were also mooted to execute part of the scheme in 1922. The drains were badly constructed resulting in water-stagnation. Even roads and streets were not cleared of dirt, garbage and street refuse regularly.⁹

During the period of 1917-1970, the Municipality tried to improve sanitation by three ways namely :

- By cleaning roads and streets.
- By maintaining public latrines and
- By the system of private scavenging.

Cleaning of Roads and Streets

Cleaning of roads and streets became an important function of Chittoor Municipality. The public health workers were the main persons involved in conservancy works. They were supplied with required tools to sweep and collect the rubbish from the dust-bins provided in different places of the town. The house-hold refuse was also expected to be dumped in the dust-bins. But, in practice, the house-hold rubbish was being thrown out on the roads. The rubbish in the dust-bins and ready heaps (where dust-bins were not provided) have to be collected and transported to the compost yard. The transportation of the rubbish was the main function involved in the public health programme. The transport system had to be thoroughly improved. Sufficient number of Dustbins should be kept handy at all vulnerable places.¹⁰

The Madras Government gave a sum of Rs.2,250/- as grant-in-aid for the purchase of conservancy plant. The entire amount was spent in 1918 on the purchase of dust-bins, night-soil bins, hand-carts etc. Rubbish in the town was removed partly by the contract system and partly by the departmental system. Both the systems worked satisfactorily.¹¹ From 1920 onwards, the sanitation of the town was looked after by one sanitary Inspector, 5 pigists, 24 sweepers and eight scavengers. The conservancy staff was equipped with three hand rubbish carts for the removal of silt and rubbish.¹²

Steps were taken to improve the sanitary conditions of the town by increasing the strength of sanitary inspectors, and also constructed 2 night-soil depots and a plague-shed.¹³ In 1921-22, the council appointed one Sanitary Inspector for the period of one month on the salary of Rs.45/-¹⁴ In 1927-28, the system of engaging contractors for the supply of carts for the removal of street refuse and their appropriation by them for the use in the fields outside the town was introduced. The contractors got remuneration in terms of monthly payments for removing the rubbish. An amount of Rs.70 –9-0 was realized in the shape of sale proceeds of trenched rubbish and night-soil in 1927-28.¹⁵

During 1930-31, a daily minimum of eight cart-loads of rubbish was given to a contractor for converting it into manure. The filth was trenched in a place about 3 kms from the town limits.¹⁶ In 1938-39, the removed rubbish from the dust-bins was leased out on the advice of the municipal council and two carts with rubber tyres were purchased for the

purpose.¹⁷ In 1953-54, the contract system of removing rubbish was terminated. The Municipality took upon itself the task of appointing regular conservancy staff.¹⁸

Till 1960, the rubbish, which was collected from 70 dust-bins located in different parts of the town, was transported in eight hand-drawn rubbish carts. The matter was in active correspondence. The council proposed to the Government for a grant-in-aid to erect 80 more cemented dust-bins in the town.¹⁹

The transport of rubbish by carts was slow and out-dated. So, open body lorry was purchased in 1964, with a matching grant of Rs.30,000 from the government.²⁰ By 1969, the municipal administration was able to purchase another open body lorry and a tractor with a trailer. This was possible due to the loan of Rs.40,000/- provided by the Government of Andhra Pradesh.²¹

By 1968-69, the Chittoor town was divided into four divisions for conservancy work and each division was kept in charge of one sanitary Inspector. The following vehicles were utilized for the removal and transport of street rubbish and night soil from the town.

- Open-body lorries –2
- Tractor with trailers – 1
- Rubbish Hand-drawn carts– 14.

Daily, the vehicles transported the rubbish, Night-soil and silt to the compost yard, where compost was manufactured.²²

Special Sanitary Arrangements

In Chittoor town, four important festivals were celebrated every year. They were, Gangamma Jatara, Brahmosavam festival of Ramaswami temple, Sri. Subramanyaswami Adikrithgai Festival and Sri Anakalaparameswari Brahmotsavam. Municipality made special arrangements such as cleaning of latrines and drains, and disinfecting them, sweeping and watering the roads more often than usual, were made with the help of sanitary staff. Special lights were also put-up in important places of the town. Municipality took preventive measures to check the outbreak of epidemics by giving vaccination to the people of the town as well as to those who came from neighboring villages.²³ In 1968-69, the Director of Public Health instructed the Tirupati and the Madanapalli Municipalities to depute their Sanitary and Health Inspectors to the Chittoor Municipality to look after and to take special pre-cautions, like anti-cholera inoculations, during the festival season.²⁴

Public Latrines

Open places covered with bushes situated in different parts of the town were generally used as public latrines. Steps were taken to provide public convenience after the inception of the Municipality. In 1923-24, there were 8 public latrines with two compartments for each sex. All of them were constructed according to 8 – type design. By 1930-31, the number of public latrines increased to ten. As Chittoor is the Head-quarters of the district, number of people visit Chittoor for various works. So keeping the demand in view, the council sanctioned and instructed the administration to build two more public latrines in 1930.²⁵ The design of the two newly constructed ones was improved during the year by the provision of impervious floor and seating arrangement. The municipal administration also constructed one urinal public place near collector's office during this year.²⁶

By 1936-37, the number of public latrines increased to 12. The system of converting night-soil into poudrette was introduced at the end of the year.²⁷ By 1942-43, there were 12 public latrines. All of them were '8' type design. But, the municipal administration started encouraging people to have their own toilet facilities.²⁸

In 1952, the Director of Public Health insisted on the Municipality to go in for septic tank latrines only.²⁹ But, the problem in Chittoor was the lack of adequate water. The municipal administration went a step-ahead and constructed 2 septic tank latrines in 1955 in Medakoil Street and Market Street.³⁰

By 1961-62, there were 12 public latrines, one urinal toilet and two septic tank latrines.³¹ By 1969-70, there were 15 public latrines 2 urinal toilets and 4 septic tank latrines. The septic tank latrines were not put into use, sadly, for want of water supply due to scarcity of water. The suggestions to construct more public latrines at important places was not feasible since the town was congested and no open space were available in important and busy localities. The provision of septic tank latrine was insisted upon in every application for the construction of new houses in the town.³²

Private Scavenging System

Private scavenging denotes the municipal arrangements for cleaning latrines attached to private houses. Private scavenging system was introduced in a few towns. Chittoor Municipality encouraged private scavenging system since its inception. In 1917-18, the Municipality extended the system to 549 houses.³² This was increased to 1115 houses in 1930. This increase was due to the various steps taken by the Municipality to encourage private scavenging system.³⁴

By 1930, the Municipality spent nearly Rs.3,000/- towards this service. The tax collection for this purpose was less than the amount spent. But, in the succeeding years the percentage of the houses availing this facility began to increase. 1,500 houses availed the private scavenging system by 1935. The Municipal administration conducted census of all the houses in the town to find-out the actual position. Even slum areas were also covered in the census. It was found that entire slum areas were at distance from this system. Villagers from neighboring areas migrated to Chittoor town in search of work. This development resulted in the growth of slum areas. People living in slum areas created problems of sanitation. Very congested areas were identified by the Municipality where the backyards of these localities had no room for the entry of scavengers to clean the latrines.

The residents of these localities made small holes in the walls of each house through which pigs alone could enter the back-yards to clear the night soil. The census also highlighted and recommended that the municipal administration should take steps immediately to bring awareness among the public about the benefits of private scavenging system.³⁵ In spite of alarming situation, the municipal council's action was far from satisfactory.

By 1940-41, municipal council initiated a systematic inspection of houses so as to enforce the private scavenging system. Houses which contain plenty of space for private latrines were asked to have them.³⁶ Municipal administration took steps to bring awareness among the citizens about public hygiene. The following table clearly shows the increasing number of private latrines.³⁷

Table 1

Year	Number of Private Latrines
1917-18	549
1929-30	1,115
1934-35	1,500
1940-41	1,700
1948-49	2,000
1951-53	2,500

Table 1: Contd.,

1960-61	3,500
1968-69	5,521
1969-70	5,872

Source: P.H.Ad. Reports of Chittoor Municipality 1917-18 to 1969-70

There was increasing trend of more houses coming forward to avail the facility of private scavenging. 3,500 houses availed this facility in 1960-61 and this number was increased to 5872 in 1969-70, as against 5521 in the previous year.³⁸ This increase was due to public awareness among the citizens about public hygiene and municipal regulation of having compulsory sanitary facilities for newly constructed houses.³⁹ By 1970, most of the house owners availed the sanitary facilities. About 60% of houses enjoy those facilities. This is really a great wonder indeed when compared with the situation before the inception of the Municipality, when hardly 5% of the houses had this basic amenity.⁴⁰

Night-Soil

The night-soil removed from the public and private latrines was carried outside the town where it was mixed up with lime and allowed to dry. After drying, it was removed and used as manure for paddy fields. The night soil of the town continued to be trenched in a depot about a mile away from the town. The system of engaging contractors for the supply of carts for the removal of street sweepings and their appropriation by them for the use in the fields outside the town continued during the years 1924-25.⁴¹ The trenching of night-soil was done as in the previous years. The removal of street sweepings was entrusted to contractors who carted the night-soil to their fields outside the town.⁴²

In the early years of inception, there was a great demand for the night-soil trenched in the ground. But from 1935 onwards, the demand declined as it was not found suitable for paddy fields since a major part of it consisted only of sand.⁴³ From 1936, night-soil was mixed with rubbish and made into 'poudrette'. The Municipality is realizing small amount of money by the sale of poudrette.⁴⁴ The following table shows the amount realized by the sale of poudrettee.

Table 2

Year	Amount Rs.
1936	350
1937	400
1938	375
1940	500
1941	550

Source: Ad.R. of Chittoor Municipality 1936-37 to 1941-42

Compost

From 1955 onwards night – soil and rubbish were removed departmentally to manufacture compost which is sold to the farmers at the rate fixed by the government.⁴⁵ Compost – yard is located 3½ miles from the centre of the town. The Municipality owned a site measuring 16.75 acres. The system of compost manufacture was by Bangalore method.⁴⁶

The staff of the compost – yard consisted one sanitary Inspector, one Public Health worker, Four Mazdoors, one watchman and a Maistry. There was a great demand for the compost. 3205 tons of compost was manufactured in 1964 and an amount of Rs.20,980/- was realized by way of its sale.⁴⁷ The following table shows the increased demand for compost and so the increased revenues to the Municipality.

Table 3

Year	Compost Manufactured [In Tons]	Compost Sold [In Tons]	Amount Rs.
1964-65	3205	3992	20980

Table 3: Contd.,

1965-66	3293	1352	8592-18
1966-67	3547	3824	26696-18
1967-68	3839	3604	23698
1968-69	3192	1255	8051-46

Source: Ad.R. of Chittoor Municipality 1964-65 to 1968-69

3992 tons of compost sold as against 3205 tons of compost manufacture in 1964-65, was made possible due to carried over compost in the year 1963-64. The sale of compost was decreased in 1965-66 and in 1968-69 and it was due to drought in the area.⁴⁸

Sanitary Staff

In 1930, the sanitary staff consisted of 2 sanitary Inspectors, 92 scavengers, 6 Pigysts, 3 silt and rubbish cart – drivers. Special sanitary staff was also employed during emergencies like, Festivals, epidemics etc.⁴⁹

With the growth of the town and changes made in the field of sanitary maintenance additional staff was recruited on temporary basis. By 1968, the staff increased to 206. With the mechanization of conservancy operations new types of workers like Drivers for lorry and tractors were recruited.⁵⁰

Enforcement of Sanitary Measures

Maintenance of sanitation in the town is entrusted to sanitary Inspector. Sanitary Inspector supervised the work of the sanitary staff and had power to inspect latrines in private houses and report to the municipality on the house-owners who failed to maintain minimum sanitary requirements. Municipal administration issued notices to house-owners to rectify sanitary defects in houses, such as filling up of cess – pools, provision of public latrines etc.⁵¹ The following table shows the number of notices issued to house – owners for the lack of minimum sanitary requirements and the number of house – owners prosecuted.

Table 4

Year	No. of Notices Issued	No. of Prosecuted
1920-21	350	Data not available
1930-31	432	300
1940-41	350	100
1950-51	225	Data not available
1960-61	Data not available	155

Source : Ad.R. of Chittoor Municipality :1920-21, 1930-31, 1940-41, 1950-51, 1960-61

During the year 1940-41, 700 houses were inspected and 350 notices were issued to house-owners directing them to make necessary provisions for latrines. 100 persons were prosecuted for not complying with the orders of the Municipality regarding the construction of latrines in their houses.⁵²

Conservancy Equipment

To maintain the sanitation of the town at a reasonable level, the Municipality, besides, recruiting the necessary personnel, acquired the equipment needed for modern sanitary requirements. The equipment consisted of night-soil earths, watering carts, dustbins, Rubber Hand drawn carts, tools for sweepers etc.,⁵³ For the transport of rubbish and night-soil Tractor with a trailer, and open body lorries are used.⁵⁴ The Municipality is slowly moving with the times and equipping itself with mechanized tools vital for modern sanitary management.

CONCLUSIONS

From the above account, it is clear that the municipality made sincere efforts to keep the sanitation of Chittoor

satisfactory. Sanitary Inspector inspected latrines in private houses and submitted a report to the Municipal authorities. Municipal Council instructed the authorities to inspect the houses and influence the house-owners to maintain minimum sanitary requirements. Thus, the municipality took effective steps, whenever necessary, to provide better sanitary environment to its citizens in spite of poor financial sources. The members of the municipal council, local gentlemen and school teachers played a very positive role by organising Baby-shows, public lectures and street gatherings in bringing awareness among public and in promoting sanitary environment in Chittoor. However, the sanitation of the Chittoor has to be improved further.

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