Health Care Services in Greater Mumbai: its past and the present

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Abstract

Till 19th century, the general public remained deprived of medical facilities. The ancient Indian healthcare system with only individual practitioners has gradually expanded with healthcare service centers started during British rule and then after. The organised healthcare system in India came in to existence mainly because of British rulers as there was tremendous expansion of their dynasty in India. The first hospital was established by East India Company in Madras (Chennai) in 1664 which served only British and few Indian elite. The expansion of British Empire in other parts of India has marked the establishment of organized medical services in other parts of country too. Like Bengal Medical Service (BMS) now called as Indian Medical Service (IMS).

It is the post colonial period that experienced significant improvement in health care system for general public without distinction. With the passage of time, private sector health care system also grew for those who can afford. However, for the under-privileged, the Government run health care system, though poorly equipped, is the hallmark feature of independent India.

The paper deals with historical development of healthcare system in Mumbai and its suburban region. It studies ward-wise spatial distribution of state-run hospitals in Greater Mumbai which serves in metropolitan region. Till 1971 Mumbai city population was more than its suburbs. The increase in suburban population since 1981(Census Data 2001) reveals that the number of health care centers in Mumbai suburban are not sufficient to cater to the needs of public health. The data collected from Municipal Corporation, Greater Mumbai and ward-wise distribution of population which has been derived from Census Data 2001 is used to analyse and interpret the existing situation of healthcare services system in Greater Mumbai.

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